

2006 SRFB Review Panel (Final) Individual Project Comments Form October 5, 2006

Review Panel Member Name:
Lead Entity: Island County LE
Project Sponsor: Island County of
Project Name: Strawberry Point Protection Assessment
Project Number: 06-2217
Project Location:
Project Type: N

Please refer to Manual #18, Appendix C, for the criteria for projects that are not considered technically sound. In the "why" box explain your reason for selecting this as a project of concern.

Please check the appropriate box.

1. Is this a "project of concern" according to the SRFB's criteria? Y ☒ N ☐
Why?

8. It is unclear how the project will achieve its stated objectives.

This is a challenging project that has a lot of potential to provide meaningful outcomes to protect habitat function in an important area of WRIA 6. However, it is unclear how the applicant will achieve the stated objectives.

2. If YES, what would make this a technically sound project according to the SRFB's criteria?

The proposed assessment and planning activities could lead to significant coordinated protection efforts in the project area. However, multiple aspects of the project remain unclear despite the review panel's request for clarification during the preliminary project reviews. The review panel requests additional information on the specific roles of each partner. A written explanation of roles and a map showing public versus private land ownership and the areas of responsibility for each partner would be most helpful.

A map is attached and the roles of each partner are:

1. Create Partner Specific Implementation Strategy Plans

Synthesize report information obtained in the data review assessment as well as the recommended protection actions at Strawberry Point. Voluntary, non-regulatory protection action plans will be implemented by Island County Parks, Whidbey Island Conservation District, Whidbey-Camano Land Trust, WA State Parks Deception Pass State Park staff and WSU Extension Shore Stewards Program.

2. Implement and Evaluate Implementation Plan Results

Island County Planning Department will lead, coordinate and standardize the common protection framework and goals based on the assembled data. Technical and scientific information will identify ideal protection action candidates. These will be categorized by watershed and by partner's area of responsibility. Recommended voluntary, non-regulatory actions pertaining to protection management strategies for

Strawberry Point will be presented, evaluated and selected. The plan report will include pertinent GIS figures, data tables, and photographic documentation.

WSU Shore Stewards, Whidbey Island Conservation District's Backyard Conversation Program, the Whidbey-Camano Land Trust, Washington State Park's Deception Pass State Park (for the Dugualla Unit) and Island County Parks will carry out and evaluate results of protection activities. Shore Stewards will focus on gaining nearshore landowner involvement and commitment to its programs and so too will the Conservation District through its Backyard Conversation Program. Results will be measured through the number of active landowners who become involved and committed to each partner's protection programs. State and County Parks will use this project to update or create appropriate protection planning and stewardship plans based on best current science and data review for the existing site conditions. Additionally, the project lead will produce status reporting on partner results through normal SRFB reporting channels. Further, this task will include twice yearly assembly of full partner panels with other local and SRFB identified members to review and record protection planning and implementation progress.

3. Prepare Conservation Easement (or other Acquisition Method) Feasibility Assessment

Whidbey Camano Land Trust (WCLT) will lead a feasibility study that will assess the willingness of private landowners to agree to allow access to their land for a habitat project or for selling a conservation easement, or other acquisition methods. Additionally, WCLT will use their normal protocols in assessing, prioritizing and performing outreach with candidate land owners. The results of the proposed conservation easement assessment will directly lead to identification, siting, or design of habitat protection project(s) or fill a data gap identified as a priority in a lead entity strategy. Projects will focus on addressing findings that merit protection and that are advisable without adverse impact to current land owner land functions and processes.

This information will help the review panel understand the project, as well as allow for a better understanding of the estimated costs. Information is needed on the number of parcels that occur in the project area and number of landowner contacts expected to be made needs to be clarified.

There are approximately 100 different parcel owners within the project area and all of them will be contacted during the project. The project area includes State and County held lands as well as a privately held property with a conservation easement. The project area consists of seven sub-watersheds and coastal drainages. The state park land is made up of 1890 meters of shoreline and is 585 acres in size. The county park land is 250 meters long at the shoreline and is 13 acres in size.

The assessment and landowner outreach efforts will presumably identify numerous areas worthy of protection. Please explain what selection criteria will be used or how criteria will be selected for prioritizing projects?

Listed below are the steps in selecting protection areas.

I) Assemble, Fill and Review Existing Data

- (1) Assemble existing site data, including Salmon Recovery Plan, into a preliminary report*
- (2) Assess the geomorphic changes of the Strawberry Point area*
- (3) Assess the status of Strawberry Point's riparian conditions*
- (4) Identify historic, current, and potential watershed land use issues effecting the nearshore environment of Strawberry Point*
- (5) Prioritize parcels for focused partner attention based on review of the above data*

The application states that only undeveloped areas will be addressed in this project. The review panel strongly encourages that protection opportunities in developed or armored areas be included as there may be significant habitat features remaining on the property. For example, the bluff portion of a land parcel that is developed at the top of a bluff would still merit protection and such opportunities should be explored. Similarly, armored areas may continue to provide features worthy of protection depending on the armor location in the intertidal zone and the riparian vegetation conditions. Voluntary restoration opportunities may exist in these areas as well.

Agreed. It is important that both developed and undeveloped areas be protected, for the reasons stated above. The project application conveyed that in a phased approach the undeveloped areas had a higher probability of access and success compared to developed parcels. All parcels will be evaluated for potential efforts.

In addition to conservation easements, opportunities to promote improved stewardship and to acquire property should also be considered.

Agreed. The project will consider the full range of acquisition tools, included outright acquiring of property.

3. If NO, are there ways in which this project could be further improved?

4. Other comments.

The coordinated partnership among local and state agencies, as well as non-profit organizations could be a model for other efforts around the state.

The review panel understands that the application's emphasis on non-regulatory and voluntary protection measures is due in large part to property rights issues in the county

The coordination and oversight role of Island County is important to the success of the project in providing a unified approach to the assessment and planning.