

To: Snohomish Basin Salmon Recovery Forum
From: Tulalip Tribes
April 24, 2013

RE: Request for Snohomish Basin Salmon Recovery Forum support – additional \$150,000 for the Qwuloolt Estuary Restoration construction project from the Puget Sound Regional PSAR return funds from PSP

PSAR Return Funds:

The Puget Sound Partnership manages the PSAR funding for Puget Sound. In every biennium some funds are returned from projects that are completed under budget or have scope changes. These funds are first returned to the watershed from which they originated, and if the watershed has no use for them they are put into a Puget Sound wide funding pot. These funds are distributed based on a first come/first served basis assuming the increase or need is warranted and that it is supported by the watershed. It is currently unclear how much funding may be available, but it is important to be in the line before decisions are made.

Request: We are requesting an additional \$150,000 from the Puget Sound Partnership PSAR return funds. This is an approximately 1% cost addition to the project. The total project cost of Qwuloolt is **\$12,000,000**. Funding has been secured through many different grant sources including Federal Recovery Act funding, ESRP, SRFB, PSAR, ALEA, NOAA, US Fish and Wildlife Service, US Army Corps of Engineers.

Rationale for cost increase request (Qwuloolt Estuary Restoration Need)

Work is underway to construct the setback levee and interior site work to prep the Qwuloolt site for flooding in 2014. As with many large scale projects, there have been some unanticipated cost increases to the project. This funding will apply to:

- Increased Site Preparation:** The federal and state agencies are suggesting more intense treatment of the site for invasive reed canary grass removal than was originally planned, which only included mowing. This increased mowing (this year and next) and disking will increase the cost of the project.
- Interior Berm Construction Hauling:** A key element of this project is interior berms that are intended to provide wave attenuation and create micro-habitats for various species. Due to the sequencing of the levee construction hauling distance has increased for the berm materials on the site than initially intended. Originally material from the levee stripping and stormwater pond was to be hauled directly across the site. Some of this material now will have to be hauled around the new levee, resulting in increased costs.
- Levee Access Road Repair Work:** Because of the increased hauling of berm material around the levee on the existing levee discussed in the previous need, it is anticipated repair of the levee road surface will be needed.

If we are unable to secure additional funds, the likely result will be a decrease in the length of berms constructed, a decrease in areas planted, resulting in a decrease in project function.

Qwuloolt Estuary Restoration Project Overview and History:

Overview of project budget and proposed revisions:

Project element	Budget	Status	Change
Phase 1 – Interior site components*	1,081,412	Underway	Requesting additional \$150,000 for interior elements
Phase 2 – Levee Construction	6,112,000	Underway	
Phase 3 – Levee lowering and Breach	397,000	Scheduled for fall 2014	

*Estimated cost to complete interior site components

Project Description

The Qwuloolt Estuary Restoration Project represents a broad-based interagency and community effort to restore historic tidal processes and a functioning estuary intertidal marsh system to 400 acres of isolated floodplain within the lower Snohomish River Estuary. The project will also restore natural hydrologic connection and functions to two stream systems and provide unrestricted fish access to 16 miles of upstream spawning and rearing habitat. Restoration will involve breaching the levee along Ebey Slough, installing a setback levee to protect adjacent properties located in the floodplain, filling existing ditches, excavating stream and tidal channels, constructing berms (site relief), and planting native shrub and tree species in shoreline riparian areas and constructed berms.

Multiple resource assessment and watershed planning efforts within the region have identified the Qwuloolt Project as a priority for intertidal marsh restoration and salmon recovery, starting as far back as the 1974 agreement, “Recommendations for Comprehensive Land Use Planning and Flood Control for the Snohomish Basin”. The 2005 Snohomish River Basin Salmon Conservation Plan (Plan) stated that the quality and quantity of rearing habitat in the nearshore, estuary, and mainstem of the river is the primary factor limiting Chinook salmon in the Snohomish Watershed. The Qwuloolt Project will have a direct benefit on this federally threatened species, as well as steelhead and bull trout, and other salmonids by restoring access to limited fresh to salt water critical transitional estuary habitat. Specifically, the Qwuloolt project will contribute to restoration of 400 acres of the 1,237 acre target for estuarine habitat restoration as outlined in the Plan.

Overall Project Objectives are to:

- Restore natural tidal and riverine processes to 400 acres of historic estuary
- Restore fish access to 400 acres of critical rearing habitat
- Restore natural hydrologic connection to two small stream systems
- Restore unrestricted fish access to 16 miles of upstream spawning and rearing habitat

Project Phases and Components

Because of the large-scale and complex nature of this project, construction has been divided into phases and components to be completed over multiple years:

- Phase 1- Interior Site Components:**
This phase involves filling existing ditches, excavating stream and tidal channels, constructing berms (site relief), and planting native shrub and tree species in shoreline riparian areas and

constructed berms. This phase is currently ongoing and will occur concurrently to the other project components

□ **Phase 2- Levee Construction Component:**

This component of the project will be under the management of the U.S. Army Corps Of Engineers (USACOE), under their Puget Sound and Adjacent Waters Program. Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) funds from this grant will be used as part of the local cost share for work performed by the USACOE. Specifically, the PSAR funds will be used for levee construction and project management in 2013 along the western edge of the project site. Levee construction is currently underway and is scheduled to be completed in 2013 and 2014. A majority of the levee will be constructed in 2013. Levee settlement is anticipated, which will require additional filling, final grading and rock work in 2014.

□ **Phase 3- Levee Lowering and Breaching Component:**

This last step of the restoration project will involve lowering approximately 1500 feet of levee and construction of a 260 foot wide breach in the levee along Ebey Slough, at the southern edge of the project site. This will also be performed by the USACOE under their Puget Sound and Adjacent Waters Program.

Project Milestones and changes

Project milestones will continue to be met on schedule as this is not a request for a time extension. The concern with the cost increase is that there will be fewer elements constructed for the project, and thus the full function of the project will not be maximized should additional funds not be secured.

Existing PSAR Funds:

Tulalip Tribes currently has a grant with a small amount (\$30,000) of 09-11 PSAR funds remaining. We were advised by the RCO grant manager to not fully expend these funds so that additional money could be added to this grant, should the watershed and PSP agree and funds become available.

Timeline:

50% of the funding will be utilized during the 2013 construction season. The remaining amount will be used shortly before the breach in 2014.