

Hidden Beach Community Meeting – August 28, 2018 6pm, Greenbank Farms

52 attendees

Meeting Minutes: (Note – Questions, comments, and responses will be posted on a separate document).

Introductions:

- Project partners:
 - Island County Marine Resources Committee (Island MRC), Northwest Straits Foundation, Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Island County Public Works
 - Primary project contacts are:
 - Northwest Straits Foundation - Nearshore Project Manager, Lisa Kaufman: 360-733-1725, kaufman@nwstraitsfoundation.org
 - Island County Marine Resources Committee Coordinator, Anna Toledo: 360-678-2349, A.toledo@co.island.wa.us
 - Washington DNR – Restoration Manager, Chris Robertson: 360-854-2808, Christopher.Robertson@dnr.wa.gov
 - Our goal for today's meeting and our future community communications is to make sure everyone is informed on the project as we move forward and can voice questions and concerns.
- This meeting is meant to share information. We do not have set designs yet for this project. We will share ideas of what we think the restoration could look like.
- Project Communications:
 - To stay informed on the progress of Hidden Beach:
 - Visit the new project website: <https://nwstraitsfoundation.org/project/hidden-beach-shoreline-restoration/>
 - If you signed up for email communications, we will send you project updates. Please reach out to one of the contacts listed above if you would like to be added to the email list.

Hidden Beach Overview:

- Hidden Beach is a site that has been identified as having high potential for restoration that would greatly benefit nearshore marine species and improve habitat and beach access for the community.
- There is approximately 770 feet of derelict shore armor that is not functioning as shore protection, but is burying potential intertidal habitat, and disrupting sediment transport processes.
- The derelict shore armor consists of vertical and horizontal pilings (some with creosote treated wood), rip rap (large boulders and cobbles), and concrete bags among other debris.
- Parcel Ownership:
 - DNR owned tidelands with easement for County for road and beach access.
 - Whidbey Telecom to the north, with easement with DNR for access road in north reach of project site
 - Beachcombers Community to the south, and the bluff face behind the road.

Coastal Processes:

- All shorelines of WA have been delineated into net-shore drift cells. Hidden Beach is in ISWH019 (Coastal Geologic Services, 2016; MacLennan et al.,2013)
- The dominant movement of sediment at the site and along the eastern Greenbank area is from the south to the north. This pattern is driven by prevailing southerly wind.
- The term ‘nearshore’ refers to the beach environment that includes the bluff all the way to the limits of where light penetrates the water (typically to the end of where you see eelgrass and kelp)
- Many seasonal changes occur on the beach. In summer the beaches build up and widen. During winter with bigger storms the beaches are steeper, and sand generally moves offshore. The presence of the derelict armor on Hidden Beach prevents typical long term and seasonal sediment patterns from functioning naturally. The large boulders and piles alter the wave environment and cover the beach so that sand and gravel that would normally be present in the mid and upper beach are not able to be deposited on the beach.
- With the predicted Sea Level Rise (SLR), shorelines may be at risk of loosing habitat. Naturally beaches move landward with rising sea level. While beaches with armor are stationary. As sea levels rise on the natural beach the nearshore beach will migrate landward. On armored beaches, the beach gets squeezed and shrinks as it cannot move against the seawall. This results in loss of habitat in the nearshore for forage fish. This term is referred to as the ‘Coastal Squeeze’.

How Restoration Can Benefit Habitat:

- Restoration plans at Hidden Beach have not been designed yet. However, it will be based on ‘process-based’ restoration. Process-based restoration means the beach would be self-sustaining as it is returning the beach to natural processes, so the environment would not need ongoing maintenance. Key traits at Hidden Beach that would support process-based restoration include: appropriate sediment types and sizes on the beach, a properly sloped beach face, a vegetation buffer, and the ability for drift wood to reach the upper beach and create microhabitats.
- Restoration can improve drift wood accumulation, return a more natural gradient to the beach which allows finer sediment to return to the beach. This improves forage fish spawning habitat and migration corridor for juvenile chinook salmon
- Documented forage fish spawning near the project site. They are a critical species in the marine food web. We do not know if Hidden Beach has been sampled in the past. We are looking for opportunities to conduct surveys with MRC and volunteers.
- Eelgrass beds are also present at the site (mostly the southern reach). Eelgrass is important to herring spawning, and act as a nursery for many key marine species.
- East Whidbey is an important area for migrating salmon as they transition out of the freshwater rivers and into the ocean environment. Juvenile salmon typically hug the coastline looking for food and shelter in estuaries, eelgrass beds, and intertidal beaches.
- This area is not meant as a freshwater restoration for salmon spawning.

Project Goals:

- Improve habitat for nearshore species
- Create vegetation buffer and connectivity of uplands to beach and nearshore
- Restore natural beach processes by removing derelict shore armor

Restoration Concepts:

- Remove failed armor: pilings, horizontal wood, boulders, concrete bags, and other miscellaneous debris
 - During the next phase of the project several design concepts will be created, and the feasibility of each option will be assessed. The different design options will consider concerns for the road, the Whidbey Telecom Access Road, and adjacent properties. This may mean some derelict structures are left in place, such as concrete bags on the southern end of the project.
- Potentially remove concrete pad, move and/or shorten parking area
 - We do not intent to reduce parking availability, however the parking area is very wide in the cross section and could potentially be shortened (moved landward) without loosing parking capacity. There may be a few design options for the parking area.
- Plant native vegetation
 - The vegetation buffer in the coastal environment plays a vital role in restoring habitat and beach processes. We would like to plant a mix of trees, shrubs, and groundcover/grasses between the parking area and beach to create a ‘riparian corridor’. The planting could also be in the area of the concrete pads.
- Create path(s) to beach from parking lot through vegetation buffer
 - The restoration and planting plans would include paths for beach access through the vegetation. This could include path access for hand launching non-motorized boats.

Known Concerns and Design Considerations:

- Adjacent Hidden Beach community properties
 - There are concerns about the potential impact of removing the southern extent of concrete pillows to the home immediately south of Hidden Beach
- Gravel road and Whidbey Telecom fiber optic cable
 - There are concerns about the use of the Whidbey Telecom Access Road and the road slowly undercutting South Hidden Beach Dr.
- Road and parking lot area directly behind project area
 - Concerns about parking area space, and erosion of the parking lot
- Public use and access to beach
 - Concerns about public access and increased use

Tentative Timeline:

Task/Phase	Timeline
Preliminary Design	Nov/Dec 2018
Permit Applications	Submitted by March 2019
ID Construction Funding Sources	Summer/Fall 2019

Construction	Summer/Fall 2020
Vegetation Planting	Late Fall 2020/Spring 2021

Project Funding:

• Task / Phase	• Funding Source
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feasibility assessment • Preliminary Design • Permitting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitat Strategic Initiative EPA through WDFW
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction & • Vegetation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DNR Aquatic Lands Restoration – Pending budget approval • Other grants to be determined
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizen-science monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Orca Recovery Grant • Island County MRC? • Other grants to be determined

Project Information and Communications:

- Project updates sent to a Hidden Beach email list
- Submit questions and concerns by Sept 5th.
- Minutes and follow up answers posted to website by Sept 7th.
- Visit NW Straits Foundation Nearshore Restoration Project page: <https://nwstraitsfoundation.org/project/hidden-beach-shoreline-restoration/>
- 2nd public meeting to present and discuss preliminary designs – Winter 2019

How you can get involved:

- **Possible volunteer opportunities:**
 - Forage fish monitoring
 - Intertidal surveys
 - Shellfish surveys
 - Vegetation planting, monitoring and maintenance
- Contact Anna Toledo and the Island MRC to get involved!

References:

Coastal Geologic Services, 2018. Hidden Beach Potential Bulkhead Removal – Initial Site Visit. (Prepared for Northwest Straits Foundation, Bellingham, WA). Coastal Geologic Services, Inc.

Coastal Geologic Services, 2016. Beach Strategies for Puget Sound Recent Work Update.

Johannessen, J.W., Chase, M.A., 2005. Feeder Bluff and Accretion Shoreform Mapping in Island County, WA. (Prepared for Island County Marine Resources Committee, Coupeville, WA). Coastal Geologic Services, Inc.

MacLennan, A.J., Johannessen, J.W., Williams, S.A., Gerstel, W., Waggoner, J.F., Bailey, A., 2013. Feeder Bluff Mapping of Puget Sound. Prepared by Coastal Geologic Services, for the Washington Department of Ecology and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. Bellingham, WA. 118p.