



**City of Yelm**  
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"Pride of the Prairie"

# Yelm HCP Stakeholder Meeting #1 Minutes

December 14, 2022

5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

## PURPOSE

The overall goal of Yelm Habitat Conservation Plan (Yelm HCP) Stakeholder Meetings is to seek feedback on the process and outcomes of the Yelm HCP during the development process. Stakeholder meeting #1 introduced the project team, informed stakeholders about the HCP process, and shared anticipated project milestones, timeline, and engagement opportunities.

## AGENDA AND DISCUSSION SUMMARY

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Presentation (see Stakeholder Meeting #1 slides)
3. Questions from stakeholder group and responses from City of Yelm (Yelm) and Confluence Environmental Company (CEC)

## ATTENDANCE

Name	Affiliation	Attendance Method
Sheri Greene	AHBL	Virtual
Calvin Douglas	CEC	Virtual
Chris Cziesla	CEC	In-person
Eric Doyle	CEC	Virtual
Letitia Wheeler	CEC	Virtual
Phil Bloch	CEC	In-person
Sara Potter	CEC	Virtual
Brian Stewart	Conservation Northwest	Virtual
Chris Hansen	Yelm Community Schools – Director of Facilities	In-person
Kim Bredensteiner	Nisqually Land Trust	Virtual
Amy Tousley	Puget Sound Energy	Virtual
Jessica Jackson	Puget Sound Energy	Virtual
Phyllis Farrell	Sierra Club	Virtual
Chistina Chaput	Thurston County	Virtual
John Graver	Yelm Planning Commission Chair/ Windemere Real Estate	In-person
Cody Colt	Yelm	In-person
Sara Williams	Yelm	In-person
Savana Cervantes	Yelm	In-person
Terry Kaminski	Yelm City Council	In-person

Notes:

Yelm = City of Yelm

CEC = Confluence Environmental Company

## SUMMARY OF STAKEHOLDER QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

From	Via	Question	Response
Phyllis Farrell	Virtual chat	Will meeting notes be available with attendees and their representation/background?	<p>Yes. Yelm will make the presentation and meeting notes available via the Yelm HCP website.</p> <p>The HCP will consider species that could be listed, or species whose ranges may include Yelm over the next 30 years. For example, conversations are ongoing with USFWS regarding whether to include the western bumblebee – a species currently under review for ESA listing.</p>
Brian Stewart	Virtual chat	Species that are adapting, moving, could come in in the next 30 years, or just what is here now?	<p>To be determined during the HCP process. The Yelm HCP and the Thurston HCP will be similar, but the authorities and actions of each jurisdiction are different and the Yelm HCP will be customized to fit Yelm’s needs and authorities.</p>
Amy Tousley	Virtual chat	Will the City adopt what Thurston County has enacted for the UGA?	<p>Yes. Landscape connectivity is a key component of the analysis. The conservation strategy should coordinate mitigation to provide big-picture benefits. Connectivity and corridor opportunities between suitable habitat will be part of the analysis. Isolated quality habitat can be ineffective for species recovery if they are too fragmented and cannot be accessed or sustained.</p>
Brian Stewart	Virtual chat	<p>Will you be modeling for connectivity for these species and if so, were permeable habitat types included as linkages between critical habitats? or are they linear non-functional critical habitat patches being analyzed and/or developed? Ex. Isolating critical habitat without providing land for organisms to move between areas</p>	<p>Comment (Amy T): Thank you for addressing this, I wasn't sure if it was like other development regulations which have been made consistent such as road standards. As part of customer service, PSE monitors annexations so we'll keep tracking this topic.</p>
Terry Kaminski	In person	Are covered species endangered or do they need to have a unique purpose or function?	<p>Covered species for the HCP are primarily species listed as endangered or threatened by the federal government or that are likely to be listed over the next 30 years.</p>
Brian Stewart	Virtual chat	Western G. Squirrel have been modeled to have linkages and habitat	<p>USFWS does not consider the local population of grey squirrels as a distinct population eligible for listing</p>

From	Via	Question	Response
		concentration areas pretty close to Yelm.	under the ESA, and they are therefore not protected by ESA.
John Graver	In person	Are there negatives to HCP? Is there often pushback? What kind of effects to species do we expect?	Yelm is following USFWS's guidance for coverage of this species and related habitat. The HCP will ask for ESA-defined "take" (harm to ESA listed species) based on predicted impacts to covered species. Effects to species are anticipated to be due to impacts to species habitats and ongoing reduction and fragmentation of prairie habitats in and near Yelm. Comment (Brian Stewart): In the past there has been poorly drafted HCPs sometimes they are just justification for take, pushback is pretty rare.
Amy Tousley	Virtual chat	I understand that this is an HCP for permitting purposes, will the City anticipate amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and applicable development regulations? The next update is due June 30, 2025?	Yes, this will be included in the development of the next Yelm Comprehensive Plan which will begin in 2023.
Amy Tousley	Virtual chat	PSE is very interested in how the City will be addressing infrastructure, specifically within the public right-of-way. We have worked with Thurston County, Tumwater and the Port of Olympia on their respective HCPs.	Noted. This topic will be discussed with USFWS.
Brian Stewart	Virtual chat	I love WDFW, but it would have been nice to have (environmental non-profits like Conservation Northwest) looped in on the methods, criteria and species choice, to add data and provide input.	Yelm welcomes the opportunity to coordinate to share information and will be happy to continue this discussion with interested stakeholders.
John Graver	In person	How is climate change incorporated?	The HCP will use existing best available science to map, model, and analyze species and impacts over a 30-year period. Data incorporated into the HCP will be compiled from public and peer-reviewed sources; no new studies will be commissioned, and no new surveys will be conducted.
Terry Kaminski	In person	Do you consider cellular communication impacts?	The HCP will be developed using existing best available science to determine impacts to species and habitat.

From	Via	Question	Response
Terry Kaminski	In person	Do we have any statistics for how much HCPs help species, how much Thurston HCP has helped gophers in Thurston County?	HCPs can be a powerful tool to preserve habitat, especially in specifically defined areas such as prairie habitat. For species in more diverse areas or affected by general development, managing and predicting impacts is more difficult. Comment (Brian Stewart): it rarely works. But starting from disadvantage.

Notes:

City = Yelm

ESA = endangered species act

HCP = Habitat Conservation Plan

PSE= Puget Sound Energy

UGA = urban growth area

USFWS = US Fish and Wildlife Service

WDFW= Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Western G. Squirrel = western grey squirrel