



State of Washington
Department of Fish and Wildlife

Mailing Address: 502 High Ave. Suite 112, Port Orchard WA 98366, (360) 895-3965, Fax (360) 876-1894

March 22, 2007

City of Poulsbo Planning Department
ATTENTION: Barry Berezowsky, Planning Director
Post Office Box 98
Poulsbo, Washington 98370

Dear Mr. Berezowsky:

SUBJECT: Poulsbo Creek Review, Poulsbo, Washington.

At your request, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) reviewed the drainage course named "Poulsbo Creek" to determine whether this drainage course was a natural drainage course and thus considered "waters of the state." On March 21, 2007 WDFW staff traced this drainage course from its outlet at the Poulsbo Yacht Club upstream to Highway 305.

Poulsbo Creek is culverted at the mouth of the stream for several hundred feet. The barnacle line established within the 48-inch corrugated metal culvert is approximately 42-inches up from the bottom of the culvert. Thus, depending on the slope of the culvert (appeared to be approximately 1-2%), this culvert is backwatered during high tides. Four-inch minus streambed materials are present in the culvert bottom.

The creek is open (daylighted) at NE Matson Street and has an approximate average bankfull width greater than 2-feet and a 2-3% gradient. The streambed consists of 4-inch minus round gravels. The NE Matson Street culvert is a 24-inch concrete round culvert.

We followed the stream up to NE Sommerseth Street where the stream flowed through an 18-inch concrete round culvert. The stream gradient was approximately 2-4% and contained 4-inch minus round gravel for substrate.

Traveling further upstream, the stream flows through several backyards and then cuts diagonally under 6th Avenue and through a few instream ponds. According to city staff, the previous Mayor owns this property and has observed fish in these ponds.

It then travels along a property line to the east and splits into two forks. The north fork crosses under Harrison Street and is in an open channel upstream to the apartment complex property. It then flows through a culvert with a short segment being an open channel just down 9th Avenue.

Mr. Barry Berezowski
WDFW Comment Letter
March 22, 2007
Page 2 of 3

The stream then flows through a very long culvert under the business mall and Highway 305 before becoming open adjacent to the Chevron Station.

The south fork of the stream flows east along several property lines prior to being culverted under the church and Highway 305.

The north fork of Poulsbo Creek appears to meet the physical definition of a Type F stream and it does contain fish habitat (adequate gradient and 2-inch minus gravel streambed). Based on our observations, this fork would be considered Type F from 9th Avenue downstream to Liberty Bay.

The south fork of Poulsbo Creek does support fish habitat characteristics immediately upstream from the confluence with the north fork. However, as we traveled upstream it became very small and appeared to become a Type NP or NS stream.

WDFW acknowledges that the city discharges stormwater into this stream system. However, the presence of streambed material, channel width, and lack of streambank erosion indicate that this is a relatively stable stream course. In systems that are purely stormwater, we find no streambed gravels, extreme high flows with short duration, and scour of the ditch banks. These conditions were not observed throughout our observation area.

There appear to only be a few undeveloped parcels left on this stream and these lots contained either non-native invasive plant species or a grass buffer. It appears that there is a "win-win" opportunity for this stream system. WDFW believes that future development and/or re-development could be accomplished on this stream system with restoration efforts as mitigation for intrusions into the prescribed buffer. Several culverts are aging and will be replaced with structures that provide fish passage. Improvements for fish passage and stream functions can return this stream to a viable cutthroat trout, sculpin and brook lamprey stream once again.

WDFW received your attached previous correspondence from us regarding the status of this stream. The letter from Anya Funk, Senior Engineering Technician to the file dated June 6, 1995 was based upon the Department of Wildlife's initial impression that the culvert at the mouth of this stream was not passable to fish. Since that time, man-made barriers have not been considered in stream typing due to the fact they can be replaced and restored to allow upstream fish passage again. These structures are required by law (RCW 77.57.030) to be replaced with structures that provide fish passage. The WDFW letter sent on August 28, 2003 did not include Poulsbo Creek simply because I was not aware of its presence at the time.

Mr. Barry Berezowski
WDFW Comment Letter
March 22, 2007
Page 3 of 3

We hope that this will clarify the need to provide protection to Poulsbo Creek through your updated Critical Areas Ordinance. WDFW would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments. If you have any questions, please contact me at 360-895-3965 or davisjpd@dfw.wa.gov

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jeff Davis".

Jeff Davis
Habitat Program

JD:jd

cc: Kristin Moerler, City of Poulsbo Planning Dept.
Alison O'Sullivan, Suquamish Tribe Fisheries Dept.
Jason Kunz, WDFW Habitat Program
Stephan Kalinowski, WDFW Region 6 Habitat Program Manager
Jennifer Hayes, WDFW GMA/PHS Coordinator