Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians
Natural Resources Department
Wetlands Program Plan
2015-2018

March 2015

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Stillaguamish Natural Resources Department

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Purpose:

The purpose of the Stillaguamish Wetlands Program is to inventory and protect wetland ecosystems by developing strategies that provide and promote protection of intact areas, restore and monitor areas where processes have been altered, and reduce the risk for degradation from future activities among tribally owned land.

Natural Resources Department Mission Statement:

The Stillaguamish Tribe's Natural Resources Department came into being as a result of U.S. v. Washington, Civil 9213, and better known as the Boldt Decision of 1974. In this case, which was affirmed by the U.S. Supreme Court, Puget Sound Indian Tribes who signed treaties with Isaac Stevens in the late 1800's *retained* the *right* to take up to 50% of all harvestable (beyond what is required to ensure reproductive success) fish and shellfish resources within their respective Usual and Accustomed (U&A's) fishing areas. Because the welfare of Treaty Tribes is the responsibility of the U.S. Government (Trust status), it became the responsibility of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) to manage fish, shellfish, and other natural resources for the benefit of the Tribes. Seeing the benefit of having each Tribe manage its own resources, the BIA entered into contracts with the Tribes for the purpose of providing management of fish and shellfish resources within their respective U&A's.

The mission of the Natural Resources department is therefore to manage, protect, and conserve those natural resources that are required to sustain healthy populations of fish, shellfish, and wildlife within the Stillaguamish Tribe's U&A (Stillaguamish Watershed). In addition, the Tribe's contract with the BIA provides for enrollment of tribal members for the purpose of certifying an individual's right to take fish, shellfish, and wildlife for commercial as well as ceremonial purposes, and contains provisions for establishing enforcement of laws and regulations that the Tribe may promulgate for the purpose of conducting or curtailing commercial and/or ceremonial harvests of fish, shellfish, and wildlife.

"The river is alive. It is an essential part of our lives. When it is vibrant and healthy, our well-being is preserved. We must heal and protect this precious resource, not just for our own tribal treaty rights, but because it's a wise and respectful thing to do for everyone who lives here."

Overall Goal Statement and Time Frame for Plan:

The Stillaguamish Tribe plans to develop and begin to implement the wetland program over the next four years (2015-2018). Tribally-owned lands in the short term will be identified, monitored and assessed for wetland habitat and ecosystems condition during the initial phase of the program. Once a thorough investigation of aquatic resources has been completed, the data will be used to prioritize wetlands for restoration, design restoration projects and generate objectives for regulations in the long term. A short term goal for the program, and the focus of this document, is to develop a baseline assessment of the wetlands on tribally owned lands to improve our natural resource management and future decision making for development. In the long term, the wetland program will begin to implement priority needs determined from the initial assessment and baseline data collected. The program will compliment and work with the Timber, Fish and Wildlife program (TFW) in regulating forest practices within the Stillaguamish Watershed and provide recommendations that comply with Washington State Forest and Fish laws. The wetland program will also complement activities occurring in the Tribe's Climate Change Program, Wildlife Program, and beaver relocation effort. A long term goal and with extended funding, the wetland program will allow for the inventory, assessment, and monitoring of wetland habitat and resources throughout the Stillaguamish watershed. In support of this, the Stillaguamish Tribe Natural Resources Department will work toward these goals by employing the following actions and activities over the next four years.

Overview of the Stillaguamish Watershed

The Stillaguamish River is the fifth largest tributary to Puget Sound. The Stillaguamish Watershed drains an area of approximately 700 square miles and includes more than 3,112 miles of river, stream, and marine shore habitat. Elevations in the watershed range from sea level to about 6,854 feet on Three Fingers Mountain. The river enters Puget Sound at Stanwood, 16 miles north of Everett in northwestern Snohomish County. The watershed drains into both Port Susan and Skagit Bay. It is also part of the Whidbey Basin, which includes Skagit Bay, Saratoga Passage, Port Susan, and Deception Pass.

The Stillaguamish Watershed can be divided into three general regions: the North Fork, South Fork, and Lower Mainstem. The two forks join in Arlington, 18 river miles from the mouth. Pilchuck, Deer, Boulder, and Canyon Creeks are the four largest tributaries to the Stillaguamish River system. The watershed (figure 1) includes land governed by Snohomish County and Skagit County, the cities of Arlington, Stanwood, and Granite Falls, and the Stillaguamish and Tulalip Tribes. Federal, state, and private forest land uses occupy the majority of the watershed.

The local climate is typically maritime with cool, wet winters and mild summers. Rainfall is highly variable throughout the watershed, with average annual rainfall ranging from 30 inches per year in the western lowlands of the watershed to 150 inches per year at higher elevations in the eastern portion of the watershed. Approximately 75% of the precipitation falls between October and March. Precipitation and stream flows are highest in late autumn and winter as a result of rainstorms and rapid snowmelt during warmer rainstorms (called rain-on-snow events). The lowest flows occur usually during the summer dry period from July through October.

Currently, the Tribe has approximately 64 acres of reservation land, an additional 592 acres of property in tribal trust and 1214.36 acres of tribally owned lands dispersed throughout the Stillaguamish Watershed extending into both Skagit and Snohomish counties (figure 2).

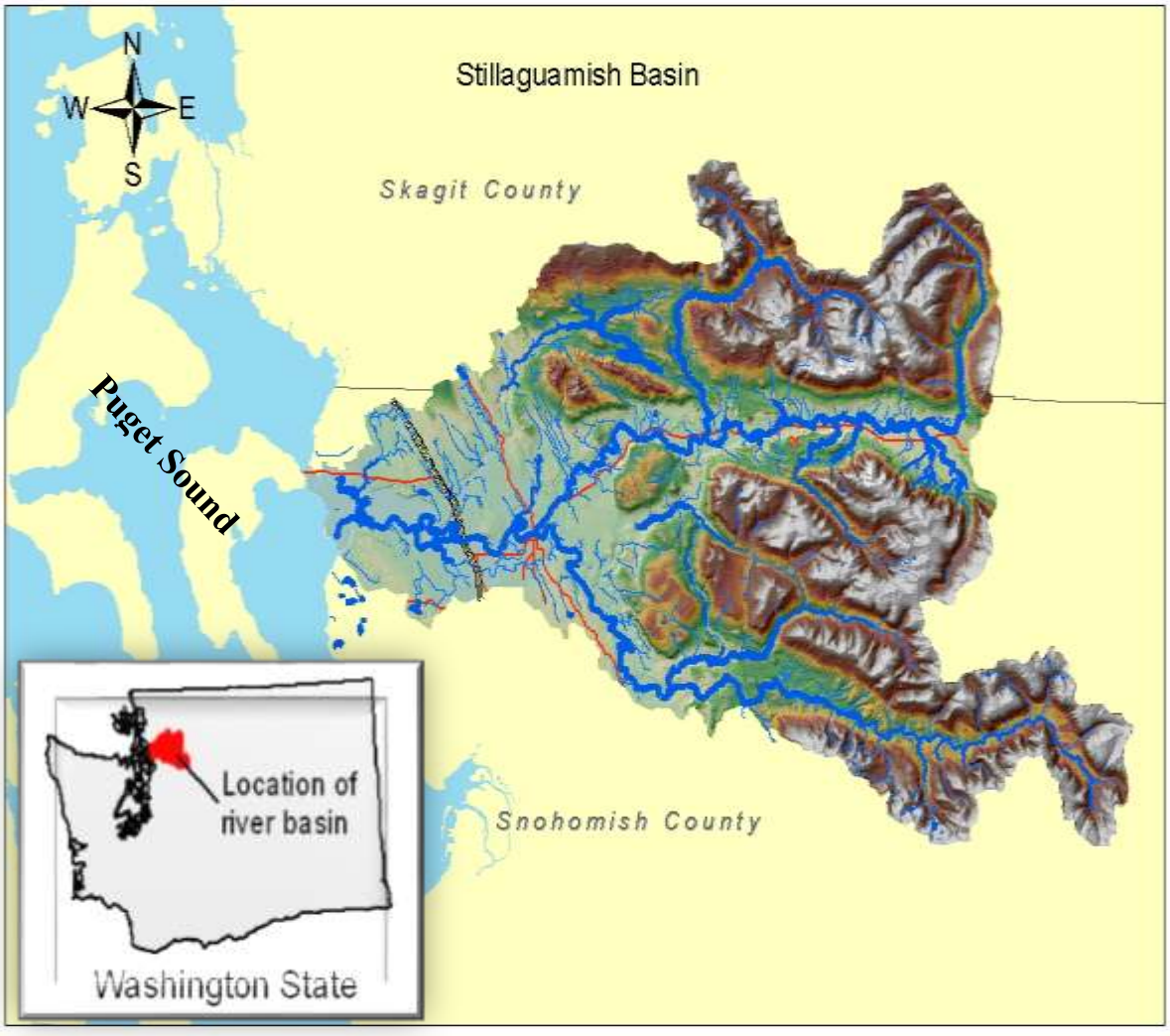

Figure 1: Stillaguamish watershed in Washington State.

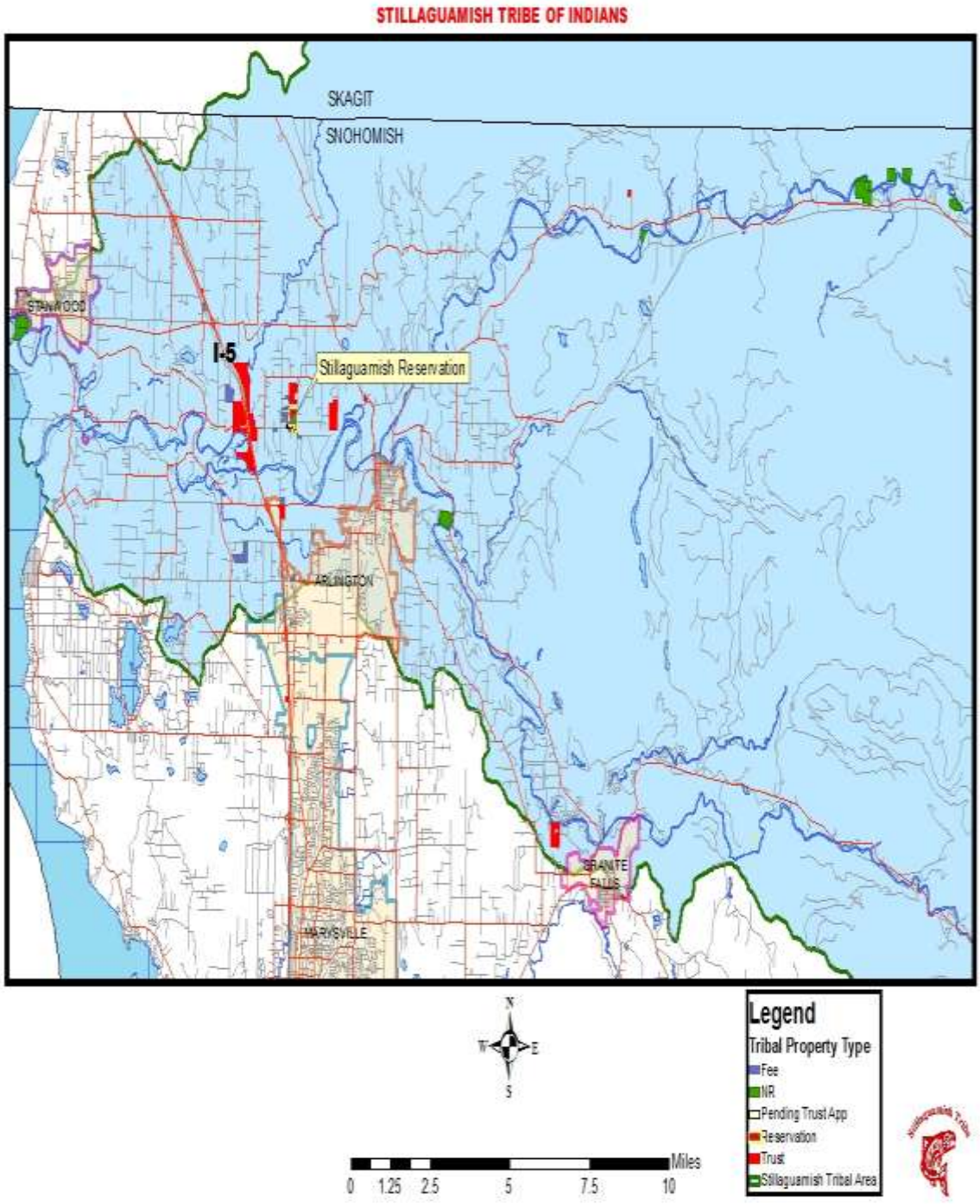

Figure 2: Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians tribal property throughout the Stillaguamish watershed (current as of 1/29/2015).

Core Element: Monitoring and Assessment

Goal: Deliver a commitment to inventorying, monitoring, and assessing wetland resources, including valuable fish and wildlife habitat on tribal properties throughout the Stillaguamish Watershed.

Objective: Develop a program that protects and conserves tribal wetlands and values. The activities and actions described below are to provide guidance and support and are subject to revisions depending on tribal needs and funding.

Action (a): Define wetlands monitoring objectives and strategies				
Activity	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**
Identify and develop wetland data needs for tribal lands. The tribe is continually adding and updating the property list.	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**
Identify available funding opportunities/sources for specific wetland monitoring projects e.g. WPDG.	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**
Develop a wetlands monitoring strategy document (WMSD) that incorporates monitoring indicators, sites and schedule/process for implementation by collecting baseline data to supplement on-going wetland projects.	**X***	**X**	**X**	**X**
Examine how to integrate wetlands monitoring strategies into existing water quality (WQ) monitoring program and efforts as feasible.	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**

Action (b): Develop a wetlands monitoring, assessment and sampling plan design and strategy				
Activity	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**
Inventory, collect, and evaluate current wetlands on tribally-owned property. Establish baseline of wetland condition and function using EPAs Water Monitoring and Assessment Program for Wetlands (MAPW) [1] level 1 assessment working towards level 2 and 3 in long term and collaborate with the tribe's WQ program for input on wetland function (landscape hydrology, water quality, and habitat). Follow guidance found in EPAs documents referenced below[234]. Level 1 data will be geographically referenced in database to lay the groundwork as a useful planning tool and monitoring system.	**X***	**X**	**X**	**X**
Examine all wetlands on tribally-owned lands using level 1 analysis. Establish baseline map as well as continually update as new properties become acquired.	**X***	**X**	**X**	**X**
Use base map and updated wetland inventory maps as a baseline for incorporating wetland regulation language into the Stillaguamish Tribe's critical areas guidance document (CAGD). The monitoring data collected will help to inform and identify high priority areas, help to develop future plans for recovery of wetlands and help to create wetland specific WQ standards.		**X**	**X**	**X**
Work towards expanding the WMSD to identify objectives and goals to address the core element framework for regulation and water quality standards for wetlands suggested by EPA. Use baseline monitoring data to help inform the WQ program.			**X**	**X**

* to be started if 2015 funding allows.

Action (c): Monitor wetland resources on tribally-owned lands				
Activity	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**
Step 1: Identify monitoring and/or functional assessment methods, research and review existing methods, metrics and/or protocols to be used for site specific data collection. Researching current available data annually.	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**
Step 2: Using existing GIS data, begin the implementation of monitoring on tribal property. This will include evaluating environmental consequences at a level 1 analysis (including on-the ground data collection, e.g. vegetation identification) as well as incorporating some level 2 (e.g. rapid assessment, field testing) and level 3 assessments by reviewing tools and methods provided by EPAs guidance documents referenced below.		**X**	**X**	**X**
Step 3: Continually monitor and assess wetlands throughout the implementation process. Using EPA's guidance documents listed above.		**X**	**X**	**X**
Design a data management system to support program objectives and to help inform decision making.		**X**	**X**	**X**
Train environmental staff by attending any applicable wetlands trainings and/or conferences. Included training might be wetland delineation, herbology of native people, building partnerships for watershed protection, wetlands biocriteria, water quality monitoring, bird and amphibian identification and use of global position systems (GPS) and GIS software. As well as participation in the Intertribal Wetland Forum meeting and TWG.	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**

Core Element: Voluntary Restoration and Protection

Goal: Work to maintain and support healthy wetlands on tribal properties through restoration, protection and conservation.

Objective: Develop and improve tribal wetland restoration and protection goals, work to educate other tribal programs, members and departments, identify high priority wetlands/aquatic resource sites for preservation and restoration (cultural, spiritual, economic, ecological) and work to expand our program to incorporate the entire Stillaguamish watershed.

Action (A): Develop prioritized wetland protection and restoration project list. Continue monitoring efforts on tribal property using collected baseline condition data.				
Activity	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**
Prioritize restoration projects. This will help to reduce loss and identify the types and sources of impacts affecting wetlands.		**X**	**X**	**X**
Maintain monitoring efforts on tribal property and newly purchased lands.		**X**	**X**	**X**
Conduct annual assessments of wetlands	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**

Action (b): Management and Protection of wetland resources on tribally-owned lands				
Activity	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**
Using baseline data collected to improve management of wetland resources on tribally-owned lands by completing aquatic wetland typing following the USFWS Cowardian system protocols and provide the data to update the NWI inventory maps. Work with the WQ program to complete the HGM class overlay to identify hydrogeomorphic class of wetlands, identify hydrology, habitat and water quality functions.		**X**	**X**	**X**
Make recommendations for better management of wetlands on tribally-owned lands and provide suggestions for proposed land purchases.		**X**	**X**	**X**
Using baseline condition data, improve protection of identified wetland resources on tribally-owned lands by identifying high priority wetland acquisitions and recommend land use protections for identified sensitive wetland areas.		**X**	**X**	**X**
Incorporate wetlands protection and community understanding of wetlands values, functions and cultural practices into Education and Outreach programs.		**X**	**X**	**X**

Action (c): Identify impaired wetlands and potential restoration projects				
Activity	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**
Using a biotic indicator approach, identify impairment and prioritize wetland sites for restoration on tribally-owned lands.		**X**	**X**	**X**
Using a checklist of landscape condition (e.g. buffer size, development, site features, and appearance); identify the areas where the most impaired wetlands exist.		**X**	**X**	**X**
Identify specific needs and appropriate methods for each wetland restoration project.		**X**	**X**	**X**

Action (d): Review tribal wetlands protection goals, objectives and restoration efforts				
Activity	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**
Hold a series of coordination meetings with tribal representatives and other responsible parties to review, analyze, monitor, and assess strategies created over the last three years			**X**	**X**
Review and track the progress made using the tribal wetland protection goals and objectives for Stillaguamish Tribally-owned lands		**X**	**X**	**X**
Analyze data and information obtained through program plan, coordinate with the WQ program and share with interested parties and funding agencies			**X**	**X**
Use previously identified impaired and prioritized wetlands to establish baseline management and restoration objectives and goals			**X**	**X**
Evaluate progress in meeting monitoring objectives identified		**X**	**X**	**X**

Action (e): Expand wetland Monitoring efforts to encompass watershed wide				
Activity	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**
Use lessons learned in years one through three to develop monitoring, restoration and protection plans at the watershed scale. Include input from co-managers and other applicable parties.				**X**
Pursue and identify Federal, State, local and other funding sources to help cover costs to expand and continue to monitor wetland resources within the Stillaguamish River watershed.			**X**	**X**

EPA Guidance Documents:

1) Application of Elements of a State Monitoring and Assessment Program for Wetlands: http://water.epa.gov/grants_funding/wetlands/upload/2006_4_19_wetlands_Wetland_Elements_Final.pdf

2) Monitoring and Assessment: http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/initiative/pdf/monitoring.pdf

3) Wetland Bio- Assessment Glossary: http://water.epa.gov/type/wetlands/assessment/bawwg_index.cfm

4) Wetlands Modules: http://www2.epa.gov/nutrient-policy-data/wetlands-modules

Project Summary:

The Stillaguamish Tribe plans to develop and implement the wetlands program over the next four years (2015-2018). The short term goals for the program are outlined in this document and will consist of performing assessment of wetland condition and function, using guidance from EPA. Landscape assessment (level 1) and rapid wetland assessment (level 2) will be performed and intensive site assessment (level 3) at identified high priority sites. We will evaluate wetland function by collaborating with the tribe's water quality program on tribally-owned lands. Once, initial assessments are complete (using existing GIS and followed by ground truthing), we will use a biotic indicator approach to determine impairment. Based on impairment results, we will prioritize wetland sites for protection and restoration. In addition to these goals, the program will also compliment and work with the timber, fish and wildlife (TFW) program in regulating forest practices within the watershed and provide recommendations that comply with Washington state forest and fish laws. The program will also support some of our valued projects and programs such as; climate change, wildlife, water quality/toxics as well as salmon recovery and beaver relocation projects. For example, the results of our monitoring efforts will help to inform the climate change vulnerability and adaptation plans. These efforts will also help to identify drainages for beaver relocation. Wetland inventory data will also help to inform the wildlife conductivity and corridor project. If funding were available, we could conduct some passive water sampling for chemicals of emerging concern (CECs) at prioritized sites. The long term goals of the program are to assess wetland condition and function throughout the entire Stillaguamish Watershed and continually update the wetland inventory efforts on tribally-owned properties. In support of this, the Stillaguamish Tribe Natural Resources Department will work toward these goals over the next four years.

Potential Partnerships

Within Organization

- Planning Department (STECO)- provide property and GIS data
- Fish Hatchery- housed on large wetland complex
- Cultural Department- provide list of significant plant and culturally significant sites

Outside Organizations

- Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)- funding and intertribal wetland forum (IWF)
- Citizen science groups- volunteer labor
- Department of Ecology (DOE)- data source and funding
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)- provide methods, protocols, and funding
- NOAA Fisheries-data source
- Point Elliot Treaty Tribes- information sharing, funding sources, project ideas, staff assistance,
- Snohomish County- data source
- Skagit Valley Community College- student interns
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service- data source
- United States Geological Survey (USGS)- WQ data source
- University of Washington (UW)- provide climate change data
- Washington Department Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)- data source
- Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR)- data source
- Western Washington University (WWU)-data source, student intern

Potential Funding Opportunities

- Tribal Charitable Funds
- Seattle City Light (SCL)
- Puget Sound Energy (PSE)
- Washington Department of Transportation (WSDOT)
- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
- United States Fish and Wildlife Service (WSFW)
- Department of Ecology (DOE)
- Bureau of Indians Affairs (BIA)
- 319 Grant (EPA)
- Wetland Program Development Grant (WPDG)

Responsible Parties for Plan Implementation

The personnel from the Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians who will be responsible for the Wetland Program Plan implementation are presented below in Table 1.

Project Personnel	Title	Responsibility
Jen Sevigny	Project Biologist, Stillaguamish Tribe NRD	Oversees all activities and actions with the Wetland Program Plan jsevigny@stillaguamish.com
Jody Pope	Project Lead, Stillaguamish Tribe NRD	Responsible for field activities associated with implementation of program plan. Such as initial assessment, GIS, and any restoration projects jpope@stillaguamish.com
Joan Knapp	Accountant	Responsible for fund accounting jknapp@stillaguamish.com
Gina Gray	Stillaguamish Natural Resources Department Director	Oversees and approves all programs and projects associated with the natural resources department and employees ggray@stillaguamish.com
Becky Fauver	EPA Region 10 Wetlands Program Coordinator	EPA Region 10 Biologist Fauver.Becky@epa.gov 206-553-1353

Appendix: I approved tribal resolution

Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians
PO Box 277
3310 Smokey Point Drive
Arlington, WA 98223

STILLAGUAMISH TRIBE OF INDIANS

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Resolution 2014/112

APPROVAL OF THE PROPOSED WETLANDS PROGRAM PLAN
(See attached)

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WHEREAS, the Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians is a party to the Treaty of Point Elliott of January 22, 1855, 12 Stat. 927; and is a sovereign, Federally Recognized tribe, which the U.S. Government acknowledged in October 1976; and

WHEREAS, the Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians Board of Directors is the duly constituted Governing Body of the Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians, in accordance with Articles III, IV and V of the Stillaguamish Constitution; and

WHEREAS, the Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians Board of Directors, acting in the best interest of its people is embarked on a course of self-determination; and

WHEREAS, the authority to protect the Tribe as a sovereign political entity is vested in the Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians Board of Directors ("Board of Directors" or "Board") under Article III and Article V, Sec. 1 of the Constitution, which Board has enumerated authority under Article V, Sec. 1 (b) to administer the affairs and assets of the Tribe, develop appropriate contracts, leases, permits, loan documents, sale agreements and, under Article V, Sec. 1(h), to exercise other necessary powers to fulfill the Board's obligations, responsibilities and purposes as the governing body of the Tribe; and

WHEREAS, the Stillaguamish Tribal Board of Directors wishes to support the Natural Resources Department Wetlands Program pursuing the EPA Wetlands Program Development Grant (WPDG) with the goal of identifying, monitoring and assessing aquatic resources on Stillaguamish Tribal Lands. The purpose of this program is to inventory and assess wetland ecosystems by developing strategies that provide and promote protection of intact areas, restore and monitor areas where processes have been altered, and reduce the risk of further degradation of wetlands on Stillaguamish Tribal property and tribal U&A. The information obtained from this program will help to create a list of prioritized properties in which restoration and protection efforts can be focused to improve the impacted wetlands and/or surrounding areas; now

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Stillaguamish Tribal Board of Directors does hereby supports the proposed wetland program plan.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Stillaguamish Tribe Board of Directors hereby authorizes the Chairman, or in his absence the Vice-Chairperson or Secretary, to execute this resolution and to take all steps necessary to carry this Resolution into effect.

CERTIFICATION

As Chairman and Secretary of the Stillaguamish Tribal Board of Directors, we hereby certify that the above resolution was duly adopted at a meeting of the Stillaguamish Tribal Board of Directors held on the 14th day of August, 2014 at which time a quorum was present and a vote of 5 for 0 opposed and 0 abstain was cast.

SHAWN YANITY, Chairman

PATRICIA A. PECOR, Secretary