

Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians
Natural Resources Department
Wetlands Program Plan
2019-2024



February 2019

Prepared by
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Table of Contents

Purpose	3
Overall Goal Statement and Timeframe for Plan	4
Overview of the Stillaguamish Watershed and Wetlands	5
Core Element Actions and Activities	7
Monitoring and Assessment	7
Current Status of Monitoring and Assessment	7
Voluntary Restoration and Protection	8
Current Status of Voluntary Restoration and Protection	8
Program Evaluation	9
Approximate Timeline of Wetland Program Activities (2019-2024)	10
Potential Partnerships	12
Within the Tribe	12
Outside Organizations	12
Potential Funding Sources	13
Responsible Parties for Plan Implementation	14
References	15
Appendix A Approved Tribal Resolution	16
Appendix: I approved tribal resolution	16

Purpose

The purpose of the Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians - Natural Resources Department, Wetlands Program is to monitor and assess baseline condition and function of wetland resources and using that information to inform departmental decision-making. This will allow the department to identify and prioritize the restoration and protection of wetlands on Tribally owned land and within the Stillaguamish watershed. These goals fit into the Department's overall mission of protecting Tribal Treaty Rights as described below.

The Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians Natural Resources Department Mission Statement:

The Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians 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) 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 traditional homelands. The Tribe's contract with the BIA provides for enrollment of Tribal members for certifying an individual's right to take fish, shellfish, and wildlife for commercial as well as ceremonial purposes.

"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."

-Lew Goodridge
Tribal Elder

Overall Goal Statement and Timeframe for Plan

The Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians Natural Resources Department (NRD) received wetland program development funds (WPDG) from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to develop and begin to carry out the objectives described in the wetland program plan (WPP) from 2015 through 2018. During this timeframe, a monitoring and assessment strategy document (MAS) and quality and assurance program plan (QAPP) were developed and approved by the EPA. The methods were tested and initial baseline monitoring and data collection was completed. Landscape scale assessments using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) of wetlands within the Stillaguamish watershed was also completed.

The objectives of this plan for the next six years (2019-2024) will be, in the short-term a continuation of monitoring and assessment work and baseline data collection, focused on Tribally owned lands, but other wetland areas within the Stillaguamish watershed will be monitored as well. The data collected through this effort will be used to inform natural resources management and future decision making for Tribal government. In the long-term, the wetland program will use the data collected to design restoration projects. For example, vegetation data can inform what types of plant species need to either be removed or enhanced. Also, data collected can prioritize wetlands for restoration and future acquisition for protection and conservation of these valued resources.

The wetland program will complement the Tribe's other environmental programs to work toward protection and restoration of wetland resources within the Stillaguamish Tribe's traditional homeland areas.

Overview of the Stillaguamish Watershed and Wetlands

The Stillaguamish watershed (Water Resources Inventory Area (WRIA) 5) drains an area of approximately 700 square miles and includes more than 3,112 miles of river, stream, and marine shore habitat (Figure 1). The Stillaguamish River is the fifth largest tributary to Puget Sound. 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.

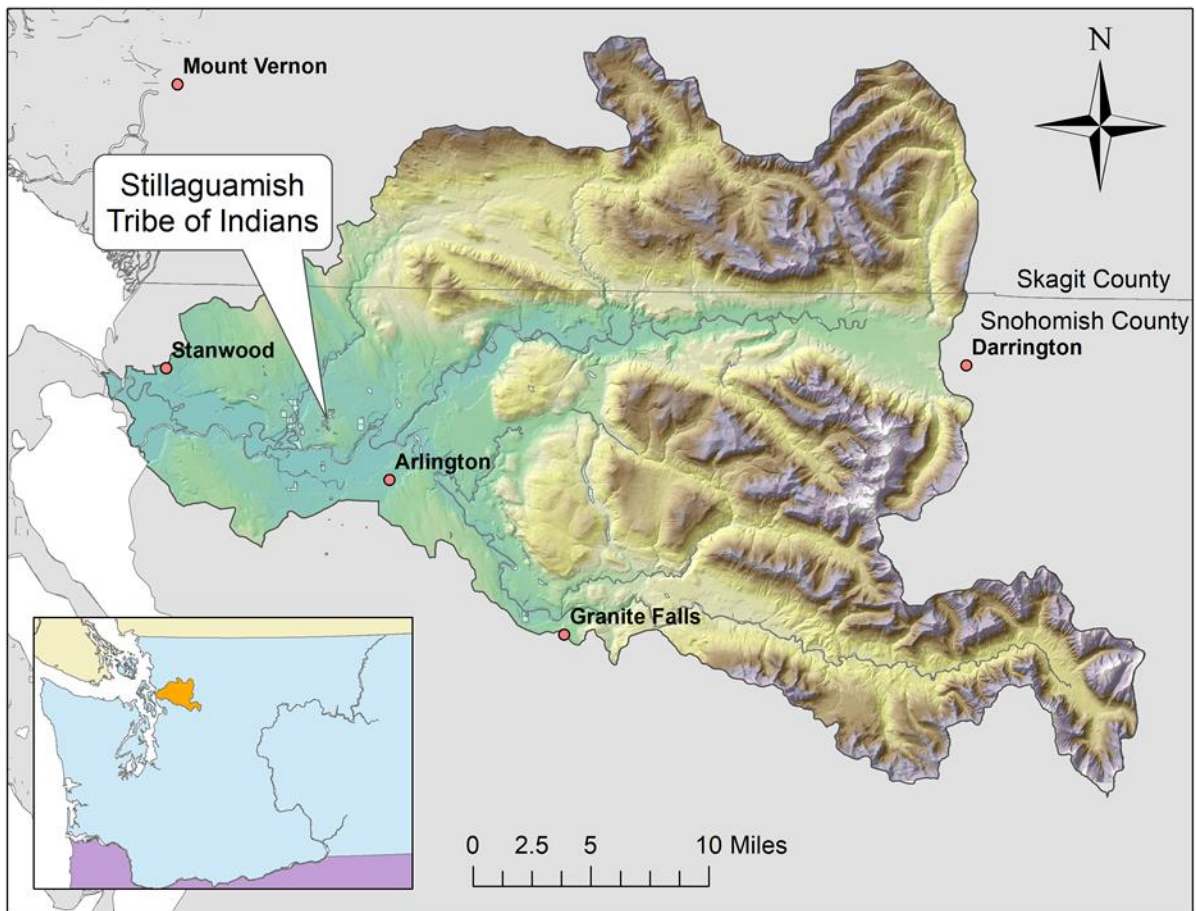


Figure 1 Location of Stillaguamish Watershed

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 includes land governed by Snohomish County and Skagit County, the cities of Arlington, Stanwood, and Granite Falls, and the

Stillaguamish and Tulalip Tribes (Figure 1). 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.

Currently, the Tribe has approximately 64 acres of reservation land, an additional 592 acres of property in Tribal trust and 1214 acres of Tribally owned lands dispersed throughout the Stillaguamish watershed.

Wetlands within the Stillaguamish watershed help maintain and improve the water quality of streams, rivers, lakes, and estuaries. In addition, wetlands perform functions such as providing wildlife habitat, flood reduction, and erosion control. For a variety of wildlife species, including invertebrates, fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals, wetlands are essential habitats for foraging, nesting, cover, or breeding.

Of the historic 1,350,000 acres of wetlands in Washington State approximately 412,000 (31%) acres had been lost as of the early 1990s and the majority of Washington State's remaining wetlands have been significantly degraded (Washington State Department of Ecology 1992). The principal historical causes of wetland loss and degradation are draining and ditching for the expansion of agriculture and the siting of ports and industrial facilities. The major causes of continuing loss and degradation of wetlands are urban expansion, forestry/agricultural practices, and the invasion of exotic plants and animals (Canning and Stevens 1989).

Similarly to Washington State, relative to historical conditions, wetlands in the Stillaguamish watershed have been extensively lost or degraded (Pollack and Pess 1998, Washington State Department of Ecology 1992). The Stillaguamish watershed historically supported 29,133 acres of wetlands, while the current total wetland area is estimated to be 6,266 acres, approximately 78% loss of historic wetlands (Washington State Conservation Commission 1999).

Finally, wetlands resources are significant to the Tribe's culture and for maintaining and practicing their Treaty Rights. In order to be successful in protecting and restoring these Tribally valuable resources into the future the Tribe needs a plan to guide management decisions and funding sources to do so.

Core Element Actions and Activities

The following goals, objectives and activities outline the priority needs for the Stillaguamish wetland program over the next six years. The actions identified below will be used as guidance and are subject to revision depending on Tribal needs and available funding.

Monitoring and Assessment

Goal: Inventory, monitor and assess wetland resources, located on Tribal property and throughout the Stillaguamish watershed, in an affordable and efficient manner.

Objectives: Implement monitoring and assessment strategy and use data collected to inform departmental decision-making.

Activity:

- Monitor Tribal properties list (provided by the Tribe's planning department) for newly acquired properties to determine if wetland resources are present and incorporate into departmental GIS wetland map.
- Pursue funding opportunities for wetland monitoring and assessment activities (e.g. WPDG).
- Incorporate monitoring data into departmental decision-making. For example, when discussing restoration opportunities on Tribal land, monitoring data (wetland class, vegetation types, water quality, etc.) can be used to inform what might be needed at a specific site and overall restoration objectives can be developed. Also, when the Tribe is looking to develop a property, monitoring data can be provided to the decision making team so they have all the technical information available to inform their decision and how to manage for wetland resources on Tribal property.
- Train staff by attending applicable wetlands trainings and conferences, such as the Tribal Wetlands Working Group (TWIG) meetings, Association of State Wetland Managers webinars and Society of Wetland Scientist or Ecological Restoration Conferences should they coincide with grant timeline.

Current Status of Monitoring and Assessment

Modelled after the EPA 3-level wetland assessment strategy, the Stillaguamish Tribe, using level 1 GIS landscape scale remote-sensing data, developed a series of maps of wetland resources located within the Stillaguamish watershed; using the Washington Department of Ecology Wetland rating system, the Tribe conducted level 2 rapid assessment for qualitatively scoring wetlands; and developed a level 3, intensive wetland monitoring and assessment strategy document and corresponding QAPP. The level 3 monitoring and assessment strategy methods were tested during a pilot survey effort to determine efficiency and effectiveness. These methods include, vegetation,

soil and water quality sampling (Stillaguamish Tribe Wetland Monitoring and Assessment Strategy, 2018). Slight modifications to the strategy document were made based upon the implementation of the pilot survey. The revised strategy document and QAPP were approved by the EPA in 2018. The Tribe received another round of Tribal WPDG funds to continue to carry out wetland monitoring and assessment activities through October 2019.

Voluntary Restoration and Protection

Goal: Identify and prioritize wetlands to restore, conserve, and protect on Tribal properties and throughout the Stillaguamish watershed.

Objectives: Develop and improve Tribal wetland restoration and protection goals. Use monitoring data and GIS maps and model to identify priority wetland sites for preservation and restoration and identify sites for future acquisition, enhance native vegetation species diversity on wetlands, communicate and collaborate with other Tribal departments to achieve wetland resource restoration and protection goals.

Activity:

- Use monitoring and assessment data, from the up to 6 wetland sites surveyed, to identify and prioritize wetland resources on Tribally-owned lands and throughout the Stillaguamish watershed for restoration, protection and future land acquisitions. A site assessment document will be produced describing wetland resources on the site and how to restore the resources.
- Collaborate with NRD programs and Tribal departments to incorporate wetlands values into educational curriculum and decision-making. For example, when the Tribe is scoping property development and acquisition opportunities, if the site has been monitored for wetland resources, we can provide valuable information to the necessary decision makers on what types of wetland resources are present on the property. Additionally, site assessment and monitoring provide information that can be shared with the department's education and outreach program for use in their educational programs to Tribal youth and area schools.

Current Status of Voluntary Restoration and Protection

The previous WPDG grant objectives were to develop GIS based maps, a wetland monitoring and assessment strategy document and to collect data; therefore, there was no capacity to carry out the objectives of the voluntary restoration and protection core element.

Program Evaluation

The Wetlands program plan should be evaluated midway (in roughly three years) to ensure the plan is on track for achieving identified actions and activities. Evaluation should receive feedback from departmental programs and the EPA to assess program effectiveness.

Approximate Timeline of Wetland Program Activities (2019-2024)

CORE ELEMENTS	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT						
Objectives: Implement monitoring and assessment strategy and use data collected to inform departmental decision-making.						
Monitor Tribal properties list for newly acquired properties to determine if wetland resources are present and incorporate into departmental GIS wetland map.	x	x	x	x	x	x
Pursue funding opportunities for wetland monitoring and assessment activities e.g. WPDG.	x	x	x	x	x	x
Monitor and assess wetlands, up to 6 sites per year, on Tribal property and throughout the Stillaguamish watershed.	x	x	x	x	x	x
Incorporate monitoring data into departmental decision-making.	x	x	x	x	x	x
Train staff by attending applicable wetlands trainings and conferences.	x	x	x	x	x	x
VOLUNTARY RESTORATION AND PROTECTION						
Objectives: Develop and improve Tribal wetland restoration and protection goals, identify priority wetland sites for preservation and restoration and identify sites for future acquisition, enhance native vegetation species diversity on wetlands, communicate and collaborate with other Tribal departments to achieve wetland resource restoration and protection goals.						
Use monitoring and assessment data, from the up to 6 wetland sites surveyed, to identify and prioritize wetland resources on Tribally-owned lands and throughout the Stillaguamish watershed for restoration, protection and future land acquisitions. Produce a site-assessment document describing wetland resources on the site and how the resources can be restored.	x	x	x	x	x	x
Collaborate with NRD programs and Tribal departments to incorporate wetlands values into educational curriculum and decision-making.		x	x	x	x	x

Potential Partnerships

Within the Tribe

- Planning Department- provide Tribal property data
- Cultural Department- provide list of culturally significant plants and share with them data collected on wetlands
- Education Department – collaborate for wetland education for Tribal youth

Outside Organizations

- Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)- funding and inter-Tribal wetland forum (IWF)
- Citizen science groups- volunteer labor
- Washington State Department of Ecology (DOE)- data source and funding
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)- provide methods, protocols, and funding
- NOAA Fisheries- data source and funding
- 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 and funding
- 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 Sources

- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- Seattle City Light (SCL)
- Puget Sound Energy (PSE)
- Washington Department of Transportation (WSDOT)
- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
- United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
- Washington State Department of Ecology (WA DOE)
- Bureau of Indians Affairs (BIA)
- National Oceanic Atmospheric Association (NOAA)

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.

Project Personnel	Title	Responsibility
Jen Seigny	Project Biologist, Stillaguamish Tribe NRD	Oversees all activities associated with the Wetland Program Plan jseigny@stillaguamish.com
Charlotte Scofield	Lead Project Biologist, Stillaguamish Tribe NRD	Responsible for field activities associated with implementation of Wetland Program Plan cscofield@stillaguamish.com
Rick Rogers	Fish and Wildlife Technician Stillaguamish Tribe NRD	Assists biologists with field data collection and GIS analysis. rrogers@stillaguamish.com
Amanda Summers	Fish and Wildlife Technician Stillaguamish Tribe NRD	Assists biologists with field data collection and GIS analysis. asummers@stillaguamish.com
Virginia Elves, CPA	Certified Accountant, Stillaguamish Tribe	Responsible for fund accounting velves@stillaguamish.com
Gina Gray	Department Director, Stillaguamish Tribe NRD	Oversees and approves all programs and projects associated with the natural resources department and employees ggray@stillaguamish.com
Westley Foster	EPA Region 10 Grant Manager	Provides oversight of grant tasks and progress Foster.Westley@epa.gov
Linda Storm	EPA Region 10 Technical Monitor	Provides technical assistance and oversight of grant tasks and progress Storm.Linda@epa.gov

References

- Canning, D.J., and M. Stevens. (1989). Wetlands of Washington - A resource characterization. Washington State Department of Ecology, Olympia, WA.
- Pollock, M. M., G. R. Pess. (1998). The current and historical influence of beaver (*Castor canadensis*) on Coho (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*) smolt production in the Stillaguamish River basin. Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians Natural Resources Department, Arlington, WA.
- Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians. (2018). Wetland Monitoring and Assessment Strategy, Determining methods to asses wetland condition and function. Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians Natural Resources Department, Arlington, WA.
- Washington State Conservation Commission. (1999). Salmon Habitat Limiting Factors Final Report – Water Resource Inventory Area 5, Stillaguamish Watershed. Retrieved March 15, 2018 from:
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- Washington State Department of Ecology. (1992). Focus--Wetlands in Washington State. F-S-92-108 Washington State Department of Ecology, Olympia, WA.

Appendix A Approved Tribal Resolution



Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians

PO Box 277 3322 236th St. NE
Arlington, WA 98223

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Resolution 2019/027

APPROVING WETLANDS PROGRAM PLAN FOR 2019-2024

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 on October 27, 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 their 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, protecting, conserving and restoring the habitat of fish, shellfish, wildlife and other natural resources within the Stillaguamish watershed are critical to the well-being and cultural, spiritual, and economic life of the Tribe, and to the exercise of the Tribe’s federally-guaranteed fishing rights reserved by the Tribe in the Treaty of Point Elliott, and recognized in the *United States v. Washington*, Case No. 70-9213 (W.D. Wash.) litigation; and

WHEREAS, having a Wetlands Program Plan, which provides guidance to the Tribe’s Natural Resources Department in conducting monitoring and assessment of Tribal wetland resources for monitoring and protection, is an important component of this natural resources work; and

WHEREAS, having a Wetlands Program Plan also provides opportunity for the Tribe to seek outside funding from, e.g. the EPA, to support the Tribe's wetlands program work; and

WHEREAS, the Stillaguamish Tribe Board of Directors wishes to approve the Wetlands Program Plan attached hereto; now

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Stillaguamish Tribe's Board of Directors hereby approves the attached Wetlands Program Plan for 2019-2024.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Stillaguamish Tribe Board of Directors hereby authorizes the Chairman, or in his absence the Vice-Chairperson or Secretary, to certify 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 7 day of March, 2019 at which time a quorum was present and a vote of 5 for 0 opposed and 0 abstain was cast.



SHAWN YANITY, Chairman



PATRICIA PECOR, Secretary