

# HCP Communications Strategy overview

## Goals

- Educate & inform.
- Be brief but transparent.
- Be simple & clear: Lay terms, connect dots.
- Build relationships during the process.

## Positioning

- Align on the side of County residents.
- Tell story from stakeholder viewpoint.
- Lead the conversation (anticipate specific criticism & address directly).

## Audiences

- Our elected officials + staff; Cities
- Permit applicants. (Bldrs, landowners)
- Local & Nat'l Media (+ specific reporters)
- Potential buyers (via realtors).
- Ag producers.
- Conservationists & Environmentalists.
- Community at large.
- NGOs & Agencies.

## Outreach channels

- Stakeholder meetings (1:1 & group) & meeting materials (PPTs, handouts, etc.).
- Staff meetings, SOP, talking pts.
- Permit office & lobby outside PAC.
- Social Media.
- Constant Contact mailers/newsletter.
- Website (blog thru website?).
- News releases (Olympian, Chron, etc.).
- Videos

## Messages

### Basics

- 4 ESA listed animals in TC.
- It's **federal** law.
- Prohibits harm to animals or habitat on **private** & public land.
- **It's happening no matter what bc it's FED.**
- **If the county gets a federal permit, you won't have to. Decisions will stay local.**
- The federal permit allows protected species to be impacted during a building project & allows development to displace protected habitat. This is called 'take.'
- In order to get a federal take permit, County must prepare a habitat conservation plan (HCP) & submit it to USFWS who oversee the ESA and the listed species.
- An HCP basically outlines ways to accommodate new construction for a growing population while simultaneously protecting endangered species & habitat.

### Thurston County HCP details

- HCP will lead to 30-year federal take permit.
- The take permit and the HCP create regulatory certainty for developers.
- HCP sets limits on take, and spells out mitigation.
- County needs about 5,000 acres for mitigation. Contiguous would be best.
- Cost to community is about \$5 million/year. Shared-funding options are preferred.

- County is working with landowners, ag producers & developers to write an HCP
- ETA: 2018, if approved.

### History of HCP's

- HCP's are not new. Communities all over the U.S. have worked through species listings since the Endangered Species Act became law in the 1970s.
- HCPs can help maintain and improve water quality, provide enriching outdoor education and beautiful vistas.
- In Texas, officials estimate properties adjacent to HCP preserves are worth 20% more than similar properties around the Travis County. (See Travis County BCCP)

### It's a community decision

- 4 basic steps: Stakeholders help shape it. Public will review & weigh in. HCP experts will write the final in a format that USFWS will accept. County Commissioners will vote on it: approve or deny.

### Alternatives to an HCP

- IMPORTANT TO FLESH THIS OUT. Opportunity to lead the convo – how to address? (In **jurisdictions that don't do this, permits come to screeching halt for years.** Alabama Beach Mouse, what else)?

## Actions

- Course corrections ongoing as we learn.

## HCP Communications Strategy overview

- Review/update the plan & message.
- Decide on website – build or update?
- Draft an editorial calendar: schedule outreach on specific dates.
- Flesh out the basic messaging for internal & external. All staff on same page.
- Schedule an editorial board?
- Schedule an HCP team meeting?
- Schedule an HCP dog n pony for RC?