



State of Washington

Department of Fish and Wildlife

*South Central Region – Ellensburg District Office, 201 North Pearl, Ellensburg, WA 98926
Phone: (509) 925-1013, Fax (509) 925-4702*

December 16, 2010

Christina Wollman, Planner
Kittitas County Dept. of Public Works
411 North Ruby Street, Suite 1
Ellensburg, WA 98926

Subject: Request for Parcel Segregation, Gene Brain Family, N1/2, Section 1, T18N, R16E –
Proposed Bridge over Taneum Creek to serve lots 1-6 of 8 lots.

Dear Ms. Wollman:

I am writing as a follow-up to my visit December 7, 2010 with Dave Nelson and Gene Brain regarding a proposed bridge location across Taneum Creek to serve lots 1-6 of a proposed 8-lot parcel segregation. The proposed bridge location is approximately 1,400 feet downstream from the existing bridge on the parcel. You had requested that they consult with Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) to determine if a crossing over Taneum Creek will be allowed at this proposed location.

The proposed site is not a desirable location on the property for a bridge. WDFW cannot determine whether approval for a bridge at that site will be granted until such time as we actually receive an application which includes the proposed bridge design, supporting materials and hydraulic analysis. I have provided some information about applying for a Hydraulic Project Approval and a link to forms at the end of this letter.

The best location on this parcel for a bridge is the site of the existing bridge. Shoreline, riparian and floodplain conditions at the proposed new bridge site are such that constructing a new road and bridge at this proposed new site would have more adverse impact on the shoreline and habitat for fish than upgrading the bridge crossing at the existing bridge site. Based upon our field visit, review of aerial photographs, floodplain maps, and our knowledge of the watershed, WDFW requests that the existing bridge location be used (upgraded if necessary) to serve the proposed lot segregation.

Background Information

Taneum Creek appears to have been dredged and straightened through the Brain property at times in the past. Such channel modifications affect the channel slope, increase water velocity

and decrease channel stability during bank-full flow and flood flows. In the vicinity of the proposed new bridge crossing, there is active erosion occurring on the south side of the channel as the stream is gradually increasing sinuosity and recovering a more natural slope and flow pattern.

The proposed new bridge location is in a reach of Taneum Creek that has an active floodplain, some channel complexity and desirable habitat complexity for fish. There is a flood channel within the wooded riparian zone to the north of the main creek channel that appears to convey water during flood events. I have attached a copy of the cross-section of the site at the proposed access road centerline (view looking downstream) provided for our meeting, marked to show the main channel and flood channel.

Taneum Creek supports both resident fish such as rainbow and cutthroat trout, and adult and juvenile anadromous (ocean-going) fish including steelhead (listed as a Threatened Species under the federal Endangered Species Act), Chinook salmon and coho salmon (the latter recently reintroduced to the watershed). The dams and unscreened water diversions on Taneum Creek, which previously prevented the recovery of salmon runs in the creek, have now all been replaced, at substantial public expense, with facilities that allow for the safe upstream and downstream passage of fish.

Suitability of the Proposed New Location for Road and Bridge

It may be physically possible to construct a bridge at the proposed site, but a very long span would be required to minimize adverse impacts to the channel, floodplain and the habitat for fish. The cost of such a long span would be unattractive. Even with a long span this bridge would still result in a large hardened corridor being established through the shoreline and would permanently affect the alignment of the creek and shoreline habitat for fish and wildlife.

Damage to and loss of fish and wildlife habitat and shoreline habitat could be avoided if construction of a new crossing of the shoreline and creek could be avoided. There is currently a bridge across Taneum Creek in this parcel and a modification to the conceptual road layout for the parcel segregation could afford access to the parcels via this existing bridge location.

To maintain the functions of the floodplain and shoreline, and the functioning of the stream including its fish habitat, only one bridge crossing should be approved for the parcel, regardless of the number of lots segregated. If Kittitas County requires a new bridge at the proposed location, it should also serve as the replacement for the currently existing bridge. The existing bridge and approaches should be required to be completely removed from the shoreline at the time the new bridge is constructed. I note that a single bridge crossing that provides access to all parcels on the property is in keeping with the guidance of the Kittitas County Shoreline Master Program (SMP). Constructing an additional roadway and bridge through this Shoreline of the State is problematic and inconsistent with guidance provided in the SMP. (Please note Kittitas County Shoreline Master Program Regulations, Section 34 (1)a(iv).)

Conclusions and Requests

A new bridge in addition to the existing bridge would have significant adverse impacts on the shoreline and fish and wildlife habitat. We request that only one bridge crossing be approved for the parcel, regardless of the number of lots segregated.

The best bridge location in the parent parcel is the site of the existing bridge where the channel is most confined and has minimal functional floodplain. A bridge located at this location has the least adverse affect on the character of stream, shoreline and habitat for fish. It would be better to apply the investment needed to create a new long-span bridge at a new crossing location to the existing crossing site to bring it up to county road standards. We request that the existing bridge location be used to serve the proposed lot segregation.

We request that the road layout shown in the survey be modified to show access to the parcels via the existing bridge site. We also request that notes be added to the survey clarifying that there will only be one bridge crossing of Taneum Creek.

Obtaining a Hydraulic Project Approval

A Hydraulic Project Approval from the Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is required for constructing a bridge. The bridge should be designed to WDFW's current guidelines for water crossing structures at the time of construction. Detailed plans and hydraulic analysis of the crossing will be needed. For a bridge at the proposed new site, a reach assessment will also be needed as part of the application.

The application form for a Hydraulic Project Approval is the JARPA form. A copy of the most current revision of the JARPA form (both PDF and MS-Word versions), as well as instructions, detailed information about the JARPA are on this internet link at the e-permitting service:
http://www.epermitting.wa.gov/site/alias_resourcecenter/jarpa_jarpa_form/9984/jarpa_form.aspx

I can provide assistance with the application process. Let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Brent D. Renfrow
District Habitat Biologist

Cc: David Nelson, Encompass Engineering and Surveying
Perry Harvester, WDFW
John Marvin, YN