

South Hill Bluff Restoration Project Update

On April 26, Avista hosted a pre-planning meeting to discuss the South Hill Bluff Restoration Project. The restoration project core team is comprised of Avista, City of Spokane, Washington Department of Ecology, Land Expressions and Anderson Environmental. The purpose of the meeting was to update interested stakeholders on the status of the restoration efforts, including the restoration plan and construction schedule. Attendees included representatives of Randall Bracher (landowner), the Friends of the Bluff, the Comstock Neighborhood Council, the Spokane River Forum, the Lands Council, and the Spokane Riverkeeper. The meeting sign-in sheet is attached.

The agreed focus of the Bluff Road Restoration Plan is to restore the areas damaged by the road cut on City parks' and private properties. Specifically, the plan is to restore the prior contours and slope, trail network, and the cover of native plants. It should be noted, this effort is not intended to be an enhancement of the existing public trail system and therefore does not include expanding or constructing new trails.

Based on input of the City Forester, the Restoration Plan will use downed trees that are larger than six inches in diameter as part of the restoration efforts and chip branches and smaller trees. Trees that are still standing but that have root or limb damage will be assessed and pruned as appropriate to remain in place. The Restoration Plan will also address public use during and after the restoration efforts, with a goal of protecting the restored areas and to prevent new trails from being established along the area in restoration.

The group agreed it is essential that effective communication occur as we move forward with the restoration effort. Specifically, it was requested that Avista and the City have common messages and increased outreach, possibly including a Facebook post that stakeholders can share with their groups.

April 27, 2017

The following items were discussed during the meeting.

Current status of work:

- During the week of April 17 erosion control measures were put in place along the road cut. This included silt fences and straw waddles that were strategically placed to prevent sediment from washing off the road during rain events. The Core Team will monitor the site throughout the process to ensure these measures remain effective.
- Avista completed a site survey on April 26 for use in the Restoration Plan.
- Signs were installed on April 22 to inform trail users of the restoration effort and request they avoid the disturbed area now, during, and after the restoration process.
- Aerial and drone photography were completed to assist with the Restoration Plan, and were provided to the landowners.
- The Spokane Tribe completed cultural field work and plans to provide a summary report by April 28. This report will be confidential.
- The gate to the access road off Highway 195 was locked to control unauthorized vehicular access to the site.
- Avista is working with the City and Ecology on permitting the restoration effort. The agencies discussed that while they are planning to issue emergency approvals, the full permitting schedules and reviews will apply. The dates for the permitting processes are not yet known, but will be shared when available. The permits include:
 - Shoreline Substantial Development Permit from the City;
 - State Environmental Policy Act Checklist from the City; and
 - General Stormwater Construction Permit from Ecology.
- Land Expressions and Anderson Environmental, with input and guidance from the Core Team, are developing the Restoration Plan.

Plan Schedule:

The restoration schedule is aggressive, primarily to allow the new vegetation to get established during the spring and summer growing seasons. This will also reduce weed invasion in the damaged areas, which would be aggravated if the restoration effort is postponed.

- The Draft Restoration Plan will be sent out on Friday May 5.
- The Core Team will hold a meeting at 6:00 p.m. on Monday, May 8 to discuss the restoration efforts and go over the Draft Plan. Our plans are to hold the meeting at Sacajawea Middle School, located at 33rd Avenue S. and Lamonte. We will send out a reminder email regarding the meeting, and also notify folks if the time or location changes for any reason.
- Feedback on the Draft Restoration Plan is due back by Thursday, May 11 at 5:00 p.m.
- The Final Restoration Plan will be used for the restoration effort. The agencies plan to apply applicable landscape ecology standards and mitigation ratios as appropriate.

Construction Schedule:

- Pre-construction, which includes construction staging, fencing, etc. will begin the week of May 8.
- Field work will begin the week of May 15.
- The plan is to be finished by the end of May or the first week in June.
- Monitoring and re-seeding will take place as needed.

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