Tribal Engagement Process for Washington State Department of Transportation's Drainage Maintenance General Hydraulic Project Approvals

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) uses General Hydraulic Project Approvals (GHPAs) to maintain existing state-owned infrastructure. The four "drainage maintenance" GHPAs issued by Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) include: Culvert Maintenance, Channelized Stream Maintenance, Fishway Maintenance, and Bridge Debris Maintenance. WSDOT performs maintenance work covered by these GHPAs using standard methods to protect the infrastructure, while avoiding and minimizing impacts to fish life by employing best management practices (BMPs) and strictly complying with the GHPAs' provisions. Please see the actual permits for additional details on the scope and scale of work covered by these drainage GHPAs: https://wsdot.wa.gov/engineering-standards/environmental-guidance/fish

Highway maintenance activities include planned, unplanned and emergency work. Variables including weather, site conditions, available resources, budget, and other maintenance priorities play a role in the ability to plan drainage maintenance work. Maintenance crews proactively perform routine maintenance work within WDFW's fish windows as they see concerns in the field or upon inspection (e.g., removing debris from a culvert using hand tools, replacing a dislodged culvert end, repositioning large woody material off bridge piers before a storm event). All maintenance work performed on culverts located within the Culvert Injunction Case Area, *and* subject to the Injunction, follows the maintenance section of the *Culvert Injunction Implementation Guidelines.*

WSDOT engaged in consultation with Tribes on these statewide GHPAs in late 2018 as part of the renewal process. During this consultation, some Tribes asked that WSDOT notify them of work covered under these GHPAs before it occurs. WSDOT developed this statewide guidance in response to these Tribes' requests. This guidance recognizes that each WSDOT Region's relationship with individual Tribes is unique, and WSDOT is committed to build, strengthen, and maintain durable relationships with Tribal governments.

For maintenance activities covered by these drainage maintenance GHPAs, each WSDOT Regional office will provide an annual opportunity for Tribes in their area to learn about planned maintenance work. Each Region, in consultation with interested Tribes, has discretion to tailor this annual opportunity as necessary (e.g., region-wide meeting, as part of regularly scheduled annual review meetings, distributing written materials for review). Potential topics of discussion covered by the annual opportunity may include:

- Planned maintenance activities covered under these drainage maintenance GHPAs
- Potential locations of concern for WSDOT that might require unplanned work later in the season
- Tribes interest in activities located in certain water bodies or involving specific work (e.g., sediment removal from channelized streams, replacing riprap, repositioning large wood on rivers where Tribes have an open fishery)
- Scheduling field visits so that Tribal staff may safely view maintenance activities
- Pictures and/or videos showing how WSDOT performs typical maintenance activities
- Evaluation of the existing Tribal Engagement Process

To the extent possible, WSDOT Region staff will send discussion topics, an agenda, and a list of planned maintenance activities (if already compiled by the WSDOT Region) in advance of any meeting to occur with the Tribes, providing adequate review time before the meeting (30 days if feasible).

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If requested by an individual Tribe, WSDOT can provide notice (e.g., via email) at the same time WSDOT notifies WDFW (as required by GHPA provisions). For example, three of the maintenance GHPAs (Culvert Maintenance, Channelized Stream Maintenance, and Bridge Debris Maintenance) require that WSDOT give WDFW one day advanced notice if using heavy equipment. On rivers where Tribes have an open fishery, WSDOT will give Tribes at least 48 hours' notice when maintenance crews are scheduled to float large wood from bridges (work covered under the Bridge Debris Maintenance GHPA) to avoid conflict with fishing nets downstream.

Regions should encourage Tribes to contact the Regional Maintenance Environmental Coordinator (RMEC) if they have concerns about maintenance activities. Issues that cannot be addressed at this level can be elevated to the Regional Environmental Manager (REM). If a Tribe has concerns about whether an activity meets the project description and provisions of a GHPA, they should also reach out to WDFW. WSDOT's goal is to programmatically address concerns with GHPA implementation, including possible revisions to this engagement process.

Washington State Department of Transportation

Regional Maintenance Environmental Coordinator Contact List

For specific questions regarding Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) maintenance work, please contact the WSDOT Regional Maintenance Environmental Coordinator (RMEC) in your area:

Eastern Region – Jacob McCann, jacob.mccann@wsdot.wa.gov, 509-324-6139
North Central – Joe Williams, joseph.williams@wsdot.wa.gov, 509-667-3054
Northwest Region – Andrew Gross, andrew.gross@wsdot.wa.gov, 206-406-8074
Olympic Region – Paul Dreisbach, paul.dreisbach@wsdot.wa.gov, 360-485-3600
South Central Region – Colton Peyser, colton.peyser@wsdot.wa.gov, 509-577-1891
Southwest Region – Tom Kohl, tom.kohl@wsdot.wa.gov, 503-863-7923

You may access a map of WSDOT regions on our website:
https://wsdot.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2021-10/wsdot-regions-map.pdf

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