



Date: 10.28.2024

Acre Environmental Consulting, LLC
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Land Technologies, Inc.
18820 3rd Avenue NE
Arlington, WA 98223

Re: Harmony at Arlington (PLN #1234) – Habitat Protection Plan and Buffer Preservation.

On October 16, 2024 Acre Environmental Consulting, LLC assessed the approximate 4.38-acre site located at 7417 204th Street NE in the City of Arlington. The site is further located as a portion of Section 30, Township 25N, Range 4E, W.M. The parcels numbers for this property are 31051100304000 and 31051100400700.

The purpose of this site visit was to assess the buffer of Portage Creek and the extent of potential downstream impacts to Fish and Wildlife Conservation Areas (FWCA) that may result from this work. It is our understanding that a 25 percent reduction of the 100 foot buffer to a minimum of 75 feet was approved by the City in 2019 and again in 2024 as part of the current development proposal for Harmony at Arlington. The applicant is proposing to maintain this 75-foot buffer width. The entire width of this buffer is contained in Tract A as shown on the Engineer's site plans. This tract is required to be dedicated to the City of Arlington upon completion of the project. The project is also required to build a pedestrian trail along the southern border of the stream buffer and tract A.

While the majority of this site has been comprised of more or less maintained pasture going back to at least 1990 (the last year Google Earth pictures area available), the portion of the site adjacent to Portage Creek has generally been maintained as a natural area comprised of native trees and shrubs represented by red alder (*Alnus rubra*, Fac), western red cedar (*Thuja plicata*, Fac), black cottonwood (*Populus balsamifera*, Fac), snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*, FacU), and Nootka rose (*Rosa nutkana*, Fac), with small patches of Himalayan blackberry (*Rubus armeniacus*, Fac).

The 75-foot buffer appears to coincide with the outer limit of this existing native vegetation. Put another way, the outer 25 feet of the 100-foot stream buffer has been comprised of maintained pasture for at least the past thirty-five years and likely longer. As a result, the outer 25 feet of the stream buffer has provided a nominal level of functions and values and no protection to Portage Creek for that period of time. Therefore, it appears that preserving the 75-foot buffer has effectively maintained the long-term existing condition of the site, will have

no negative impact on Portage Creek and the associated FWCA, and will not negatively affect fish life in this stream. By designing the proposed development to comply with the current DOE stormwater requirements, it is likely that the developed site condition will provide increased water quality functions to Portage Creek and the associated FWCA over the maintained pasture condition.

No disruptions or changes to the existing high or low stream flows will occur as a result of this proposal. Through the avoidance of any in-water work, the minimally invasive nature of the project (preserving and protecting the approved stream buffer), the presence of established vegetation within this buffer, and the implementation of applicable erosion control measures, we do not anticipate that sediment or pollutants from the project site will enter surface waters. Therefore, we do not anticipate any water quality changes to surface waters surrounding the property. The proposed project will not block any habitat corridors for listed species. No large woody debris will be impacted and no trees will be removed as a part of this project. The proposed project will have no impact on any natural channel migration areas and bank stability will not be impacted in any way because the project is preserving the existing, approved buffer. No modifications will occur to any water body within the project area and no removal or changes in large woody debris (LWD) will occur. As a result, the proposed project will not result in any direct effects to fish species.

It is our understanding that measures are proposed to protect the stream buffer during construction. In addition, upon the completion of construction, a two-rail fence and critical areas signs will be installed along the outer border of the buffer. The signs and fencing will clearly demarcate the edge of the critical areas and to prevent people and pets from encroaching into the stream and associated buffer.

I greatly appreciate the concern that the Tulalip Tribes has for the natural environment. In the case of this project it appears preserving the established vegetation within the stream buffer and protecting these areas with signs, fencing, and a tract, should substantially address their concerns. This project will not result in any direct or indirect impacts to any species, and will generally maintain the existing condition of the site and the adjacent areas. Therefore, no impacts to designated critical fish or wildlife species or habitat are expected to occur.

If you have questions or would like to discuss the project, please let me know.

Sincerely

Acre Environmental Consulting, LLC.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Louis Emenhiser". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Louis Emenhiser
Principal Wetland Ecologist
Professional Wetland Scientist #1680