WSDOT Liaison Program
Business & Operations Plan

October 28, 2015

Contents

BACKGROUND 1
Liaison Program 1
MAP Team 1
CURRENT OPERATIONS 1
Liaison ESA Team 1
Liaison Permitting Team 1
MISSION & VISION 2
GOALS 2
OBJECTIVES 2
Measuring and Reporting Team Performance 3
TEAM ORGANIZATION & COMPOSITION 3
Organization 3
Team Members, Roles and Responsibilities 4
WSDOT 4
NOAA 5
USFWS 5
Ecology 5
USACE 6
Program Management Team (PMT) 6
Steering Committee 6
Team Funding 6
ESA CONSULTATION PROCESS 7
Pre-BA Phase 7
BA Review/Consultation Process Phase 7
Construction/Compliance Phase 7
PERMITTING PROCESS 7
Early Project Coordination Phase 7
Permit Review Phase 8
Construction/Compliance Phase 8
LIAISON COMMUNICATION PROTOCOL 8
Communicating within the Liaison Program 8
Points of Contact 9
Weekly Team Meetings 9

Liaison Program Manager Communication Responsibilities 9
Liaison Program Coordinator Communication Responsibilities 9
Resource Agency Team Member Communication Responsibilities 9
Liaison Program Meetings 10
Liaison Team Member Contact List 10
Liaison Communications with WSDOT 10
Normal Liaison Team Communications 10
Resolving Technical Issues 10
Resolving Issues 12
Communicating within our own Agencies 12
Team Member Communication Responsibilities 12
Communicating Substantial Information Changes 12
Changes in Liaison Program Personnel 12
Changes in Project Parameters 13
Changes in Review Requirements or Agency Policies 13
Communication Tools 13
General Communications and Meetings 13
Liaison Program Website 13
Weekly Permitting Downloads 14
ESA Tracking Sheet 14
Workload Projection Sheet 14
Workload Planning Tool 14
General Use of Planning Tools 15

BACKGROUND

Liaison Program

Since 1999, the WSDOT Liaison Program has provided staff at state and federal resource agencies dedicated to delivering transportation projects. This program provides specialists dedicated to working on WSDOT projects and can include working with WSDOT on early project coordination, Permitting, Endangered Species Act (ESA) consultations, construction and emergency project support, policy support, and environmental review of National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents.

MAP Team

In 2003, the first Multi-Agency Permitting (MAP) Team was developed as a transportation project delivery organizing framework by the Washington Departments of Transportation (WSDOT), Ecology, and Fish & Wildlife (WDFW). The MAP Team consisted of representatives from regulatory agencies and WSDOT responsible for meeting project timelines and permitting requirements for a given set of state transportation projects. The MAP Team included of a set of technical experts to expedite permitting transportation projects to ensure on-time advertisement of WSDOT projects.

The first team consisted of representatives from:

- Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)
- Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology)
- Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW)
- United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
- King County Department of Development and Environmental Services (joined January 2004) (KCDDES)

The MAP Team permitting process identified permitting risks, developed cooperative processes and solutions, and provided a unified package of environmental information to the WSDOT project managers early enough in project development to make a difference. As such, the MAP Team helped WSDOT reduce environmental impacts and provide a structured environmental permitting process resulting in efficient project delivery.

CURRENT OPERATIONS

Liaison ESA Team

The Liaison ESA Team includes technical experts who work at United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) on WSDOT projects statewide and review documents under ESA and Essential Fish Habitat (EFH). The Liaison ESA Team communicates risks and expedites the consultation process to ensure on-time delivery of WSDOT projects.

Liaison Permitting Team

With the sharp decline in Nickel and TPA gas tax funds the Liaison Program and MAP Team staffing resources were reduced in 2011 and 2013. In 2013, the MAP Team and

permitting liaisons were combined to form the Liaison Permitting Team. The Liaison Permitting Team works on projects statewide with a focus on efficient project delivery. This Business & Operations Plan supersedes the Liaison Permitting Team Business & Operations Plan dated 10/11/13.

MISSION & VISION

The Liaison Program follows the mission and vision of the Compliance Solutions Branch within WSDOT's Environmental Services Office.

Mission: "We develop trust, protect the environment, and streamline project delivery"
Vision: "People come to us for solutions to achieve environmental excellence"

The Liaison Permitting Team has also adopted the MAP Team mission, which is upholding and embracing the public call for:

- ✓ Governmental cooperation, collaboration, creativity, and team work;
- ✓ Streamlined permitting and regulatory decision-making;
- ✓ Effective environmental protection and impact mitigation; and
- ✓ Efficient delivery of transportation improvement projects that balance and are accountable to community, economic, and environmental values.

GOALS

In order to fulfill the Compliance Solutions Branch mission the Liaison ESA and Permitting Teams will achieve the following goals:

Goal 1: Provide Efficient and Predictable ESA Consultation for WSDOT Projects

Goal 2: Provide Efficient and Predictable Permitting for WSDOT Projects

OBJECTIVES

In order to meet the Goal 1, the Liaison Program will meet the following objectives:

Objective 1.1: Notify WSDOT of receipt of BAs within 15 days of BA assignment 100% of the time
Measure: Percent of BA notification of receipt emails sent within 15 days using the number of days from consultation assignment to ESA Liaison staff to date notification sent by agency

Objective 1.2: Meet all statutory or agency agreed upon timeframes for consultations
Measure: Percent of consultations issued within the statutory timelines or agreed upon timeframes using the number of days from consultation assignment

to ESA Liaison staff to consultation completion by agency and consultation type

Objective 1.3: Complete all consultation by the consultation completion deadline
Measure: Percent of consultations completed before consultation completion deadline identified on the ESA Tracking Sheet by agency

In order to meet Goal 2, the Liaison Program will meet the following objectives:

Objective 2.1: WSDOT submits complete application 90% of the time
Measure: Percent of applications determined complete upon official application submittal

Objective 2.2: Review applications within 15 days of the JARPA submittal 90% of the time
Measure: Percent of reviews by the agency within 15 days of official application submittal

Objective 2.3: Issue 90% of public notices within 15 days of complete application for individual permits
Measure: Percent of individual permits with the public notice issued within 15 days of a complete application using the number of days from complete application to public notice by agency

Objective 2.4: Issue all permit decisions before Ad or RFP date
Measure: Percent of permit decisions completed before Ad or RFP date identified on the Workload Planning Tool by agency

Measuring and Reporting Team Performance

The Liaison Program Manager reports on Liaison performance on an annual basis. Each performance measure report will cover the program's ability to meet its goals and objectives during the reporting period of January through December of the preceding year. The Liaison Program Manager provides an electronic copy of the report to the Steering Committee members, Liaison members, and places it on the Liaison Program webpage.

TEAM ORGANIZATION & COMPOSITION

Organization

Together with the Liaison ESA Team, the Liaison Permitting Team makes up the WSDOT Liaison Program. The Liaison Program is organized within the Compliance Solutions Branch of the WSDOT Environmental Services Office. The Liaison ESA Team includes place-based staff at the NOAA National Marine Fisheries (NMFS) and the (USFWS), and is primarily responsible for conducting ESA Section 7 Consultations for WSDOT activities with a federal nexus. The Liaison Permitting Team includes place-based staff at the USACE and Ecology and is primarily responsible for Sections 404, 10, and 401 permit decisions for WSDOT projects.

Team Members, Roles and Responsibilities

All Liaison Team members are expected to further interagency awareness of WSDOT transportation and environmental regulatory issues within their respective agencies and assist in improving interagency communication and coordination to the benefit of all. Team members are also expected to keep the rest of the team informed of regulatory policy and administrative changes.

WSDOT

The **Liaison Program Manager** provides team leadership and ensures resource agency permit decisions are issued within a predictable timeframe to support WSDOT project delivery. As such, the position establishes permit delivery and consultation schedules and priorities for the team, coordinates staff efforts, and ensures WSDOT project schedule deadlines are met. The Liaison Program Manager will work with the project teams to identify project schedule risks, based the their proposed ESA consultation and permitting schedule information provided for the ESA Tracking Sheet and Workload Planning Tool. This position plans, directs and oversees team efforts and communicates team performance to Liaison Team members, member resource agency managers, and WSDOT staff and managers. The Liaison Program Manager develops and makes adjustments to the Liaison Program structure and process as necessary to ensure performance targets are met and continuously seeks streamlining opportunities, recommends and implements additional operational changes as needed to increase and balance team productivity. The team Manager oversees and directs Liaison operations and facilitates the Steering Committee Meetings. The Team Manager resolves disputes within the team, resolves or facilitates the resolution of project-specific permitting issues that cannot be resolved at the staff level. When necessary, the Liaison Program Manager facilitates the coordination of resource agency management, and WSDOT headquarters and region environmental staff to resolve technical, permitting, or consultation issues that have the potential to delay issuance of regulatory decisions. The Liaison Manager negotiates and manages interagency funding agreements, and provides guidance and training to Liaison Program members and customers on Liaison Program business and operations.

The **Liaison Program Coordinator** provides focused assistance to the Liaison Team in the areas of data collection, analysis and reporting, customer service, coordination and administrative functions. The position collects, analyzes and reports team performance data to the Liaison Program Manager. The Liaison Program Coordinator maintains the Liaison Program website as an important informational tool for team members and customers, assists in the development of ESA and permitting assistance tools, interacts with staff and customers, and continuously seeks new ways to improve customer service. The team Coordinator performs a variety of team coordination and administrative functions (schedules team meetings, obtains routine project information updates from the WSDOT, maintains project files, coordinates team training and travel needs, assists in training new Liaison Team members, etc.) to assist the Liaison Program Manager and the team overall.

NOAA

The **NOAA Biologist** is responsible for preparing consultations under Section 7 of the ESA, concurrence for EFH and MMPA review for WSDOT projects. The position provides expert technical guidance for NOAA listed species and regulatory process. This position also completes review of projects for concurrence under the NOAA programmatic Biological Opinions (PBOs) as well as supports updates and/or revisions to the PBOs. The position additionally participates in developing fish and habitat management protection policies and provides water quality expertise and support during construction.

USFWS

The **USFWS Biologist** is responsible for preparing consultations under Section 7 of the ESA for WSDOT projects. The position provides expert technical guidance for USFWS listed species and regulatory process. This position also completes review of projects for concurrence under the USFWS PBOs as well as supports updates and/or revisions to the PBOs. This position also coordinates review of proposals with species leads within USFWS and provides support to WSDOT project teams during construction.

Ecology

The **Ecology Federal Project Coordinator** prepares Water Quality Certification/401 permits and Coastal Zone Management Act consistency analyses for WSDOT projects. The position additionally serves as a liaison between WSDOT and Ecology for a variety of issues relating to water quality permitting, appropriate Best Management Practices, communication paths, etc. In this capacity, the position closely coordinates and interacts with the Federal Project Coordinators and other staff in Ecology. The Ecology Federal Project Coordinator provides WSDOT project teams assistance to maintain compliance with state water quality standards during construction.

The **Ecology Wetland Specialist** reviews wetland-related aspects of WSDOT projects. This work includes assessing wetland impacts, evaluating and approving mitigation plans, providing expert technical advice, closeout of mitigation sites that are meeting performance standards, and working with WSDOT to develop improved and innovative mitigation opportunities. The wetland specialist directly assists the Ecology Federal Project Coordinator when writing wetlands conditions for the 401 Water Quality Certifications and represents Ecology when discussing wetlands issues for WSDOT projects. This position is also a member of the Ecology wetlands Technical Advisory Group (TAG).

The **Ecology Stormwater Engineer** reviews WSDOT projects to determine compliance with relevant stormwater manuals. The position directly assists the Ecology Federal Project Coordinator in a capacity similar to the Ecology Wetlands Specialist. The Ecology Stormwater Engineer can coordinate with Ecology staff on General and Individual Section 402 National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit compliance issues for WSDOT projects, if needed. The position provides additional expert technical assistance and support to WSDOT engineering

staff through review of project compliance with the Western Washington Stormwater Manual (WWSWM), WSDOT Highway Runoff Manual (HRM) and early design input. The Ecology Stormwater Engineer is also a member of the Demonstrative Approach Team (DAT), which reviews and approves (if appropriate) alternative stormwater design proposals. The DAT can approve an alternative compliance pathway to meeting the intent of the minimum requirements using a project-specific demonstrative approach.

USACE

The **Corps Permit Project Manager** is responsible for processing Nationwide and Individual Section 404 and Section 10 permits for WSDOT projects. Position duties include, but are not limited to the following: review and approval of wetland delineation and mitigation plans, oversight to ensure that Section 7 and Section 106 coordination have been completed, expert technical advice and guidance on USACE regulatory process and wetland mitigation planning, review of information and final documentation on 404(b)(1) guidelines analysis, close out of mitigation sites that have met performance standards, and ensure tribal coordination has been completed. In addition, the position is responsible to ensure compliance with permit conditions.

Program Management Team (PMT)

The Program Management Team provides guidance and support on overall strategic directions for matters such as operating policy, procedures, and Liaison ESA Team performance, and related matters affecting the Liaison ESA Team as a whole. The PMT contains management representation from each member agency as well as Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

Steering Committee

The Liaison Permitting Team Steering Committee provides guidance and support on overall strategic direction for matters such as operating policy, procedures, Liaison Permitting Team performance, issue resolution, and related matters affecting the Liaison Permitting Team as a whole. The Steering Committee contains management representation from each member agency. The Liaison Program Manager organizes and facilitates these meetings.

Team Funding

All staff positions on the Liaison Permitting Team are funded by WSDOT. Generally, USACE, USFWS, and NOAA Liaisons are WSDOT employees place-based at the host agencies, while Ecology positions are Ecology staff funded through interagency agreements.

In some cases, individual projects or programs may provide funding for regulatory support for unanticipated project needs, especially demanding project schedules, and high priority projects with intensive regulatory support needs.

ESA CONSULTATION PROCESS

The ESA Section 7 consultation process facilitated by the Liaison Program is organized by three distinct phases that occur in WSDOT's processes of preliminary engineering and construction for design/build and design/bid/build project delivery methods.

Pre-BA Phase
The Pre-Biological Assessment (BA) Phase generally occurs during a project's preliminary engineering and begins when the WSDOT project team first contacts the ESA Liaison about a specific project. The Pre-BA Phase concludes when WSDOT submits a BA for consultation. Often WSDOT will begin coordination with ESA Liaisons during scoping or early in design when effects to listed species are being assessed. During Pre-BA Phase WSDOT can request a Pre-BA meeting with the ESA liaisons through the WSDOT Fish and Wildlife Program. Pre-BA coordination is required for projects that will require formal consultation. A Pre-BA meeting is a chance for WSDOT to present a project to get early technical and regulatory feedback in advanced of the BA development or completion. Specific meeting expectations are outlined in the WSDOT Pre-BA Meeting Guidance.

BA Review/Consultation Process Phase
The BA Review/Consultation Phase generally occurs during a project's preliminary engineering and begins when the ESA liaisons receive a BA from a WSDOT project team. The BA Review/Consultation Phase concludes when all resource agencies have completed their respective consultations for the project. Typically, WSDOT will coordinate with the ESA liaisons throughout the BA Review/Consultation Phase, particularly if the resource agencies have determined additional information or clarification is needed from the project team to complete the consultations.

Construction/Compliance Phase
The Construction/Compliance Phase occurs during project construction and begins when all resource agencies have completed their consultations for the project. The Construction/Compliance Phase concludes when project construction is completed. During the Construction/Compliance Phase, WSDOT may coordinate with Liaison ESA Team to seek clarification about the incidental take statement or terms and conditions, request reinitiation or updates, or request technical expertise to help resolve any compliance related problems encountered during construction.

PERMITTING PROCESS

The permitting process is organized by three distinct phases that correspond with WSDOT's processes of (1) Preliminary Engineering, (2) Plans, Specifications, & Engineering (PS&E), and (3) Construction Phases for design/build and design/bid/build project delivery methods.

Early Project Coordination Phase
The Early Project Coordination (EPC) Phase generally occurs during a project's preliminary engineering and begins when a Permitting Liaison Team member is first

contacted by the WSDOT project team about a specific project. The EPC Phase concludes when the WSDOT project team submits the permit application packages to the permitting liaisons. Often, the WSDOT project team will begin coordination with the permitting liaisons during project scoping or early in design when impacts to aquatic features such as wetlands, shorelines, streams below OHWM and stormwater hydraulics have been conceptually identified. During the EPC Phase the WSDOT project team can request an EPC Meeting with the permitting liaisons. An EPC Meeting is a chance for the WSDOT project team to present their project to the permitting liaisons and get early technical and regulatory feedback from each resource agency before permit applications are developed or submitted. Specific EPC meeting expectations are outlined in the Liaison Permitting Team EPC Meeting Purpose Statement.

Permit Review Phase
The Permit Review Phase generally occurs during a project's PS&E and begins when the permitting liaisons receive the permit application packages from the WSDOT project team. The Permit Review Phase concludes when all resource agencies have issued their respective permit decisions for the project. Typically, the WSDOT project team will coordinate with the permitting liaison throughout the Permit Review Phase, particularly if the resource agencies have determined additional information or clarification is needed from the project team in order for the agencies to issue a permit decision.

Construction/Compliance Phase
The Construction/Compliance Phase occurs during project construction and begins when all resource agencies have issued their respective permit decisions for the project. The Construction/Compliance Phase concludes when project construction is completed. (Note: mitigation monitoring required by resource agency permits may continue beyond construction completion.) During the Construction/Compliance Phase, WSDOT may coordinate with the Liaison Permitting Team to seek clarification about permit conditions, request permit modifications and/or request technical expertise to help resolve any permit compliance related problems encountered during construction.

LIAISON COMMUNICATION PROTOCOL

Communicating within the Liaison Program
Timely and effective communication and coordination is essential to the success of the Liaison Program consultation and permitting processes. This communication protocol outlines the primary communication and coordination paths within and outside of the Liaison Team. The Liaison Team views communication as an ongoing and necessary activity during the consultation and permitting processes. This communication protocol allows for variability depending on the project-specific circumstances, while providing a basic framework that clarifies Liaison Team communication expectations. The communication protocol includes specific procedures, responsibilities and tools that will contribute to open, effective communication among those involved in the Liaison Team consultation and permitting processes.

Points of Contact

Liaison Team resource agency members will serve as the staff level point of contact for their agency for issues relating to WSDOT projects and their respective agency approvals and permits. Liaison Team resource agency members needing information from another member resource agency will first consult with that agency's representative(s) on the Liaison Team to obtain the information.

Weekly Team Meetings

To ensure timely and available communication for coordination on consultations, permits, and other work products, a weekly team meeting will be held each Monday for the Liaison Permitting Team and each Tuesday for the Liaison ESA Team, to discuss work schedules, project review status and priorities, project schedule risks, and other relevant issues. The Liaison Program Manager will ensure a current meeting agenda is available for each weekly meeting and will facilitate the meeting. If the Liaison Program Manager is absent, he/she may designate a substitute facilitator for the weekly team meeting. Liaison Team members are expected to attend and participate in their respective meetings each week, informing the team of project review status, informational needs, early project coordination, construction phase, and non-project related workload.

Liaison Program Manager Communication Responsibilities

As part of the Liaison Program Manager's designated roles and responsibilities identified earlier in this plan, the Liaison Program Manager will initiate and facilitate communication within the Team as needed. This includes facilitating meetings, facilitating the resolution of team and project related issues, communicating project needs to the Liaison Team, communicating Liaison Team process needs to WSDOT, working with WSDOT and Liaison Team members to set project priorities and review schedules. The Liaison Program Manager also communicates program performance to team members and stakeholders.

Liaison Program Coordinator Communication Responsibilities

As part of the Liaison Program Coordinator's designated roles and responsibilities identified earlier in this plan, the Liaison Program Coordinator will initiate communication within the team as needed. This includes active participation in the weekly Liaison Team meetings and other Liaison Team meetings, working with team members to meet project priorities and permit review schedules, and other duties. The Liaison Program Coordinator will work with region and modal Environmental Coordinators and other staff to keep Liaison Team members and project teams aware of current project and Liaison Team schedules and timelines.

Resource Agency Team Member Communication Responsibilities

As part of the designated roles and responsibilities identified earlier in this plan, each resource agency member will initiate communication within the team as needed. This includes active participation in the weekly Liaison Team meetings and other Liaison Team meetings (e.g. EPC, Pre-BA, etc.), working with team members to meet project priorities and review schedules. Each resource agency Liaison Team member will keep the team informed regarding work progress, status of deliverables, project

issues, work schedule changes, planned leave, and other relevant information. Members will report to the Liaison Manager as soon as possible if circumstances arise that interfere with their ability to complete their work on schedule.

Liaison Program Meetings

To assist the Liaison Team, the Liaison Program Meetings provides an opportunity for all the Liaison resource agencies to get together and discuss project issues, agency policy issues, program administrative updates, common topics of interest relating to the Liaison Program, and learn more about the WSDOT project delivery process. The Liaison Program Manager will facilitate the meetings. All Liaison Team members are expected to participate in the Liaison Program Meetings.

Liaison Team Member Contact List

Current contact and work schedule information for all Liaison Team members is maintained by the Liaison Team Coordinator on the Liaison Program webpage.

Liaison Communications with WSDOT

Normal Liaison Team Communications

Liaison ESA Team

During the Pre-BA, BA Review/Consultation, and Construction/Compliance Phases, the Liaison ESA Team recognizes that the WSDOT region/mode Project Biologist typically leads all project consultation discussions. Therefore, unless otherwise specified, the Liaison ESA Team will communicate directly with the designated Project Biologist on project consultation. Liaison ESA Team members can find the designated Project Biologist identified in the ESA Tracking Sheet (updated monthly).

Liaison Permitting Team

During the Early Project Coordination, Permit Review, and Construction/Compliance Phases, the Liaison Permitting Team recognizes that the WSDOT region/mode Project Environmental Coordinator typically leads all project permitting discussions. Therefore, unless otherwise specified, the Liaison Permitting Team will communicate directly with the designated Project Environmental Coordinator on project permitting. Liaison Permitting Team members can find the designated Project Environmental Coordinator identified in the Permitting State Workload Planning Tool (updated monthly).

Resolving Technical Issues

Liaison ESA Team

In the event a technical issue develops during the Pre-BA, BA Review/Consultation, or Construction/Compliance Phases the Liaison ESA Team will communicate directly with the Project Biologist. The Project Biologist may facilitate or authorize communication with the appropriate project technical specialist (Coordinator, Engineer, etc.) to communicate directly with the Liaison ESA Team. If this occurs, all communications between the project technical specialist and the Liaison ESA Team must follow the communication path specified by the Project Biologist. The Project Biologist must clearly specify the communication path to all parties involved.

Liaison ESA Team resource agency members seeking or receiving direct conversations with a project technical specialist should only do so after notifying the Project Biologist of their intent and purpose for the direct communication. The Liaison ESA Team resource agency member will keep the Project Biologist apprised of the status and outcome of such communications in a timely manner. Similarly, Project Biologist will be the focal point for all communication from the WSDOT project team to the Liaison ESA Team, unless otherwise designated.

During the Construction/Compliance Phase, the Liaison ESA Team will work with the Project Biologist to resolve any compliance issues. Liaison ESA Team resource agency members seeking direct conversations with a project technical specialist will only do so after notifying the region Project Biologist of their intent and purpose for the direct communication. The Liaison ESA Team resource agency member will keep the Project Biologist apprised of the status and outcome of such communications in a timely manner.

Liaison Permitting Team

In the event a technical issue develops during the Early Project Coordination, Permit Review, or Construction/Compliance Phases that is beyond the expertise of the Project Environmental Coordinator, the Liaison Permitting Team recognizes that the Project Environmental Coordinator may authorize the appropriate project technical specialist (Biologist, Engineer, Archaeologist, etc.) to communicate directly with the Liaison Permitting Team. If this occurs, all communications between the project technical specialist and the Liaison Permitting Team must follow the communication path specified by the Project Environmental Coordinator. The Project Environmental Coordinator must clearly specify the communication path to all parties involved.

Liaison Permitting Team resource agency members seeking or receiving direct conversations with a project technical specialist should only do so after notifying the Project Environmental Coordinator of their intent and purpose for the direct communication. The Liaison Permitting Team resource agency member will keep the Project Environmental Coordinator apprised of the status and outcome of such communications in a timely manner. Similarly, Project Environmental Coordinators will be the focal point for all communication from the WSDOT project team to the Liaison Permitting Team, unless otherwise designated.

During the Construction/Compliance Phase, the Liaison Permitting Team will work with the Project Environmental Coordinator to resolve any compliance issues. Liaison Permitting Team resource agency members seeking direct conversations with a project technical specialist will only do so after notifying the Project Environmental Coordinator of their intent and purpose for the direct communication. The Liaison Permitting Team resource agency member will keep the Project Environmental Coordinator apprised of the status and outcome of such communications in a timely manner.

Resolving Issues

In the event that issue resolution efforts between the Project Environmental staff and a Liaison Team resource agency result in an impasse, the ESA Liaison Issue Resolution Process or Permitting Liaison Issue Resolution Process will be used to resolve the issue. To ensure all opportunities for issue resolution have been exhausted, Liaison Program Manager concurrence is required before an issue can be elevated into this 3-step process. The Liaison Program Manager will implement this process and will track issues that are being addressed through this process to ensure timely resolution.

Communicating within our own Agencies

Team Member Communication Responsibilities

All Liaison Team members will keep their agency supervisors informed of their work schedules and work progress.

All team members will keep their appropriate regional/field regulatory staff informed of the results of mitigation development, consultation completion, and permit issuance.

All team members will arrange for resource agency technical specialist positions to participate on a case-by-case basis dependent upon project specific requirements.

All team members will participate within their agencies' technical groups (such as Ecology participating in their internal Technical Assistance Group [TAG] meetings, etc.) as such agency deems necessary.

The Liaison Program Manager will keep WSDOT Environmental Managers at regions and headquarters and Environmental Coordinators informed of changes in the Liaison Program.

Communicating Substantial Information Changes

Changes in Liaison Program Personnel

New Liaison Team members will receive training about the team process, procedures, protocols and active projects by the Liaison Program Manager and Liaison Program Coordinator. It is expected that their host agency supervisor will provide full training about their agency's internal policies and procedures. The Liaison Program Manager and host agency supervisor will effectively coordinate to ensure new employee training is thorough and successful.

The Liaison Program Manager will communicate changes in team personnel to the WSDOT region and headquarters Environmental Managers so the information can be disseminated to all appropriate WSDOT staff. The Environmental Managers will communicate changes in WSDOT personnel to the Liaison Program Manager and Liaison Program Coordinator so the information can be disseminated to all Liaison Team members.

Changes in Project Parameters

The Liaison Program Coordinator will compile and manage a list of all projects in each phase of the consultation and permitting processes for Liaison Team use and keep the Liaison Team informed of project schedules and changes. The ESA Tracking Sheet, Workload Project Sheets, and State Workload Planning Tool will be the primary tools for keeping all team members and project teams informed of project workload and schedules. The Liaison Program Coordinator may periodically receive project schedule updates from several sources, including Liaison Team members, but the primary source will be the region/mode environmental staff on a monthly basis.

Changes in Review Requirements or Agency Policies

It will be the responsibility of each team member to stay current on the regulatory requirements and policies of their respective agency. Liaison Team members will proactively identify and effectively communicate upcoming policy and procedural changes to the Liaison Program that has the potential to impact WSDOT projects and/or Liaison Program operations. The Liaison Program Manager will then decide on the best course to inform the appropriate WSDOT staff. When such a change would directly affect active projects the appropriate Project Biologist or Environmental Coordinator will be informed as soon as possible.

Communication Tools

General Communications and Meetings

Meetings will be a primary tool for conveying essential information both within and outside of the Liaison Program. To effectively use this tool, the Team recognizes the following meeting guidelines:

- Begin and end meetings on time.
- Respect differences and listen to each other's ideas.
- Acknowledge problems and deal with them in an open and timely fashion.
- Participate in the discussions and come to meetings prepared to address items on the agenda.
- Team members will work within their respective agencies to communicate issues and keep the right people informed of decisions that are being made.
- When possible, meeting agendas and handouts will be distributed to all meeting attendees in advance of the meeting date.
- Any team member unable to attend scheduled meetings will notify the Liaison Program Manager sufficiently in advance of the meeting and assist in developing an alternative plan for information exchange.

Liaison Program Website

To assist Liaison Program customers, the Liaison Program Coordinator will maintain a Liaison Program website with current information to provide customers with current tools for working with the Liaison Team, background and operational information about the MAP Team and Liaison Program, current contact information for Liaison Program members, performance tracking, and other useful information and links.

Weekly Permitting Downloads
To assist WSDOT in managing project delivery, the Liaison Program Coordinator will provide a weekly email to region Environmental Coordinators and managers detailing the status and progress of each permit application under review. These downloads are intended to be a high-clip update of review status or identification of process obstacles to permit decisions. The primary information source of the downloads is the weekly Liaison Permitting Team meeting.

Region Environmental Coordinators are encouraged to contact the appropriate team members, the Liaison Program Manager, or Coordinator to address any discrepancies of information or informational needs of the permitting agencies as early as possible to ensure timely completion of permit decisions.

ESA Tracking Sheet
To assist the Liaison ESA Team with workload forecasting and management, the Liaison Program Coordinator will maintain a detailed list of all projects requiring ESA consultation. The ESA Tracking Sheet will be updated and provided to Liaison ESA Team members at the first weekly Liaison ESA Team meeting of each month. The Liaison Program Coordinator will also provide the ESA Tracking Sheet to region/mode environmental staff (and others) as appropriate. The detailed list will include such information for each project as anticipated consultation needs, BA submittal date, Consultation Completion Deadline, and AD date. The Liaison Program Coordinator will also maintain a tab in the ESA Tracking sheet for projects requiring MMPA Incidental Harassment Authorization (IHA).

Workload Projection Sheet
To assist the Liaison ESA Team with workload forecasting and management, the Liaison Program Coordinator will summarize the ESA Tracking sheet for the Liaison ESA Team. The Workload Projection Sheet will only include projects that the Liaison ESA Team will review. The Workload Projection Sheet will be provided to Liaison ESA Team members at the first weekly Liaison ESA Team meeting of each month. The Liaison Program Coordinator will provide the Workload Projection Sheet to PMT and others as appropriate. The detailed list will include such information for each project as anticipated consultation (level) needs, BA Submittal Date, Consultation Completion Deadline, and AD Date. The Consultation Completion Deadline will be the primary gage for ESA workload prioritization.

Workload Planning Tool
To assist the Liaison Permitting Team with workload forecasting and management, the Liaison Program Coordinator will maintain a detailed list of all projects to be permitted by the Liaison Permitting Team. The Workload Planning Tool will be updated and provided to Liaison Permitting Team members at the first weekly Liaison Permitting Team meeting of each month. The Liaison Program Coordinator will also provide the Workload Planning Tool to region/mode environmental staff (and others) as appropriate. The detailed list will include such information for each project as anticipated permits (type) needed, permit application submittal date, date permits are needed, and AD date. The Liaison Program Coordinator will also

maintain a tab in the Workload Planning Tool for projects in construction. This detailed list will include permits issued for each project in construction, the number of modifications issued by each agency for each project, general construction schedules, the WSDOT environmental contact for construction, and the type of mitigation permitted for the project. The Needs Permits By Date will be the primary gage for permitting workload prioritization.

General Use of Planning Tools

Each Liaison Team Member and Region/Mode is responsible for providing current and accurate information to the Liaison Program Coordinator for updating the planning tools. The Liaison Program Manager and Coordinator will work with Project Teams and Liaison Team Members to identify project schedule risks, possible solutions, and alternatives based on the proposed ESA consultation and permitting schedule information provided.