



PORT OF PORT TOWNSEND **SHORT'S FAMILY FARM PLAN**

Working Together to Support Community Resilience and Prosperity



Port Commission

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PRESENTED TO THE PORT COMMISSION BY THE FARM STEERING COMMITTEE ON 7/10/24

I: Introduction & Background

In the summer of 2023, the Port acquired the 253-acre Short's Family Farm in Chimacum, one of the largest contiguous agricultural land holdings in Jefferson County. The Commission authorized the purchase of the farm with the objective of developing and maintaining infrastructure and establishing uses of the property that will help sustain and expand agriculture in Jefferson County. Acquisition, redevelopment, and active use of the Short's Family Farm represents a rare opportunity for the Port to help to strengthen the agricultural sector of our economy and support the health of our local food system.

On September 27, 2023, the Commission adopted Resolution No. 797-23 to guide the development of a plan for the farm. The resolution outlined four planning objectives, a schedule for plan development, and established a committee of local experts (the Farm Steering Committee (FSC)) to help prepare a Farm Plan to guide future use and development of the property.

In late 2023, the Port contracted with the University of Washington's Department of Urban Design (UW) to employ master's degree students and faculty to assist the FSC and Port staff with the visioning process, community engagement, meeting facilitation, and to assist the FSC in preparing its recommendations for Commission consideration.

FSC meetings were held regularly between January and June of 2024. Between January and March of 2024, the FSC's work focused on developing a common understanding of existing site conditions and identifying issues requiring additional information and research. In April and May, community and FSC meetings concentrated on developing a vision for future use and development of the property. All FSC meetings were conducted at the WSU Extension Offices in Hadlock, or on-site at the Short's Family Farm. The FSC's recommendations were presented to the Port Commission at a Public Workshop Meeting on July 10, 2024.



II: Plan Purpose & Vision for the Future

PLAN PURPOSE

To help promote a thriving agricultural sector in Jefferson County.

A VISION FOR THE FARM'S FUTURE

The Port's ownership and management of the Short's Family Farm has expanded agricultural opportunities for the farmers of Jefferson County, enhanced the resilience of the local food system, and improved fish and wildlife habitat along Chimacum and Naylor's Creeks. The ag-supporting infrastructure developed and maintained by the Port supports the processing, storage and distribution of local ag products, and the property has been wisely stewarded to help nurture farmers in our community.



KEY CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES PRESENTED BY THE FARM

Challenges:

- Ongoing need to manage reed canary grass, especially in the creek channel
- Site conditions and historic changes to the landform that contribute to flooding and poor salmon habitat
- Shortage of arable land – better suited to grazing/pasture than crops/perennials
- Aging farm buildings and infrastructure in need of replacement, rehabilitation, and ongoing maintenance
- Maintenance of the unfarmed areas of the property (i.e., unleased common areas)

Opportunities:

- Advancing the Port’s mission to support the community’s economic health and vitality
- Collaborating to build community consensus for future use
- Leveraging Port capabilities to develop infrastructure that widely benefits farmers and grows Jefferson County’s economy
- Forging partnerships with agencies, non-profits and producers to address complex habitat restoration, land stewardship, and food system resilience challenges
- Providing farmers access to land for lease



Figure #1 - Short’s Family Farm & Chimacum Valley – View Looking North/Northwest, June 2023

FOUR KEY PLAN GOALS

Consistent with the guidance provided by the Port Commission in Resolution No. 797-23, the Farm Steering Committee has recommended adoption of four key goals to guide the Port’s future decision-making concerning the Short’s Family Farm, as follows:

1. **Support, Sustain & Expand Local Ag:** Develop and manage the farm to tangibly benefit area farmers and support, sustain, and expand agricultural production, processing, and food system resilience in Jefferson County.
2. **Restore Habitat:** Undertake restoration efforts to improve habitat functions and values on site, especially for migratory fish.
3. **Seek a Return on Port Investments:** Whenever possible, advance uses and activities that achieve the Port’s standard rate of a return on its directly invested dollars.
4. **Buy Time for Further Research & Investigation:** Take immediate actions to ensure a smooth transition to Port management of the farm while further assessing implementation steps.



Figure #2 - Farm Steering Committee – “Hayride” Farm Tour, April 25, 2024

III: Goals, Strategies & Actions

Goal #1 - Support, Sustain & Expand Local Ag: *Develop and manage the farm to tangibly benefit area farmers and support, sustain, and expand agricultural production, processing, and food system resilience in Jefferson County.*

Strategy 1.1: Research, and if feasible, seek funding to design, build and permit on-site infrastructure that provides wide benefits to Jefferson County farmers.

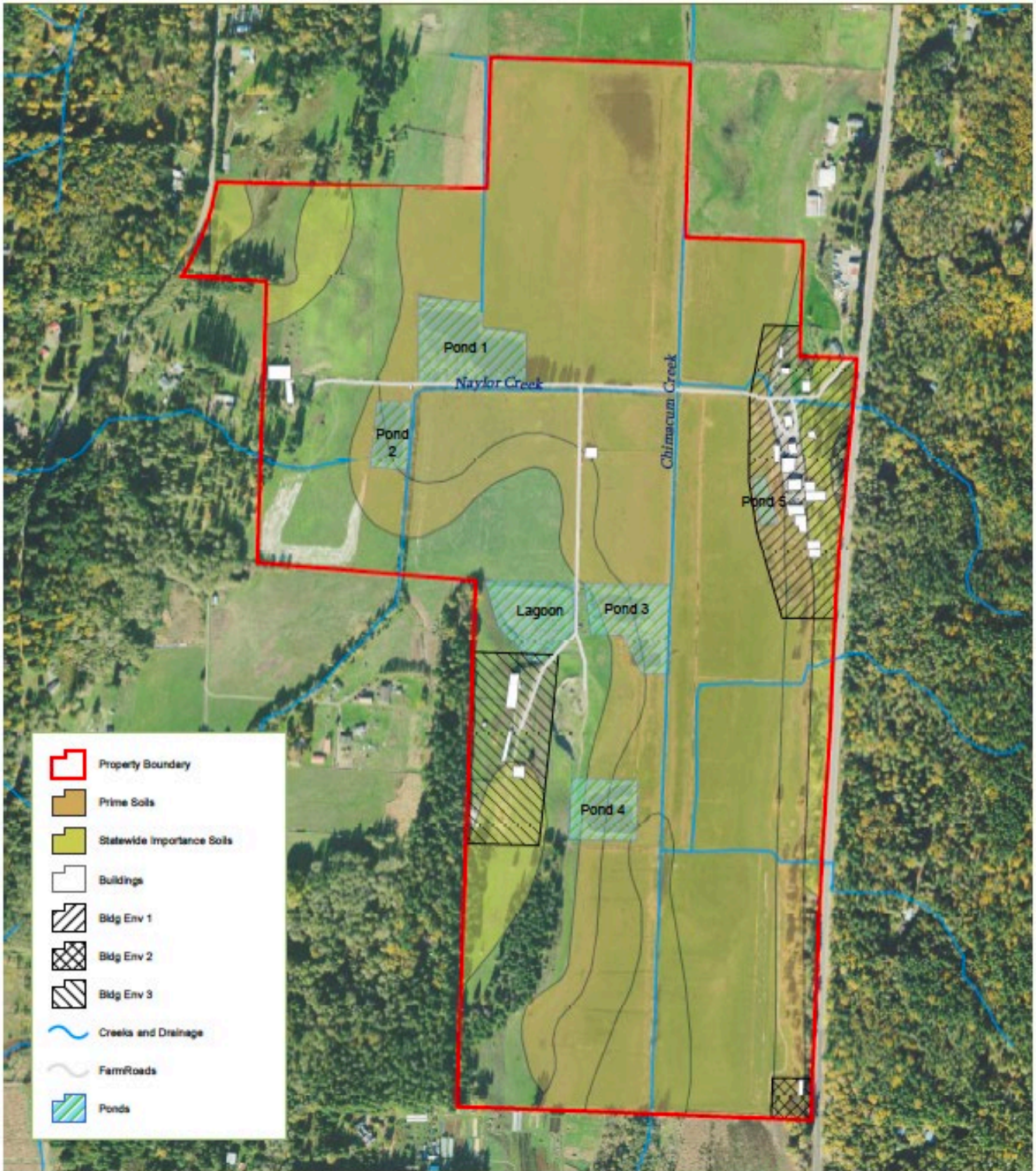
- Investigate, and if feasible, fund and construct the infrastructure needed to periodically host a mobile slaughter unit (MSU) at the Short’s Family Farm.
- Research the potential to construct and license use of infrastructure that supports multiple users, for the processing, cold storage, and distribution of locally produced ag goods.
- Support equipment sharing and rental arrangements that increase farmers’ access to the tools of the trade.

Strategy 1.2: Encourage continued active agricultural use of the farm for both grazing and growing crops.

- Identify and delineate areas of the farm for specific uses,¹ including:
 - Hay production/year-round pasture
 - Summer-only pasture
 - Arable crops (e.g., cereals), perennials (e.g., blueberries) and orchards (e.g., fruit and nut trees)
 - Parcels available for lease to benefit new and existing farmers
 - Seasonal Hunting
 - Public access for birding, walking and wildlife viewing
- In collaboration with agencies and community groups, continually apply adaptive management principles at the farm to attain the Port’s goals of benefiting both agriculture and habitat, while achieving the Port’s adopted rate of return.
- Investigate, and if feasible construct, vehicular farm access from West Valley Road.
- Research the potential for persistently wet soils on-site to be used for paludiculture crops (e.g., cranberries, watercress, etc.).
- If feasible, extend irrigation to portions of the farm not supplied with water for crops, perennials and orchards.

Strategy 1.3: Ensure public access is sensitive to, and compatible with, agricultural activity.

¹ See Figures #3, “Property Boundary & Features” and #4, Field Boundaries & Acreages” on pages 7 and 8.



Short's Family Farm
Figure #3 - Property
Boundary & Features

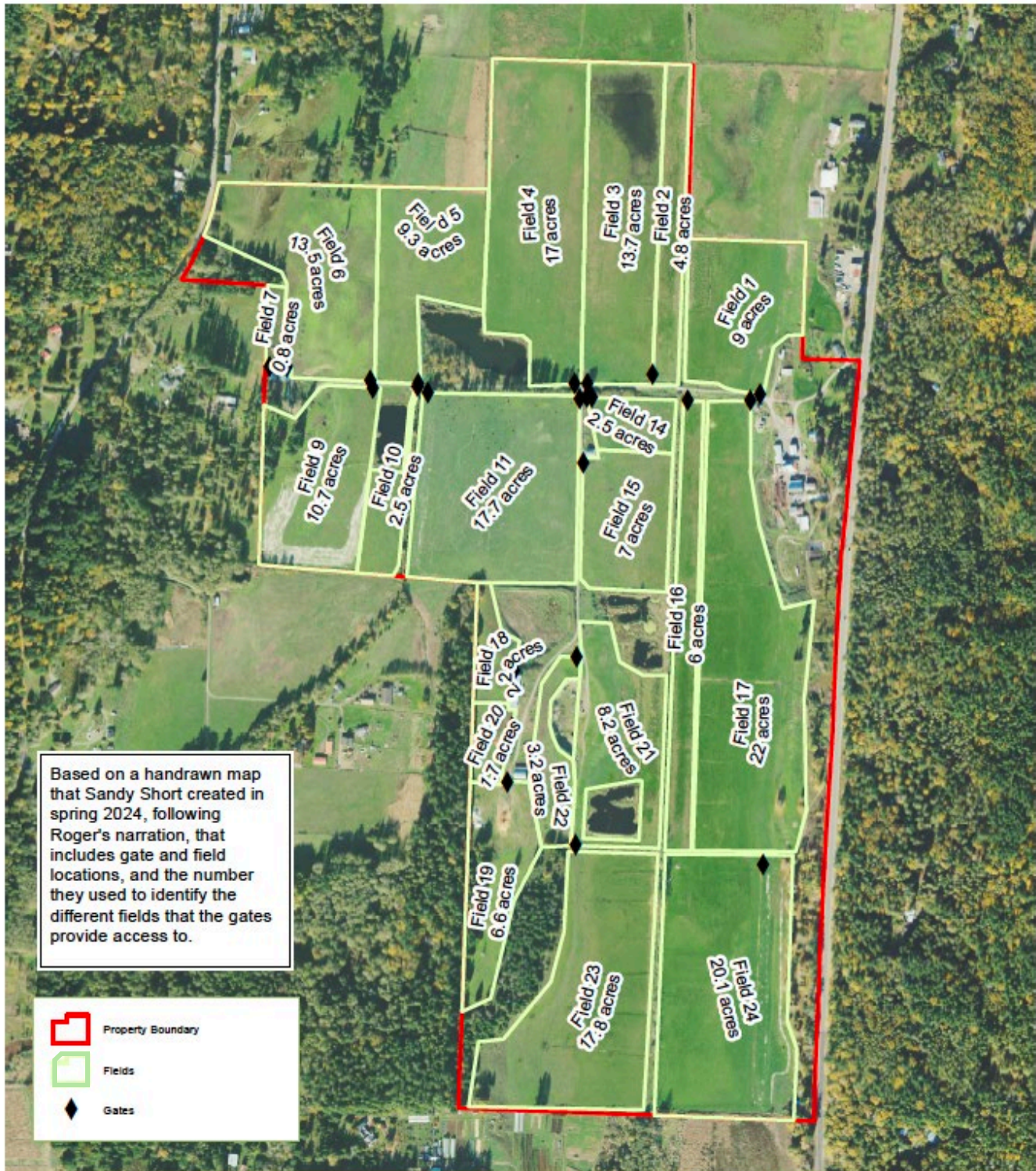
0 250 500 1,000
 Feet

2023 Aerial Image (NAIP)

For informational purposes only. All data
 represented are from varying sources and
 approximate.

Map created in June, 2024





Short's Family Farm
Figure #4 - Field
Boundaries & Acreages

0 250 500 1,000
 Feet

2023 Aerial Image (NAIP)
 For informational purposes only. All data represented are from varying sources and approximate.
 Map created in June, 2024



Goal #2 – Restore Habitat: Undertake restoration efforts to improve habitat functions and values on site, especially for migratory fish.

Strategy 2.1: Immediately (i.e., July-September 2024) implement measures to manage invasive Reed Canary Grass to improve stream flow and reduce the extent of fall and winter flooding.

- Work with the Jefferson County Conservation District and other partners to mechanically remove Reed Canary Grass and other invasive species via rake and flail mower attachments from the main stem of Chimacum Creek.
- Develop, fund and implement an annual plan to manage Reed Canary Grass and other invasives on-site.
- Collaborate and coordinate with other landowners on the main stem of Chimacum Creek and the JCCD to encourage system-wide Reed Canary Grass management efforts.

Strategy 2.2: Investigate the potential to access grant funding to replace the Naylor's Creek culvert on-site to improve fish passage.

Strategy 2.3: In consultation with agencies, habitat and wetland specialists, the tribes, non-profits (e.g., NOSC and Jefferson Land Trust) and farmers, develop Habitat Restoration and Public Access Plan.

- Investigate and confirm the extent of historic agricultural activities to inform decisions concerning the geographic scope of future habitat restoration efforts.
- Develop improved topographic survey data to inform habitat restoration design.
- Research options to improve habitat for migratory fish.
- Coordinate with agencies, wetland and habitat specialists, the tribes, non-profits and farmers to design a Habitat Restoration Plan capable of funding and implementation.
- Ensure that public access is sensitive to habitat functions.

Goal #3 – Seek a Return on Port Investments: Whenever possible, advance uses and activities that achieve the Port's standard rate of a return on its directly invested dollars.

Strategy 3.1: Ensure that licenses, leases, and capital investment decisions at the Short Farm employ a "triple bottom line" analysis to confirm that each is responsible economically, environmentally, and socially.

Strategy 3.2: Aggressively seek grant funding for capital infrastructure improvement and habitat restoration efforts to minimize directly invested Port dollars and maximize the potential to achieve the Port's standard rate of return.

Strategy 3.3: Recognize that the Port's standard rate of return of 9.5% for the Short's Family Farm may not be achieved immediately but may require a period of years.

Strategy 3.4: Pursue short-term license and use agreements to generate an immediate return on investment (e.g., hunting and birding access agreements with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)).



Figure #5 – Short’s Family Farm Cattle

Goal #4 - Buy Time for Further Research & Investigation: Take immediate actions to ensure a smooth transition to Port management of the farm while further assessing implementation steps.

Strategy 4.1: Immediately (i.e., before September 1, 2024) develop an “Operations Plan” that documents the locations of key utilities and improvements on the Farm, and that outlines the day-to-day, month-to-month, and year-to-year activities that must be undertaken to ensure that the farm remains viable.

Strategy 4.2: Consider retaining a part-time/temporary farm caretaker to routinely inspect the property and oversee implementation of the Operations Plan.

Strategy 4.3: Create an Implementation Matrix outlining action items requiring further research and analysis to determine their feasibility (see Attachment “A,” Implementation Actions). Ensure that the matrix identifies a timeline for completion of each item, its estimated rough order of magnitude cost, implementation leaders and partners, and measures of success. Priority implementation actions include, but are not limited to the following:

- Negotiating and approving short-term lease agreements (e.g., 12-24 months) to ensure that the farm remains in active use while the longer-term use and development plans outlined in this Plan are advanced.
- Adopting an Agricultural Best Management Practices (BMP) Manual for farm tenants and licensees.
- Developing evaluation criteria to fairly select lessees (i.e., an equitable land access strategy).

Strategy 4.4: Consider establishing the Farm Steering Committee as a regular standing committee to advance the work outlined in this Plan between July 2024 and December 2026. Alternatively, consider convening an ad hoc committee or committees to assist the Port in implementing this plan as needed.



Figure #6 – Summer Hay Rolls, Jefferson County, WA



ATTACHMENT “A”

Short’s Family Farm Plan - Implementation Actions

Successful implementation of this Farm Plan will require the Port to undertake a variety of studies, programs and capital investments. The following matrix identifies priority studies, programs and capital projects to be initiated over the coming years. Items in the matrix are not listed in order of priority. The matrix should be reassessed periodically to ensure that the correct priorities have been identified, consistent with the direction outlined in this Plan.

RESEARCH PRIORITIES, MANAGEMENT ACTIONS & CAPITAL PROJECTS						
Plan Goals & Action Items	Timeline for Initiation/Completion			Estimated Cost (Rough Order of Magnitude) ^{1*}	Implementation Leaders & Partners	Measuring Success
	2024-2026	2027-2030	2031 & Beyond			
Goal #1 - Support, Sustain & Expand Local Ag						
Collaborate with WSU Extension to complete an updated Farm Census for Jefferson County.	X			Low	Port staff	A completed census that helps inform future Port infrastructure investments.
Research the on-site infrastructure requirements and potential to attract a regional meat processor to periodically use the Short Farm as a location for a Mobile Slaughter Unit (MSU).	X			Moderate	Port staff in collaboration w/local livestock ranchers and WSU Extension	Construction of necessary on-site improvements and a license and use agreement with regional meat processor – or a determination that such investment is not economically viable.
Conduct a feasibility analysis to determine the viability of developing infrastructure for processing, cold storage, and distribution of agricultural products on-site.		X		Moderate	Port staff w/consultant support (grant funded)	A completed Feasibility Analysis meeting the requirements of the Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB) to ascertain the viability of establishing a Food Hub on the site.
Delineate parcels available for lease to farmers.	X			Low	Port staff	Complete “lease up” of available fields to local growers.
Research and, if feasible, construct vehicular access to the farm from West Valley Road.		X		High	Port staff	Construction of a second means of access to facilitate more efficient use of land and outbuildings on the west side of Chimacum Creek.
Extend irrigation to portions of the farm not presently supplied with water.	X			Moderate	Port staff	More irrigated acreage available for crops, perennials and orchards.
Goal #2 – Restore Habitat						
Under the JCCD’s Hydraulic Project Approval (HPA) permit, mechanically remove Reed Canary Grass and other invasive species along Chimacum Creek.	X			Moderate	Port management to retain contractor; coordinate activities w/JCCD	Active/ongoing management of Reed Canary Grass/invasives – improved stream flow.
Seek funding to replace the Naylor’s Creek culvert to improve fish passage.	X			Moderate to High	Port staff	Securing grant funding and proceeding with the design, permitting and construction of a new culvert to improve fish passage.

^{1*} Key to estimated cost terminology: “Low” = up to \$10,000; “Moderate” = \$10,001 - \$100,000; “High” = over \$100,000.

**RESEARCH PRIORITIES, MANAGEMENT ACTIONS & CAPITAL PROJECTS,
Continued**

Action Item	Timeline for Initiation/Completion			Estimated Cost (Rough Order of Magnitude) ^{2*}	Implementation Leaders & Partners	Measuring Success
	2024-2026	2027-2030	2031 & Beyond			
Goal #2 – Restore Habitat, continued						
Develop and implement a Habitat Restoration Plan.		X	X	High	Port staff w/consultant support in coordination with agencies and non-profits	A Habitat Restoration Plan that, as it is implemented, materially improves habitat functions and values, especially for migratory fish.
Complete a refined and updated topographical survey of the property to inform the design of a Habitat Restoration Plan.	X			High	Port consultant selected via RCW 39.80	Sufficiently detailed topographic data to inform the design of a Habitat Restoration Plan.
Develop a Public Access Plan which is sensitive to habitat functions.	X	X		Low	Port staff w/consultant support in coordination with agencies and non-profits	A Public Access Plan that facilitates increased public use without compromising habitat functions or agricultural activities.
Goal #3 – Seek a Return on Port Investments						
Aggressively seek grant funding for capital improvements and habitat restoration efforts.	X	X	X	Low to Moderate (depending on complexity of grant)	Port staff	Funding for key habitat restoration and infrastructure projects, leveraging Port contributions to help achieve of Port’s standard rate of return.
Negotiate and execute short-term license & use agreements to generate an immediate income stream (e.g., hunting/birding access agreement(s) with WDFW).	X			Low	Port staff	Generation of an immediate return on investment; continued (limited) public recreational access.
Negotiate and execute short-term lease agreements (i.e., not to exceed 24 months) to ensure that the farm remains in active use while long-term use/development plans are formulated.	X			Low	Port staff	Generation of immediate return on investment; continued active agricultural use of the farm.
Goal #4 – Buy Time - Conduct Further Research & Investigation						
Immediately develop (i.e., before September 1, 2024) and implement a Farm Operations Plan.	X			Low	Port staff in collaboration w/the Short Family and local farmers	A Plan outlining day-to-day, month-to-month, year-to-year activities that must occur to keep the farm viable, and documentation of locations of key utilities & improvements on-site.
Assess, and if appropriate, retain a part-time/temporary caretaker (i.e., up to 24 months) to routinely inspect the farm/structures and oversee implementation of the Farm Operations Plan.	X			Moderate	Port Commission decision in consultation w/Port staff	Active oversight and management of the farm while a long-term management plan is developed.

^{2*} Key to estimated cost terminology: “Low” = up to \$10,000; “Moderate” = \$10,001 - \$100,000; “High” = over \$100,000.

**RESEARCH PRIORITIES, MANAGEMENT ACTIONS & CAPITAL PROJECTS,
Continued**

Action Item	Timeline for Initiation/Completion			Estimated Cost (Rough Order of Magnitude) ^{3*}	Implementation Leaders & Partners	Measuring Success
	2024-2026	2027-2030	2031 & Beyond			
Goal #4 – Buy Time - Conduct Further Research & Investigation, continued						
Negotiate and execute short-term lease agreements (i.e., not to exceed 24 months) to ensure that the farm remains in active use while long-term use/development plans are formulated. ⁴	X			Low	Port staff	Generation of immediate return on investment; continued active agricultural use of the farm.
Develop and implement a Best Management Practices (BMPs) Manual for use by farm tenants and lessees.	X			Moderate	Port staff in collaboration w/local farmers, JCCD, NRCS and WSU Extension	Adherence to BMPs that promote human and environmental health and high-quality farm products.
Develop and apply evaluation/decision criteria to fairly select future lessees (i.e., an equitable land access strategy).	X			Low	Port staff in consultation w/FSC or successor	Equitable treatment in the selection of lessees that advance the goals of the Farm Plan.
Consider establishing either an ad hoc committee(s) or the Farm Steering Committee (as a standing committee) to assist in future research, investigation and plan implementation efforts	X			Low	Port Commission/Port staff	Continued help, guidance, and alignment with community values in determining the future of the farm.
Research and determine appropriate future use of the existing residence on-site.	X			Low	Port staff in consultation w/General Counsel and Port Commission	An actionable plan for beneficial use of the farmhouse.
Develop and implement a Public Access Management Plan that delineates areas of the property that are open and accessible on a full-time or limited basis.		X		Low	Port staff in consultation w/FSC or successor	Implementation of rules that ensure that public recreational access to the property is in harmony agricultural uses and maintenance of habitat functions and values.

^{3*} Key to estimated cost terminology: “Low” = up to \$10,000; “Moderate” = \$10,001 - \$100,000; “High” = over \$100,000.

⁴ Negotiating and executing short term leases is a high priority under both Goal #3 and #4.