

Skagit Watershed Council
Meeting of the Board of Directors – Final Notes
June 4, 2015 SWC Office, Mount Vernon, WA

(* indicates action item; indicates decision)

Attendance: Chair Ken Dahlstedt, Bob Everitt, Richard Brocksmith, Brenda Cunningham, Loren Everest, Margaret Fleek, Steve Hinton, Colleen McShane, and Jon-Paul Shannahan. (Note: Steve Hinton left at 11:00 am)

Not in attendance: Carolyn Kelly

The meeting was called to order at 9:13 am with a quorum.

Meeting Notes

Approve Board Notes with two changes: February 2016 not 2106. Also, replace attribution of one comment to Steve rather than Bob.

Bob moved and Loren seconded approval of the notes from May 7, 2015 (#2); unanimously approved.

Draft Agenda Review

The group introduced themselves, quorum was established, and Agenda approved. (#1)

Executive Director Report

- Richard made general comments about the April 2014 financials. Everything that is possible is direct billed, which has produced surplus income for the year. One minor error on indirect cost comparison sheet: Insurance was paid in May, not April (\$1499), though this is corrected in the hard copy packets.
Margaret moved and Brenda seconded the motion to approve the April Financial Report (#3) as included in the board packet; vote was unanimous.
- Richard handed out a memo regarding transition planning for board members. Margaret is retiring in January 2016, and her future role is not yet determined; however, she intends to stay on as a planner for Hamilton and possibly Lyman, which would likely keep her qualified. The Board will need to establish a nomination committee.
- The M&AM subcommittee has a proposal for a monitoring project with SRSC. They are still finalizing the final proposal, and briefed TWG at last meeting, as noted in committee reports.
- Washington Salmon Coalition - Richard is on the Executive Committee and slated to be appointed to the Funding Committee Chair which will likely have a limited time commitment, but great benefit to the Skagit efforts. is the main role of that position appears to be serving on the Salmon Recovery Network which is composed of many of the major sectors across the state such as lead entities, regional recovery organizations and state agencies. It is working to articulate key messages to use on a statewide level. This position puts Richard in a position to advocate for maintaining and increasing SWC's funding. No comments by the Board.

- SRFB Conference - SWC members were well represented and many made excellent presentations. WDFW has a new Director who signaled the importance of the Skagit. Richard also pointed out that tangible, specific watershed-scale actions are being identified and communicated about appropriate strategies and actions in the face of climate change. These recommendations fully reinforce our current salmon strategies though they may increase focus on riparian areas and upper watershed refugia. Mention on John Stein a climate researcher.
- Legislative Update - Richard spoke with Representative Norma Smith at length about funding needs as she is on the negotiating committee. She wants project proposals to be disciplined and strategic, with each able to communicate goals and how those project goals add up to recovery. Steve shared that this observation doesn't signal a technical issue; it's more of a communication issue. Many felt that we are already being focused and strategic in the Skagit.

Committee Reports

Richard shared activities of each of the following subcommittees:

- Technical Work Group May 21
Savage Creek outcomes weren't detailed in the committee report, so Steve stated that TWG looked at relocation of South Skagit Highway or working with the current location. Discussion will continue. Steve also mentioned that the scope change with Hanson Creek will be discussed later in the meeting.
- Protection Subcommittee May 21
- Monitoring & Adaptive Management Subcommittee May 11
- Steelhead/ Bull Trout Subcommittee: None.

Old Business

- 2015-2016 work plan (#5) and budget (#6)
Richard indicated he didn't receive many suggestions for changes to the work plan and he spoke to minor changes that were incorporated. He also noted that he included in the packet a page showing allocated funds for each task.
Comments: Objectives 10 and 11 use words 'management' which imply that SWC has habitat management authority; however, Steve does not believe that is true. Also the gaps analysis by the monitoring committee will help inform the Chinook critical uncertainties questions in the 2015 Strategic Approach so it is appropriate to not explicitly call that out in this year's work plan. We should add SWC would participate in the PSP 2016 Action Agenda update and Chinook Implementation Strategies under task 4, Lead Entity Strategic Approach.
Richard spoke to the budget breakdown - PSAR funds are capital not operational funds and thus are most appropriate for project and project development process. Lead entity funds are state general funds and are thus more flexible which is why they are allocated towards monitoring and adaptive management. As a result, PSAR and lead entity funding has been flipped around in the last few years as state guidance on that has recently changed. RCO reviews any sub-contracts over \$20K. Bob moved with the

edits as described today that we approve the work plan and budget and Brenda seconded; approved unanimously.

- SWC Personnel Policies amendment (#7)
After further consultation with Carolyn, it has become more apparent that since staff work descriptions change over time and are specific to each employee it isn't ideal to put employee classifications in this static policies document, so those have been removed in this final version.
Sections 4.5 and 4.6 - Wording will be added to state that part time employees do not receive overtime pay until they exceed 40 hours at which point they can choose either time and a half pay or 1:1 comp time. ***Colleen will send wording to Richard for inclusion.**
Bob moved approval of the Personnel Policies as presented with the addition of Colleen's wording and Colleen seconded; unanimously approved.
- SWC Financial Policies amendment (#8)
Richard outlined four changes as shown in track changes.
Bob moved and Brenda seconded approval of Financial Policies amendments; unanimously approved.
- Nominee for Board of Director's vacancy thru February 2016 (#9)
Steve nominated and Loren seconded Michael Kirshenbaum's nomination to the Council of Members in September to replace Brenda following her resignation; unanimously approved.

New Business

- Hansen Creek Acquisition – SRFB project scope change request (#10)
Steve summarized that three parcels were identified in the original proposal approved July 2014. The proposal added a small portion for the upper property along SR20 with SRFP grant match. Steve secured PSE 505 agreement funds in the meantime with these PSE funds being used to fund Boetcher and Burress properties, leaving only the property along SR20 unfunded. all of that represents a huge success in consolidating these properties in a project. However, SRSC had not yet even entered into contract with RCO for the SRFB grant award and now RCO wants a contract to happen this month or we'll need to return the funds. To keep the project moving towards success, SRSC is now proposing to increase the acreage of the remaining property acquisition near SR20 and to add a new property just above Minkler Road, which is the first part of his change request. Steve confirmed that there are only two parcels at the top and bottom of the reach as a focus of this scope change request. \$59K would be returned to the lead entity process for 2015 allocation.
Work around with funding issues was to use PSE design money for matching, but this required a change from the original acquisition project to be a combination project, which is the second part of the scope change request and is mostly an administrative change. The change request was reviewed and approved by TWG from their technical purview.

Issues around Carolyn's concerns were discussed. Steve indicated that this is really 2014 old business, not new properties. However he wants to give Carolyn opportunity to respond. There is lower ground where the stream seems to want to be that creates a more-connected floodplain creating benefits for salmon as well as limiting flooding issues in that area. The scope change was not discussed at the last meeting which is in part why Carolyn wants caution on this project.

Bob moved that we commit the funds as proposed by the TWG with the caveat that if Carolyn doesn't approve, then we reconsider as a group before the next meeting and Jon Paul seconded; unanimously approved with Steve abstaining.

Nominating Committee

Discussion on this topic was added at this point in the meeting to provide time for Bob Warinner to arrive to present the SWC Protection Strategy Update. All directors are in place until February 2016 when 4 will have their terms expire, as outlined in Richard's previous memo. The September meeting could nominate Michael for a three-year term to better stagger the wave of expirations coming. Align actions of nominating committee and subsequently the Board with the expiration of many of the terms in February. Richard suggested the board and nominating committee looks at gaps in representation as well as staggering terms for better continuity. The group discussed options. Chair asked for people who would be willing to be appointed and he appointed those five.

***The group agreed to form a nominating committee: Loren, Bob, Jon Paul, Steve (Chair) and one non-board member, Tim Manns should he agree. After this meeting, the committee will be given a list of current members and upcoming term expirations and will be called together by Steve and Richard.**

Executive Session

- Executive Director Performance Review

SWC Protection Strategy Update project (#11)

- Bob Warinner and Richard reviewed the status on the SWC Protection Strategy Update with a PowerPoint presentation. (10:55 am) He started with an explanation of the 1998 establishment of this guiding document which addressed the following criteria: monetary property value, reach level habitat, floodplain habitat, and connectivity and threat which provides a cost effectiveness score. He shared the equation deriving the CE score. The Board delegates some authority to the Protection Subcommittee because of the empirical nature of this scoring strategy. Anything above a CE of 27 can be greenlighted by the subcommittee for acquisition. The SRFB is comfortable with this process including allocating funds by reach-level grants unlike other watersheds. He shared the properties that have been acquired over the past 15 years.
- Richard shared a document listing many of the policies and principles flowing from this 1998 strategy so that the committees can use this to highlight where some principles

and policies are being bumped up against. While the direction is to avoid changes where possible, where that happens, the Board will be asked to determine how to proceed.

- Richard shared a draft of problem statements from the protection subcommittee, which will continue to be a work in progress as the project proceeds.
- Richard spoke to the deliverables and timeline and outlined the three modules which are likely to be developed: floodplain, tributaries, marine nearshore (future phase). Watershed and restoration - could they be parameters of the other 3 modules or standalone modules? Current thinking is likely the former.
- Tributary approach will concurrently work on: adaptation of current empirical formula for tributaries; fix problems with main stem module; assess ability to be able to compare the two modules; develop a stratification process in a tributary using a score sheet tool as opposed to the formula; pilot both tributary approaches and assess each approaches' relative strengths before selecting one tool over the other; SWC to define work plan staffing approaches as a next step.
- SRFB system takes 1.5 years so maintaining block grants allow for nimble funding options in the interim.
- Discussion: Chinook and Steelhead should be a driver. Cost seems to be such a huge factor, but what about habitat. Could this parameter be applied last or separately? Rather than lump them, perhaps keep them separate and have a way to identify extraordinary situations. Cost could be secondary under some circumstances. Property is getting more expensive so this issue will come into play more in the future. Floodplain scores driven by vegetation may be over weighted given technology and knowledge acquired since 1998 regarding ability to successfully complete plantings.
- The old 1998 document is on the website under Resources for those who want to review it.
- Richard said that the Protection subcommittee will be meeting every month. Jon Paul would like to be kept in the loop about their future meeting dates and will work with Rick on the topic.

The meeting adjourned around at 11:40 am.