

Skagit Watershed Council - Final Notes

Meeting of the Board of Directors – November 3, 2016

(* indicates action item; ___ indicates decision)

Attendance: Richard Brocksmith, Michael Kirshenbaum, Carolyn Kelly, and Colleen McShane, Steve Hinton, Jon Vanderheyden, and Jon-Paul Shannahan.

Not in attendance: Chair Ken Dahlstedt and Brendan Brokes.

Call to Order

- Introductions, Determine Quorum, and Agenda (#1) – Carolyn served as chair for this meeting. Agenda approved with two additions: SFEG contract amendment & new potential TWG member.
- Board Notes: October 6, 2016 (#2) and October 24, 2016 (#3)
Colleen McShane moved to approve the October 6 notes and Michael Kirshenbaum seconded. No suggested edits. Vote to approve was unanimous.
Jon-Paul moved to approve the October 24 phone Board meeting notes and Michael Kirshenbaum seconded. No suggested edits. Vote to approve was unanimous.

Executive Directors Report

- Approve September Financial Report (#4) and Sub-Contracting Update (#5)
Richard provided an update on the Financials which were a little in the negative this month due to unrecoverable annual lunch costs, larger than normal server installation fee, and extended staff vacations in September.
As part of the Financial Report, the Board reviewed the consultant tracking sheet and a brief memo of the status of each sub-award outlining work underway to complete projects. Richard noted that he executed two time extensions for capacity building contracts associated with culvert barrier analyses and there was an agenda item in new business to amend the SFEG riparian contract.
Steve Hinton moved to approve the Financial Report and Colleen McShane seconded. No further discussion. Vote to approve was unanimous.
- SWC Quarterly meeting
Richard described the agenda items and their intent for the meeting on November 9.

Committee Reports – Verbal Update

- Technical Work Group – TWG met in October. We gathered input on the Protection Strategy work. They also discussed the Hansen amendment, recommending it for Board approval. TWG also had a briefing from Tidegate Fish Initiative (TFI) staff from NOAA and WDFW, including how it ties in with SWC work. It was helpful to have Steve Hinton from SRSC at the meeting to provide context as well since he has staffed TFI since early on.
- Protection Subcommittee – This subcommittee met in October to review a couple parcels and green light those. They also provided input on the Protection Strategy update.
- Community Engagement Committee – They met in early November. Two additional staff attended from Skagit Land Trust, while others have been invited such as Coastal Volunteer Partnership. This is a very excited group and a great sounding board for engagement initiatives. They envision SWC as a

hub and are looking at ways to collaborate and partner effectively while keeping within current capacity. They've been instrumental in moving from planning to implementation proposals.

Old Business

Community Engagement Program – Richard provided an overview of the unfolding of the engagement process over the last year. Current planning includes decisions about tools, community-oriented themes, length of the project, partners, and capacity.

Richard reviewed the Draft Implementation Plan (#6) –Tools are being put in place including a SWC Facebook site called 'Our Skagit' which will cross-market community and SWC member events as well as roll out content of its own. The Facebook will launch a 'Seasons of Skagit' photo contest to the community. Interviews called 'This Skagit Life' will capture voices around the Skagit. The plan is to build the tools and infrastructure so it's ready to launch publicly in December after the Board has provided final input.

The Board shared their thoughts and advice about launching this project.

- Make sure to include all faces of our community in this initiative. Pay close attention to the voice of minority populations. It takes extra effort to include the subgroup populations – this is a diverse community – immigrant, Latino, Asian, Native American. 'This Skagit Life' interviews are a key place to promote the variety of perspectives across the community.
***Richard will further detail how tribal and other cultural perspectives will be included in this effort.**
- The Board emphasized the importance of soliciting tribal involvement. They suggested that Richard consult with each of the tribes and listen to how they would want to engage in this effort. Staff is busy and it would be more authentic to include tribal members - instead of staff - who are active and interested in community issues. Board members felt an outside agency such as SWC would be more effective in enlisting their participation. Steve and JP indicated they could at least support Richard's efforts here. ***Richard to follow up.**
- Pay attention to how sense of place differs per the lens of cultural heritage, past history, and where they live within the Skagit.
- Clarify the purpose and need for this initiative. Make sure the message is tight and clear so we are all on the same page. Without the community on board we won't get to a sustainable fishery. However, rather than jump in and tell people, we are asking the community to share.
- Take your time. Be open to slow it down. Don't feel rushed to get the tools activated or to check off boxes if we don't yet have a clear message. Pay attention to pace and momentum.
- Use words sensitively and carefully. For instance, use 'protect' instead of 'preserve;' restoration has multiple meanings; use 'project' or 'initiative' instead of 'campaign' which implies a donation; 'sustainability' is very broad.
- The path hasn't been obvious and this is a new direction. There are a million ways to approach the community and this is big and new. Be comfortable if this looks different six months from now. Be responsive and open to listening. Put some things out there and listen.
- The tools such as Facebook, interviews, contest, and possible activities look good. ***Front load the tools.** Interviews are key – pay attention to the stories.
- Get the "landmines" worked out regarding sequence, approval, press release, phases to do upfront and then subsequent phases. Publicity activities seem out of sequence; when does the press release go out and shouldn't we wait for Board approval?

- Establish phases; not everything needs to be rolled out immediately.
- ***Clearly sequence the timeline of activities; for instance, get the Facebook page established, do a SWC survey, and identify people to interview.**
- Make sure you have reached out to other voices within the community.
- Work out the language and ***solidify the “elevator speech”** so it’s solid and congruent across all channels and resonates with as many as possible.
- Continue to work the CEC members into the process. Enlist support from our membership. Once our core group is ready, we need to expand beyond what’s there; who are the people and how do they perceive us? What ‘Our Skagit’ means is a community dialogue. Listen and test it outside the usual crowd so you know what resonates. What are their pet peeves? See if SRFB funding is available for SWC member groups to do focus groups, and if so, focus groups in Rockport, Concrete, Hamilton, Darrington, Lyman will give SWC more context and input. We can test language, ask, and listen. (Ex: Middle Skagit Assessment was supposed to do this, but it never really happened.) Are these really focus groups or are these community-based activities generating the actual dialogue and engagement we hope for?
- Decide if getting the SWC image out there is part of the goal.
- Messaging: All members have skin in this game. The reputation of the organization and the member groups have a lot on the line. We need to make sure it’s not a campaign to pressure neighbors to restore and preserve or it could be misconstrued. Tone down the salmon message. Yes, they are a keystone species and they, like us all, are dependent on a healthy system and water. It’s about people’s backyard and working collectively. Protection is a strategy, but not the key message. The message is ‘protect what we love and it takes everyone to make a healthy watershed.’ SFEG is currently looking at their messaging and marketing as well.

***Richard agreed to further detail the implementation plan, sequence and phase it, clearly define the elevator speech, get more input and ensure regular check-ins with the Board. Richard will seek further input at the December Board meeting**

***At the Quarterly Council of Members meeting, Richard will introduce the broader goal and the elements and get their input. He will explain the purpose, goals, and tools; seeking expanded partnerships for this program.**

***Richard is scheduling meetings with all of the members to see what partnership opportunities we might have. He will be meeting with EDASC who are coincidentally going down this road of environmental benefits.**

Community Engagement Capacity

A letter of intent was submitted in late October to the Satterberg Foundation. This is a substantial grant opportunity. The Satterberg Foundation’s Core Support Grant is a multi-year general operating grant that funds up to \$100,000 per year, up to three years for 2017-2020. This program is structured to represent a blend of ideas that contribute to resilient nonprofit organizations, strong partnerships with the Foundation, and ultimately the fulfillment of their mission to create a just society and a sustainable environment. Application invitations are sent in late January 2017. If the process moves forward, site visits by Satterberg staff occur in February 2017 and application for the grant is no later than March 7, 2017.

Intern request (#7) – Capacity –An internship description was submitted to SVC and WWU to start in winter 2017 and build into a program that continues. Managing an intern takes time. Americorps is an option. Be aware that they don't know the subtleties; policies, politics, messaging etc so you have to be very clear and build in time to supervise them well.

Richard updated the Board on the addition of Katie Moore-Drougas and use of unallocated expenses from the existing Kulshan Services contract to hire her to be the interim coordinator for the next two months.

Richard discussed the need for additional capacity and support to sustain the engagement process. We have \$70,000 allocated at present and need double that. In response to the Board question about if it's enough to keep the momentum going, Richard indicated there are additional resources of \$12,000 set aside in the budget as well as discretionary funds in reserve which aren't yet earmarked, as well as existing funding sources to be renegotiated for 2017. Finding qualified interns will help and the CEC committee can assist with future funding ideas. While SWC is creating a superstructure for this effort, realistically it's a collective effort. He mentioned the allocation of \$6,000 for SCEA and EcoNet. The reality is funding sources don't want to pay for education and outreach. Startup grants help, but day to day operations need to look elsewhere.

Officer Elections

Ken is willing to be the Chair again, but wants an open discussion about what is best for us. No one else stepped forward since they appreciate his leadership and his unique ability to serve in this role. The Vice-Chair position needs to be filled since Steve resigned (he will still serve on the Board.) Jon-Paul feels he's still new to the Board, but he would consider this position after discussion with his leadership. Michael's roles are changing at the SLT and cannot devote additional time. Jon V isn't worried about obligations at SFEG, but expressed concerns about personal commitments. Colleen's job responsibilities are also pressing and she felt a better person would live and/or work in the Skagit Watershed.

New Business

- Hansen Restoration Acquisition – Approve Scope Amendment to SRFB Project #14-1248 (#8)
To improve ecological outcomes, this project has a no-cost request to add an additional property, by moving money allocated for one property to another property. Steve spoke to the map in the packet. This change would be a clean way to expand the floodplain wetland area and connect the properties as part of one project. This option manages drainage better with more effective alignment. While no agreement has been made on price, there is a motivated seller. It's too wet to be highly productive and the landowner doesn't have any other parcels nearby. The house would remain private. The TWG felt it makes technical sense and recommended this for the Board's consideration.

A motion was made and seconded to approve recommending the no-cost scope amendment to WA Recreation and Conservation Office for this existing project. Vote to approve was unanimous with Steve abstaining.

- SFEG Riparian Contract Amendment

SFEG has an existing sub-contract with SWC to support implementation of our riparian assessment and strategy update. The original contract for \$2500 had a low estimate for the amount of work it would take to complete an inventory of existing riparian restoration projects using the SWC database format. This contract amendment would add \$1,978 to complete this task. This amendment would add a second task to help SWC members conduct a workshop of riparian implementers to discuss lessons learned over the years, which would add another \$428 for a total not to exceed \$2,406.38

The Board asked that this workshop have structured outcomes with topics that met the needs of the Council as well as any individual member. The final agenda for the workshop should be approved by Richard as well.

Steve moved to approve the SFEG Contract Amendment and cost increase as proposed and Michael seconded. Vote to approve was unanimous with Jon abstaining.

- Forest Service – Jeremy Gilman has volunteered to serve on the TWG. He is an experienced and qualified individual, and we’ve been trying to get USFS back into the organization. ***The Board doesn’t have concerns about Jeremy, but they want to see his nomination formalized on the December Board agenda after discussion with the TWG.**
- Legislative Priorities
 - Status and content: Richard shared the status and content of state agency budget requests related to salmon habitat projects in particular. This begins a discussion about what priority needs we intend to share with the Legislature next year.
 - Our message: If we are to move forward, we need to keep the capital funding intact. We support the critical goals of many of these programs and we advocate maintaining at least the current level of support, and possibly more if there are specific, local projects that are critical and would be funded. However, blanket support of capital requests is difficult as we don’t always know what projects in other areas would be funded. And its possible that expanded funding for one program could impact funding for another program, which would be a negative consequence. The majority of our projects are supported by PSAR and SRFB and ESRP and thus we must preserve these at a minimum or grow the pie. SWC stewards its funding well, we are engaged, the projects are well-vetted, and we know the intricacies of the projects.

Adjourned at 11:31am.

Next SWC Board Meetings:

December 1, 9am to noon

January 5, 9am to noon

SWC Quarterly Council of Members:

November 9, 9am to noon