



Board of Directors Meeting

October 3, 2024, 10:30am-12:00pm

815 Cleveland Avenue, Mount Vernon and via Zoom

Notes

Materials in [Box](#) [Zoom meeting link](#)

(Underline indicates decision point; (#) indicate attachment; ***bold indicates action item**)

Present: John Stein (Chair), Aundrea McBride (SWC), Brendan Brokes (WDFW), Devin Smith (SRSC), Michael Kirshenbaum (SLT), Kara Rowe (WWA), Andrew Bearlin (SCL), Emmett Wild (SCD), Alison Studley (SFEG), Peter Browning (Skagit County)

Guests: Keeley Mathis (SWC), Holli Watne (SWC staff)

Call to Order

- Convened at 10:32.
- Quorum achieved.
- October Agenda approved. Motion by Michael, Emmett seconds. Unanimous.
- Board Notes for September approved. Motion by Andrew, Kara seconds. All others approve, except Michael who abstains.

Reports and Updates

Executive Director's Report

- Financials: Approving financial reports for July and August has been tabled until November. There was a request for more information or training regarding the financials. ***Aundrea will investigate and send out an invite.**
- Watershed Coordinator Interviews Update: Interviewed 5 candidates on Oct 1st and narrowed it down to 3 top candidates. Aundrea is checking references and will consider second interviews. Interview panel was made up of Devin, Rick, Aundrea, and Alison.
- Grant Round Wrap Up: All projects were funded. Smokehouse was approved on the Targeted Investment list last week at the SRFB meeting, but it is in 10th place, below the funding line which gets as far down as #7. If the Climate Commitment Act is not repealed it has a moderate chance of getting funded on the PSAR Large Cap list. Presentin is in limbo, waiting to hear if they can get Salmon money (available now) or PSAR money (available next July). RCO is working on accommodating our needs.

- Riparian Database Project Update: The consultant has begun working on small fixes and is convening a meeting with the Conservation District and possible VSP and the Drainage District Consortium.
- Data Sharing Policy: The Protection Subcommittee and Riparian Working Group are working on a policy for data sharing.
- Board Retreat Update and Request: ***Joan has created survey and is asking for your ideas for SWOT analysis and core values of SWC. Please complete this Google Docs link by Oct 15th.**

Committee Reports

- TWG amended a category in the Lead Entity Program Guide. In the chart for Technical Evaluation Criteria and Scoring, they merged two categories, “Cost Containment,” and “Cost: Benefit.” The new category name is, “Cost Justification.” Your review and approval of the change will come when the entire Program Guide is ready for review.
- Protection Subcommittee did not meet in September.
- M&AM is finalizing their updated list of monitoring priorities. They are also participating in the dialogue with Puget Sound Region and the SRFB about the new monitoring grant program policies. This will determine how future funding for monitoring gets distributed. Mike and Catherine Austin will join regional committees/panels. Aundrea: We need more of a presence at the regional level for directing how the monitoring is planned, funded, and implemented. Aundrea suggests that Mike LeMoine go to the monitoring bodies where ideas are being generated. ***Aundrea and Mike will meet next week to discuss this.**
- CEC Report: Last month SWC held Salmon Day at the Mount Vernon Farmer’s Market with 9 organizations involved. Holli has been in touch with Skagit Valley College and they did a salmon teacher workshop last weekend. Mike LaMoine’s video is now on our website.
- Special LECC Meeting: SCL is applying for a loan to purchase a high habitat value property that has just come up for sale. The loan was approved by a special meeting of the LECC, contingent upon the property tracking form being updated to reflect the unforested area and if there is any riprap to see if the property requires TWG approval.

SRFB Update

- The IMW (Intensely Monitored Watershed) is possibly being defunded in the next few years (plan evolving at SRFB). Skagit is one of four IMWs in the State. USIT is very concerned. There is more room to pressure RCO. Eric Neatherland voiced his support for funding IMW. ***Board Members voiced support for writing a letter in support of continuing IMW funding. Mike LeMoine and the M&AM will help start a draft. Aundrea will bring to November Board meeting.**
- Policy Changes:
 - Riparian/Manual 18 policy revision to align the two policies (i.e., no match for both regular riparian projects and special funds riparian projects).

- Acquisition Policy changes: Nick Norton is policy guy at RCO. He is trying to change RCO's policy to officially allow block grants like ours. Only 4 Lead Entities use this tool and it is now standard operating procedure (thanks, Marc Duboiski). The risk to us is that they could create a new policy that disallows some of what we do. ***Aundrea will watch this and keep in contact with the SRFB and Nick Norton.**

WA Salmon Coalition Update:

- Salmon Day-working with partners to talk about shared goals. Some legislators only want to hear from Skagit County residents (Aundrea is not). ***If you want to go, it is Feb 5th in Olympia and that would be great.** John, Peter and Alison are planning on going.
- Aundrea is on a committee working on permit streamlining at national and state levels. Aundrea can discuss more or gather board's input from those interested.

Salmon Recovery Council Update

- Oct 17th Puget Sound Day on the Sound.
- There's a 3M\$ request for Salmon Science. The salmon science advisory group is looking to fill 4 more slots. Having a rep of Skagit would be great.
- Long Live the Kings gave a presentation about climate change. How do you deal with climate change?
- Yukon River has just instilled a 7-year moratorium on fishing due to ~20,000 Chinook caught by fishing boats as bycatch.
- Puget Sound Partnership is developing targets for the next five years for habitat restoration and acquisition. These are based on existing data in PRISM, or on targets that individual lead entities have set in their four-year work plans.
- Skagit's Targets are coming out of PRISM, which we see as problematic.
 - The data in PRISM is not accurate because it wasn't intended to be a scientific habitat measurement but more of a grant accounting
 - Reducing the targets to acres doesn't account for how different acres have different habitat values.
 - HSIL Grant that we just received will be used to make the data in salmon recovery portal more usable for setting targets. The first step is to define the variable. It would be helpful to have people from SWC committees involved in this. ***Aundrea will put together a committee to work on this.**

Old Business

Board went into Executive Session to discuss staff plan in relation to the budget

- The board voted unanimously to change Aundrea's position at SWC from Interim Executive Director to Executive Director. Congratulations, Aundrea! She and John will discuss salary.
- Peter talked with the rest of the board about the Skagit County contract.

4-Year Work Plan

- TWG wants more specifics for criteria between non-Chinook projects that get on the list and those that don't get on the list. We can communicate about this via email. Devin's idea was to substitute "all salmon" rather than Chinook in the existing criteria.
- For TWG we will need to run through a project test case. One member suggests that SWC look at the foundational documents written around the year 2000 that were multi-species to see what projects were prioritized for funding. We should grapple with the broader mission.

Adjourn 11:59

Upcoming Events:

October 31, 9:00 to 12:00—day 1 of Board retreat

November 7, 10:30 to 12:00--regular Board meeting

November 12, 1:00 to 4:00—day 2 of Board retreat