

Community Engagement Committee – Final Meeting Notes

Skagit Watershed Council

October 4, 2016 -- 9:30 am – 11:30 am, SWC office at 815 Cleveland Ave, Suite 201

(_____ indicates decision; *indicates action item)

Call to order: 9:40 am

Present: Richard Brocksmith, Scottie Schneider, Cody Hamblin, Leah Kintner, Alex Dupont, Karen Summers
Absent: Kristi Carpenter, Lucy DeGrace

1. Welcome, introductions, review notes from last meeting.

Those present felt the meeting notes looked ok. Notes approved.

2. Puget Sound Partnership's Human Well-being Program Overview

Leah Kintner is the local Puget Sound Partnership (PSP) liaison to the Skagit. She also serves in a similar capacity in Whatcom and the Green/Duwamish. She is also the lead for the Social Science Advisory Committee (SAC) and Floodplains by Design within the Partnership.

PSP has six focus areas and two of them account for human health and quality of life or human wellbeing. Goals:

- A healthy human population supported by a healthy Puget Sound that is not threatened by changes in the ecosystem.
- A quality of human life that is sustained by a functioning Puget Sound ecosystem.

These focus areas have nine vital signs: shellfish beds, onsite sewage systems, outdoor activity, air quality, local foods, drinking water, economic vitality, cultural wellbeing, good governance, sense of place, sound stewardship. Some have enumerated and defined goals, while others are in development (see [vital signs document](#)). This process reflects an ecosystem way of thinking.

They use indicators as metrics for measuring progress and targets. They are working to change the conversation so it's more accessible to the public and seeks to find intersections around what people value. They look for ways where human well-being intersects with the greater PSP strategies and bring these into their partner's planning and implementation processes. Currently, Coast Salish priorities and Whatcom County have integrated these PSP focus areas around these human well-being strategies. Hood Canal and Puyallup have adapted the indicators to their planning processes and are working on this already.

PSP is working to get funding for a regional survey to measure indicators under these two focus areas. This survey will combine the Sound Behavior Index and another survey. They haven't yet rolled out regional guidance to help with local planning. A toolkit has been developed and will be released later.

3. North Cascade Institute's Sense of Place Approach

Cody summarized the programs that NCI uses to engage multiple ages and audiences around stewardship and sense of place. They want to do more to extend experiences from nature into the home.

Recently, NCI worked in Whatcom County with a facilitator from Vancouver to collect participants' activities and then she connected the dots into a mind map of organizations that are part of the web. Whatcom Community Foundation helped fund this NCI outreach.

NCI's location at the head of the watershed leaves it somewhat disconnected with downstream; they want to partner more with organizations down valley and connect their programs with other efforts. ***Perhaps they could do a similar mind map in Skagit?** How can SWC's earlier inventory help?

Lucy is working with Skagit County Schools to do Stewardship Days. They want to connect Mountain School with more opportunities for kids and their families to volunteer in the watershed. She mentioned that a program like Wild Whatcom would be great to have in Skagit. Wild Whatcom is partnering with the Bellingham Public Schools offering expanded programs for elementary kids in five low-income elementaries with their EdVentures program and SEED which is working with young people in the district with disabilities to take outdoor adventures.

***Plan an Education Summit held at NCI that provides networking and educational opportunities for educators to share and develop links between programs and fill gaps.**

***Cody will check into whether NCI may have a person who could represent NCI at EcoNet.**

4. Campaign discussion

- Annual Lunch input

The postcards yielded nice engagement from about ¼ of the folks at the Annual Lunch. It's one way to harvest input. The tables with people who modeled filling out the postcard had a much higher response rate. ***The same postcard (extras from the meeting) will be distributed and collected at the upcoming EcoNet meeting.** While the postcards are nice, how can this concept be used to gather information from more than our peers?

- Are we initially seeking behavioral change or engagement?

The group decided that we need to engage people, create connections, build relationships first. Some behavioral change may naturally follow engagement, but it won't be the primary focus at this stage in the campaign. We need to learn more about who our target audiences are and this takes time and takes training to do it right.

The Surge event at MoNA was well-attended. Perhaps there is an opportunity for them to share the climate change and resilience input they collected from attendees (no one was assigned this task).

NCI does before and after surveys with Mountain School. Surveys are a good way to get a baseline and to quantify data now and years from now. PSP's survey hasn't been developed yet, but Leah confirmed that data collected could be analyzed for Skagit county-specific information.

- Discuss proposed campaign approach and next steps

The campaign will begin soon, but it won't be a big flashy roll-out. The group unanimously supported "Our Skagit" as our tagline. We need to just be brave and try some tools and just start.

Discussion on Taglines:

- Imagine Skagit (visionary) or Spectacular Skagit (no place like here)
- Spectacular Skagit (exciting) but the conversation stops with beauty and sounds more like an ad for outdoor recreation – hashtags would need to be spelled correctly

- Our Skagit – (inclusive and simple) Easy to hashtag. Invites an inclusive, broader audience across age groups.
- Other topics – PSP did a public meeting in Whatcom County with specific invitations from a broad spectrum of people to help develop indicators for the well-being focus in that county. Develop decentralized themes that are parallel and inter-related around building community and sense of place. We could draft messages for these topics using some of their work too. Likewise, we could work with others such as Skagit’s EDASC and WSU’s programs, as well as SCEA, MoNA, NCI, PSP, Puget Sound Starts here.

How might an intern help us and this effort? Perhaps we could solicit campaign help through NCI who could involve their leadership/grad program in a real-time community project. SWC could underwrite some of the expenses for an intern. WWU has internship programs in Communications and Public Relations. ***Allison will contact WWU and Richard will contact SVC regarding what’s involved/required to get an intern.**

- ***Kulshan Services will draft an implementation plan for the campaign.**
- ***Allison will contact Sue Blake about the survey they did related to human wellbeing (for their LIO - Local Integrating Organization) program. Allison will also talk with her about the Water Weeks photo contest and how they developed and rolled it out.**

5. Eco-Net Agenda discussion (20 minutes)

- Educator Summit – It’s been challenging to find a date at NCI to do this, but the idea is still knocking around. It’s in the SWC budget to co-sponsor and pay half tuition. Organizations would need to pay for staff time and half of costs, but NCI would host and offer their lowest rate. ***Cody will talk with Lucy and Jeff to see how this could be initiated.**
- Social Marketing – Explore ways/trainings to get resources in place to use on the campaign as well as educate members of CEC and EcoNet on social marketing. There is a two and four-day training on Social Marketing in the third week of October. ***Allison indicated she could attend. SWC will assist with funding; Kulshan Services can assist with funding as well, all with concept that Allison would bring back information for local training.**
- Block Grants (PSP) – Money is not available at this time through PSP. Alexandra is starting back at PSP on Leah’s team. There may be some opportunities to reach out then.
- Is there flexibility with EcoNet to capture resources for training?
- EcoNet wants to better utilize an online calendar to avoid double booking and enable more partnering and shared resources. ***Invite EcoNet members to share that data with Karen before their October meeting thus enabling a more productive discussion at EcoNet. SWC can display that calendar on the website. *Alex can share her calendar for this purpose.**
- ***Karen is willing to continue as coordinator for the next year.**
- ***Sue from SCEA or Alex volunteered to take notes at the EcoNet meeting.**

6. Member sharing –upcoming events

Master Gardener Program starting training starts in January. Deadline is October 31.

7. Meeting wrap-up

Schedule – Members discussed the difficulty in meeting the same week as the SWC Board. They are willing to meet the last week of the month starting in January.

Karen Summers made a suggestion that the photo contest winner's photo could be used to inspire an artist's rendering of the Tulip Festival poster for 2018. The Tulip planning board could be the judge.

Upcoming Dates

- October 10 – ECO Net, noon to 2pm
- November 1 – SWC Community Engagement Committee, 9:30 – 11:30pm
- November 3 – SWC Board meeting, 9 am – 12 noon
- November 9 – SWC Council of Members meeting, 9 am – 12 noon