

Skagit Watershed Council
Meeting of the Board of Directors – Final Notes
February 6, 2014, SWC Office in Mount Vernon, WA

Attendance: Chair Ken Dahlstedt, Brenda Cunningham, Dave Pflug, Carolyn Kelly, Bob Everitt, Steve Hinton, and Richard Brocksmith. No absences.

The regular board meeting was called to order at 9:05am. The Board reviewed and approved December financial reports as presented. Carolyn moved to approve, Dave seconded, and there was unanimous agreement.

The Board reviewed December retreat, December regular meeting, and January meeting notes. The Board discussed the precision of the sentence “for example, SWC can be embracing all projects as “ours”...”, and agreed it should be replaced with “SWC should actively advocate for project development and implementation, but not take credit.” The Board also agreed that the second paragraph of the second page regarding balance between science and community values should be further clarified by adding another sentence saying “This is an area that will require on-going attention within the organization.” Carolyn moved to approve, Dave seconded, and there was unanimous agreement to accept the December retreat and regular meeting notes as amended.

The Board agreed that the January meeting notes should show a postscript that the results of electronic voting should be found in the February meeting notes. Carolyn moved to approve, Dave seconded, and there was unanimous agreement to accept the January meeting notes as amended.

During the meeting there was an update on the results of electronic voting required from January. The Board found unanimous agreement on the first two motions (to adopt the work plan and 2013/2014 and 2014/2015 budget as presented as well as to authorize SWC to contract remaining funds PSAR funds with RCO and subcontract \$10,000 to SFEG for HWS), which have all now been completed except the subcontract to SFEG. There was dissent in the electronic voting results in the second two motions (to authorize SWC to contract with PSP on Adaptive Management as well as to subcontract portions of AM work to support co-manager involvement) resulting in those two motions failing and instead being rescheduled to discuss in February’s agenda.

The Board reviewed the Technical Working Group meeting notes. A discussion ensued regarding the City of Concrete’s interest in improving stream and fish habitat in Lorenzen Creek and consistency with current SWC 2010 Strategic Approach. It is clear that the proposed project is not consistent with the well documented Chinook Salmon Recovery Plan, SWC Strategic Approach, and annual Request for Proposals, but it raised the question of how the SWC evaluates projects and programs not included in the above documents. There appeared to be agreement that our policy should be to support these other habitat initiatives if they are strategic and scientifically sound, while recognizing we have limited capacity. We don’t want to be the “no” group, we want to be the “no, but we can help in other ways”

group. There was agreement that further discussion was warranted, and ***the Board asked Richard to bring the topic back to the TWG to scope out how we can help within constraints noted above, particularly with a science-driven approach.**

Dave, Richard, and Carolyn reported on the development of a draft agenda for the March 12 SWC General Membership meeting. The Board agreed that the main focus should be couching the discussion in the context of opportunities for involvement in salmon recovery, broadening the SWC family, and gathering input into our mission and work plan. The draft agenda was a good start, particularly the unstructured free time, membership input, and Richard's introduction. Ensure foyer is accessible for the crowd to utilize during free time. Agreed on assignments for Board to lead most of the presentations/discussion, with Ken to welcome and introduce; Dave and Carolyn to provide origins and history; Steve for mission/goals; Richard for organizational structure and calendar; Brenda on growing the organization; Ken on election results; Richard on work plan; Ken to facilitate member input and announcements. Should Board sit up front, or is it satisfactory for them to be doing all the presentations? Main thing is presenting personally and being seen as accountable and committed.

Invitations should be going out hard copy in next week or so. Richard and Scottie are compiling new list of existing and old members, cities, tribes, governments, NGOs and will send out for Board to review. ***Richard to draft presentations, refine agenda, finish compiling list, draft invite, and send out to Board to review and input ASAP.**

Richard introduced some next steps for the lead entity program, including completing a basic update of the 3 year work program (3ywp), completing a timeline and approach for various grant programs (SRFB, PSAR large cap, 2015-2017 PSAR, floodplains by design), updating the RFP, and updating the 2014 LE Program Guide, all of which he hopes would be reviewed and approved by the Board on March 6th. Richard presented the Gantt chart of project development and grant process timeline which the Board supported with the following exceptions: Board needs final approval on Fir Island Farms (FIF) 100% design with conditions, informally circulate staff draft of 2015-2017 PSAR "representative" list to Board early, and Board project "authorization" and not "prioritization" on 2015-2017 "representative" list. ***Richard will update the Gantt chart with these changes.**

The Board also felt there wasn't sufficient information to inform a decision on incorporating Floodplains by Design into the lead entity program. ***The Board requested that section be removed before circulating back to TWG and requested that Bob Kerry from TNC be invited to give a short presentation on the program at the next Board meeting.**

Richard and Steve provided a status update on the Adaptive Management and Monitoring (AM&M) Program. Both felt we had the resources necessary to complete a draft framework by the end of June, and the Skagit product would be of higher than average quality compared to other watersheds. Richard suggested we could still utilize the Puget Sound Partnership's (PSP) capacity funding for a facilitated workshop to improve communication of technical products in June to a broader group than the AM&M subcommittee currently working on the program. All agreed that was an important task, but the Board felt that the timeline provided too much pressure on personnel and products, instead requesting that

***Richard talk with PSP and suggest that providing resources for the workshop task in the 3rd quarter (July-September) would be acceptable.** Otherwise, the SWC is no longer able to continue discussing PSP capacity funds for AM&M in this fiscal year.

Richard presented a request for authorization to hire a new employee at SWC. He provided in person a draft position announcement which essentially updated the past watershed coordinator's position and augmented it with AM&M duties. One thread of the discussion was around whether the new hire should have specific technical roles and/or fill the identified need of communications and marketing for our shared work plan. There was insufficient notice to proceed in February and the Board instead asked Richard to be more specific with work planning and tasks associated with this position. They also asked that Richard relay his ideal hire from his perspective. ***Richard will provide this information before the next Board meeting and the Board will provide input to Richard on the draft provided at the meeting before then.**

Richard presented the current organizational structure diagram, his first draft of an update, and the current draft resulting from a discussion with the TWG in December. As also suggested by the TWG, it was requested that ***Richard develop a narrative companion piece that would outline the functions of each component of the structure and the people populating it, as well as update the diagram.**

Suggested improvements included: updating monitoring subcommittee to be AM&M subcommittee, describing indirect or dotted line connections in the narrative as opposed to in the diagram, Executive Director (ED) elevated to be in line vertically between Board and TWG, show watershed coordinator position, and removing 2-way arrow between project review committee and TWG. The ED's role is to take responsibility for communications and outcomes, but not for filtering the committees and the Board. He will still be the main contact, not the watershed coordinator. The watershed coordinator would be facilitator of committees but not the chair (at least as currently envisioned in draft position description).

Richard requested adding a few small topics and updates to the agenda before adjourning, including new contracts. He requested authorization to expand Jay Watson's (Environmental Policy Matters) existing contract to develop a draft contracting procedures manual, which we currently are lacking. That would likely also wrap together with an update of our financial policies. Carolyn moved to approve, Dave seconded, and there was unanimous agreement to authorize ***Richard to amend the existing contract to update SWC contracting procedures with an amount not to exceed \$2000.**

Richard also relayed the need to have GIS support at SWC and in its committees and that he begun scoping this with Steve to use SRSC staff. Carolyn moved to approve, Dave seconded, and there was unanimous agreement to authorize Steve Hinton abstained from evaluation and decision-making on this topic. ***Richard to enter into a new task order-type contract with SRSC for GIS support with an amount not to exceed \$5000.**

Richard relayed that he and the SWC Protection Subcommittee were exploring working with SRSC to implement the Protection Strategy update. ***The Board tabled discussion of a contract on this matter until the next Board meeting.**

Richard and various Board members relayed some brief updates, including:

- Development of a 401(k) plan was proceeding well, though the annual fees for an SWC administered program were higher than expected. As a result, Richard was exploring how we could partner with other organizations to utilize an existing program that met our needs.
- Richard has implemented new financial controls recently by limiting physical and virtual access to petty cash, checks, and bank accounts. Also, bonding levels have been increased and updated for 3 staff and contractor with access including Richard, Scottie, and Judy our accountant.
- Richard passed out a recent letter to the editor at the Skagit Valley Herald which questioned the efficacy of salmon enhancement programs and regulations. The Board felt this topic could be addressed as a part of our broader outreach efforts in the work plan.
- Richard relayed information about a bill in a Senate committee (SB 6381) that would review the work of watershed councils in Puget Sound. ***If the bill passes out of committee by the deadline, Richard will forward along to Board members.**
- Richard relayed that the Upper Skagit Indian Tribe had recently requested a letter of support for their Goodell Creek restoration efforts, specifically design phase. ***The Board requested that Richard seek TWG review of the merits of the proposal and bring it back to the Board in March for a decision.**
- Steve and Dave relayed progress on their action item to begin developing a caucus mechanism to solicit input from environmental groups with a stake in SWC's work. They believed they had some good leads working with the Wild Steelhead Coalition, and they'll bring back more info at subsequent Board meetings. Richard and Carolyn relayed they had started meeting with agricultural and forest interests on the same topic, but with less specific conversations than reported by Steve and Dave.
- The Board discussed progress on seeking new Board members. Progress was sufficient to begin an election process for one of the two nominated members, but not for the other. ***Richard will send out ballots to current members with a timeline that would enable announcement of that new member at March 12 membership meeting.**

The Board adjourned at 12:45 pm.