

Skagit Watershed Council
Meeting of the Board of Directors – Final Notes
June 5, 2014, SWC Office, Mount Vernon, WA

(* indicates action item; indicates decision)

Attendance: Chair Ken Dahlstedt, Carolyn Kelly, Steve Hinton, Brenda Cunningham, Margaret Fleek, Bob Everitt, Loren Everest, and Richard Brocksmith. Dave Pflug was absent.

The meeting was called to order at 9:05 am, with quorum. After adding a set of brief updates from Richard to today's meeting topics, the agenda was approved.

Richard had a few general updates, including:

- Website updating was well underway with the contractor. We are moving to a new, more easily maintained platform for staff to use, old but still relevant info was being translated over, and some new messages were being developed as we are working hard to make it more relevant to the general public to tell our story.
- Bylaws updates are nearing a first draft from Richard and Jay. That review committee will be meeting in July to work through it and develop an improved draft for the Board's review.
- Final SRFB applications are completed and have been sent to the Technical Review Committee (TRC) for their technical review and scoring.
- Richard will be out of the office from June 13 to the 22nd to attend a family memorial in Oklahoma. The TRC will be meeting on the 19th, but facilitation, note-taking, and data management roles have been assigned to experienced team members and Richard will be on the phone.
- The Board agreed July 3 is not a feasible meeting date for the Lead Entity Citizen Committee final ranking meeting. **Richard will send out a doodle poll to set a new date.**
- We are anticipating 3 new Watershed Council members in coming months, including the Town of La Conner, Wildcat Steelhead Club, and Dike District 17. Daryl Hamburg from DD17 is interested in being more heavily engaged, perhaps as a Board member.
- We need the Nominations Committee to meet in July and/or August. Two positions are expiring, Steve Hinton and Ken Dahlstedt. Both expressed interest in staying on for another term. Dave Pflug will be retiring in the near future. And we have an open position. The group agreed that the Nominations Committee should be composed of

Carolyn, Brenda, Margaret, and Tim Manns (non-Board but SWC member representative). **Richard will begin those conversations.**

The Board reviewed draft May 1, 2014 meeting notes. Carolyn moved to approve the meeting notes as final as presented and Steve seconded, with unanimous approval.

The Board reviewed the April financial reports. Richard noted several points of interest:

- Staff found an error on Budget vs Actual detail. April PSAR and LE incomes were transposed erroneously, and the balances are slightly wrong due to that. That error has been corrected in the original books.
- We continue to track indirect billed vs actual overhead costs monthly and it continues to look good. **We will include that detail in future financial reports.**
- Staff added a new consultant subaward tracking detail to track approved contracts.
- Staff worked with Brenda on her request for a new checks detail and **it will be included in future.**
- **Richard will bring the SWC budget back to the Board in August to update.**

A Board member noted that there was a blank next to the SRFB balance (for the protection strategy update project) and Richard noted he would fill that with the balance of \$40,000 as no funds have been expended on that project yet. Carolyn moved to approve the April financial reports and Bob seconded, with unanimous agreement of the Board.

Richard relayed the status of the hiring process for the Watershed Coordinator, specifically with 2 of 3 preferred candidates getting second interviews on July 26th and 27th. **He will bring them by to visit with different Board members and/or their staff on those days.**

Financial policies agenda topic was reviewed with a specific requested amendment to add an additional, internal review annually, to be completed by the Secretary/Treasurer. Carolyn helped develop the concept since our last meeting. Carolyn moved to accept the language as presented and Brenda seconded, with unanimous agreement of the Board.

Regarding the riparian strategy proposal recently submitted into the lead entity program, Richard relayed how the project has evolved since March and some of the outcomes of the May 27th stakeholder meeting (see handouts for details). Steve felt that the content and direction of the proposal has improved over time, but he has concerns, specifically on 3 topics. First, process was problematic and this should not become a pattern. Future efforts should be made to vet through the system (i.e. TWG and then Board being more engaged). Second, individual organizations don't make policy, the Board and the membership do, and it is his perspective that no new policies should be developed by the project. Third, it isn't clear this should be a

priority in the SWC's work plan. Carolyn suggested that it is difficult to write applications by committee and that deadlines right before meetings is problematic.

Before Steve had to leave for another engagement, the Board asked for input on the Farms, Flood, and Fish Initiative agenda topic. He noted that he has been following their work plan since its beginning and that he remains skeptical. He doesn't want to discourage folks from participating but isn't in favor of the Watershed Council signing the MOU. Steve and Margaret had to leave the meeting at this point.

The Board began an initial discussion on Monitoring and Adaptive Management (M&AM). Carolyn asked if the membership would agree with this program, noting that many of them did not agree with the original Skagit Recovery Plan. Bob noted that hatchery and harvest components have federal "take" permits (under the federal Endangered Species Act) for all of their activities, showing they are compliant, but habitat doesn't fit neatly in a similar process, leaving open questions. Brenda thought members would appreciate a report card of facts. Carolyn noted that regulatory topics around habitat are full of conflict and could be a "third-rail." Ken described a potential process to look at regulatory topics where we've made progress and agree on solutions, while avoiding areas of conflict for now. **There was a request to keep documents at 12pt font for easier reading.** There was general discomfort since this draft product has the SWC logo on it and not all members would agree on the contents. Richard noted the disclaimer language on that topic but agreed it needed to be strengthened to address concerns.

There were questions on where this project and Phase 2 are going. There are options in front of us in that regard. It could be an opportunity to do a better job talking with different interests about commonly agreed upon solutions that would meet the goal of Chinook salmon recovery, leading to rewriting the recovery plan and thus have more buy-in and more shared effort working in the same direction. It could instead be an option to just report on how the current plan is progressing or not and improving decision-making around the places we have authority/responsibility. There are a lot of potential paths forward with respect to adaptively managing recovery planning efforts.

In sum:

- **Need improved disclaimer language in phase 1 products noting that this doesn't create consensus of all SWC members of plan priorities, strategies, actions, etc.**
- **Complete TWG review and Board review with that input, as proposed.**
- **Continue M&AM Subcommittee efforts on further developing and communicating goals, status, progress, monitoring and research results, etc as they are very important to the agreed-upon effort to tell the story of recovery in the Skagit River.**

- **Wait on other Phase 2 products for now.**
- **Further defining where we agree to work on for now.**

The Board was joined by Kris Knight (TNC) and Polly Hicks (NOAA Restoration Center) for the Farms, Fish, and Flood Initiative (3FI) discussion. They presented about the origins, membership, goals and multiple benefits of the project. The alternatives analysis and related score card were presented where each of the 3 related communities developed their own projects and criteria for farms, fish, and flood reduction. Conceptual projects came from the recovery plan as well as focused conversations with the broader group. The hydrodynamic model (HDM) is necessary to determine how each conceptual project would impact each of the F's and what the cumulative effect would be.

The group discussed the Skagit Farmland Preservation Strategy and an example of development of an agricultural easement with a "Chinook option" that would allow for conversion in the future if necessary and adequate contingencies were in place. The concept of the Skagit Agriculture Industrial Cluster Analysis was also presented which focused on what that sector needed to be successful.

The Board asked how 3FI envisioned/needed SWC to participate. Examples included participation in relevant technical and oversight meetings though the latter would likely require signing their existing MOU. The Board asked about tribal participation to date. Polly noted that each was in a different position. For example the SITC didn't necessarily support all 3 goals and asked if they could be briefed along the way. Samish seem to like the process but aren't engaging. Sauk-Suiattle had no formal opinion at this point. USIT have had some staff turnover but 3FI members are re-engaging with their staff in coming days. More broadly, the tribes did influence the scope of work for the project, including around best management practices. The Board thanked Kris and Polly for their time and they left the meeting.

The Board recognized that our tribal members aren't supportive of signing the MOU at this time. While most Board members did think this might be a valuable opportunity for SWC if effort was invested towards ensuring valuable outcomes, all felt this wasn't the right moment to move that forward. There were some concerns expressed about uncertainties associated with products and outcomes. **We should continue to dip our toes into the water and add value by helping produce tangible outcomes that align with our goals. The Board requested that a follow-up discussion on this topic be scheduled at our next meeting.**

The Board meeting was adjourned around noon.