

**Skagit Watershed Council Meeting of the Board of Directors**  
**Sept 5, 2024, 11:00am-12:00pm**  
**Draft Notes**

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

Present: John Stein (Chair), Brendan Brokes, Kara Rowe (via Zoom), Emmett Wild, and Alison Studley  
 Guests: Joan Drinkwin, Holli Watne (SWC staff), and Keeley Mathis (SWC staff)

**Call to Order:** 11:05. Quorum achieved.

Introductions: John introduced Keeley Mathis, our new Program Assistant. She will be supporting committees and the Board by taking notes.

Agenda approved. Motion by Alison, Brendan seconds. Unanimous.

Board Notes for August 2024 (#2) approved. Motion by Brendan, Emmett seconds. Unanimous.

**Executive Director’s Report**

Aundrea is currently on vacation. She provided these written updates:

- We hired Keeley!!!! She is a great addition to our staff.
- We got the HSIL grant to clean up our Salmon Recovery Portal legacy data and 4 Year Work Plan targets!! The grant total is \$226,000! Most of it goes to consultants to do the database work, but \$22,000 comes directly to SWC for project management. This is a collaborative project with the Whidbey Basin Lead Entities. The grant includes funding for sponsors to work on their data.
- The grant round was officially wrapped on August 13<sup>th</sup>. This was an interesting year with a lot of changes and a big pot of money. It went amazingly well. We funded all projects, loaned some funds to Olympic Coast Lead Entity and rolled some funds over to next year. Here is the final list:

Project	Sponsor	Request
2023 Upper Skagit Riparian	Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Grp.	\$ 220,000
Acquisition 2024 SLT	Skagit Land Trust	\$ 1,105,000
Acquisition 2024 SCL	Seattle City Light	\$ 1,650,000
Similk	Skagit River System Coop.	\$ 1,307,794
Upper Skagit Knotweed Control 2024	Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Grp.	\$ 234,769
Rasar Riparian	Skagit River System Coop.	\$ 142,800
Collab. Riparian 2024 SRSC	Skagit River System Coop.	\$ 189,000
Upper Martin Riparian	Skagit River System Coop.	\$ 137,900
DeBays Riparian, Riparian funds	Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Grp.	\$ 375,000
Collab. Riparian 2024 SFEG	Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Grp.	\$ 111,000
Cascade Floodplain Fill Removal Feas.	Skagit River System Coop.	\$ 321,119
Maylor Marsh Enhancement Feas.	Skagit River System Coop.	\$ 253,489
Presentin Park AM feasibility	Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Grp.	\$ 84,908
Race Lagoon (50% by Island Co.)	Island County	\$ 897,954

**TOTAL \$ 7,030,733**

- Colin did a great job leading a site visit at Similk for congressional staffers, state and federal agency funders, Erik Neatherland (Governor's Slamon Recovery Office Director), and Laura Bradstreet (Puget Sound Partnership Director). Many offered assistance to the project sponsor for funding, communications and promotion, and technical coordination with agencies.
- Erik Neatherland would like to bring his staff to visit a Board meeting (please consider when makes sense). Brenden meets quarterly with him and said this will be a good connection to make. **\*The Board will figure out a time when it makes sense to invite them.**
- We are seeking to hire a [Watershed Coordinator](#). The first interview took place on August 21<sup>st</sup>. The job is considered open until September 23<sup>rd</sup>, when we will start reviewing the applicant pool.
- Emmett, Kate Ramsden and I interviewed two firms to work on our riparian database and chose ESA who worked on our Riparian Assessment in 2017. Our contract with ESA for the Riparian Database project is nearly finished.

### Old Business

- The Annual Lunch is coming up on September 18<sup>th</sup>. Jen O'Neal will speak on her yearling study. The Upper Skagit Indian Tribe will once again be providing salmon for us. We are working on catering for the rest of the meal, hoping for a turnout of about 60 people. John says that this event is a great way for us to show that the SWC cares about the health of the whole watershed, not just its salmon.
- Aundrea got some input from Jenny Baker about our draft Adaptive Management policy. **\*She will send out a version for us to consider.**
- The board discussed the recent [presentation by Mike LeMoine and Correigh Green](#). **\*They would like a simpler version of this presentation that could be shared with the community.** There was a discussion about how to help the public understand that huge efforts are underway to recover salmon and detectible results take a long time to see due to the time it takes from outmigrating smolts until spawners to return. For example, when we have a great fishing year the public may conclude that salmon recovery efforts are not needed when, in fact, there are many variable impacting a single year's returns. The whole picture is complicated and requires the long view. It takes a lot of monitoring data over many years to see the real impacts of restoration (like the 20+ years of monitoring it took to see the signal Mike and Correigh presented). How do we show the data in a simple way that shows the necessity of our work?

### Retreat Preparation with Joan Drinkwin, retreat facilitator

- Joan works for Natural Recourse Consultants. She lived in Mount Vernon for 7 years and has worked for the Northwest Straits Initiative. Joan currently works closely with the Washington Salmon Coalition and other salmon and resource conservation groups along the west coast.
- She laid out her Strategic Planning Process Approach which is intended to keep the board focused and realistic during the 6 hours of the upcoming board retreat.
- The outcomes of the retreat will include a high elevation strategic plan that can be shared with the community and that communicates the mission and goals of SWC, its strategies, and priority programs. It will include a 3-5 year timeline and will inform our annual workplans. Joan warns

that it's important to not get "lost in the weeds". The focus of conversation should be high level ideas like how work is done and what the priority programs are.

- She brought up the mission statement from the bylaws. Joan finds this to be too long and says we'd benefit from something "tighter". Reworking the mission statement will take time. That's not our goal right now... but something you might want to have future conversations about. Joan says she was provided a "tighter" mission statement on the website, but she couldn't find it on any official documents (bylaws, etc.).
- The Strategic plan will outline 1) the mission restatement, 2) a summary of significant history and achievements to date, 3) strategies employed to achieve the mission, 4) 3-4 overarching goals (achievable within 5 years), 5) 1-4 objectives within the 5-year timeframe, and 6) 1-3 results per objective. Specific actions and steps will be articulated in the workplans.
- Alison asked if there will be information collected from outside organizations in this process. The answer is No.
- Emmet asked if the Board should have any homework to prepare for Day 1, to help make the process more efficient. The answer is Yes. **\*Joan will discuss this with Aundrea and get back to the board by next week.**
- There was a concern about creating a strategic plan without input from the county and/or USIT. **\*John will talk to Peter to see if he will come.**
- **\*Rick may be invited as a representative of USIT, Brendan and/or John will work on this.**
- The board agreed that attorneys will not be part of this retreat.
- **\*Kara will talk to the WWAA representatives on the LECC to help prepare for this meeting.**
- **\*Aundrea will clarify if SWC staff are invited to this retreat and what their role will be if they are.**

#### **Outline of Retreat**

- Day 1 – work on SWOT analysis as an organization. This means, identifying strengths (what we do well now), weaknesses (what we don't do well now), opportunities (what can amplify our progress), and threats (what might impede it).
- Identify the organization's core principles, values, strategies, and overarching work pillars.
- Between meetings we will have an online survey to inform Day 2 and a work session at the November board meeting.
- Day2 – Identify Goals, what we will do to achieve them, and how we will know when they've been achieved.

#### **Adjourn 12:07**

#### **Upcoming Events:**

September 18<sup>th</sup>, 11:30 to 2:00 – Annual Lunch @ Hillcrest Lodge  
October 3, 10:30 to 12:00--regular Board meeting  
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