

Skagit Watershed Council - Final Notes

Meeting of the Board of Directors, SWC Office – April 11, 2019

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

Attendance: Bill Blake, Richard Brocksmith, Brendan Brokes, Steve Hinton, Michael Kirshenbaum, John Stein, and Jon Vanderheyden.

Not in attendance: Chair Ken Dahlstedt and Jon-Paul Shannahan

Call to Order 9:02

- Introductions, Determine Quorum, and Approve Agenda (#1) – Quorum present. Brendan will chair this meeting. Addition of Marblemount Quarry to agenda under “New Business” Bill motioned, Steve seconded, agenda approved with addition.
- Approve Board Notes: February 7, 2019 (#2) and March 7, 2019 (#3) – Bill motioned to approve both Board meeting notes, John Stein seconded, both February 7 and March 7 Board meeting notes approved.

Executive Directors Report

- Approve January and February Financial Reports (#4 and #5) – Richard explained why there is a trend of slightly over budget each month being attributed to low indirect rates being billed and reduced subcontracts compared to previous years that indirect rates are billed to, therefore the indirect rates are not covering the basic costs of operation. Discussion about reducing expenses but already a very lean operation. ***Suggested to recalculate indirect rate.** Jon Vanderheyden motioned to approve, Steve seconded, both January and February Financial Reports approved.
- Retirement Contributions (#6) – SWC Bookkeeper noticed an inconsistency in employee retirement contributions. The inconsistency has been fixed for future payroll. Motion to approve 3 years of retirement contribution backpay of \$1,063 to Richard. Motioned by Brendan, seconded by John Stein, approved unanimously by Board. ***Bookkeeper will pay out over several months.**
- Committee Reports
 - TWG – met March 21, received Letters of Intent for competitive grant funding. Wiley Slough has been a big project in focus, board discussion tabled for later in the meeting. A form has been developed to better communicate protection projects between sub-committees and TWG.

- M&AM – met April 4, went through current monitoring updates, LiDAR helping model single-thread hydrography layer and relative elevation model which in the future can be applied to floodplain management in the mainstems. Discussion on drafting a proposal to bringing the new single-thread hydrography model as a standard tool in watershed management. Riparian actions database is being updated by members and Aundrea. They are considering how riparian plantings are doing within the watershed.
- CEC – last meeting was February, no meeting in March, will meet again in April. Skagit Watershed Council wrote a letter of commitment and support that was signed by many SWC members for Mount Vernon School District's No Child Left Inside grant application, including some new partners like Viva Farms. Nice Job Andrea!

Old Business

- Skagit Steelhead Recovery Plan Status Update – Department of Fish & Wildlife has provided more comments to Version 3, Co-managers have meeting to discuss new comments. Next steps will be discussed between co-managers at North of Falcon meeting. Council of Members meeting provided good feedback including how to communicate and raise awareness with land owners within the watershed. ***Potential draft ready for comments by end of May 2019.**
- Lead Entity Program Update (#7) – Seven letters of intent were received, but since then SFEQ has withdrawn Lower Day Slough Fish Passage application, WDFW has withdrawn Wiley Slough Dike Repair, and SRSC will be withdrawing their acquisition project. Four projects with a request of ~\$2M will proceed with roughly \$1.12 M available this year, so there will still be more projects than funding. ***Aundrea and Richard are working on site visits schedule May 7 & 8.** Discussion on should Puget Sound Partnership's Vital Signs be more of a focus within the Lead Entity, decided that SWC's focus is salmon which is just a narrow focus of the Vital Signs, but updates can come back to the Board for discussion.

New Business

- WDFW Wiley Slough Letter of Intent (#8) – Though project has been pulled from Lead Entity Grant Program, Alternatives Analysis development continues. This project raises awareness of how M&AM handles projects in the future. Steve mentioned that M&AM has policies about status and trends monitoring and adapting to Chinook Recovery but no policies to address project adaptive management and infrastructure specifically. Board discussion about maintenance of infrastructure included how to fund the costs; should they be asked to apply competitively or should money be set aside to specifically go towards maintenance and repair costs of infrastructure. Wiley Slough has a third party that is being affected, therefor repair/adaptive management of the project may be necessary. For future projects,

should projects be self-insured? Ultimately developing guidelines will be necessary of how to fund infrastructure maintenance post-restoration. ***Steve proposes to move this to subcommittee to put together framework on managing infrastructure.**

- Approve Upper Skagit Mining Comment Letter (#9) – SWC typically does not weight in on protection issues, though Richard felt that exploratory mining in the Donut Hole is different in level of risk and therefore drafted a letter. The mining claim has existed for decades, SEEC has been attempting to purchase the claims. Board discussion included where does SWC draw the line in protection issues, the verb “support” within the letter – what type of support is SWC willing to offer, could SWC play the role of providing education to members organizations rather than taking a stand via letter, and is there a process in sending a letter to member organizations for approval and how to address non-support. Michael suggests that it is the Board’s role to approve or disapprove of sending the letter of support rather than sending it out to member organizations, because there is a deadline of comments being accepted, there likely is no economic interests from SWC members, and copper mining is unprecedented in the headwaters of the Skagit – the Board should make a decision. John Vanderheyden suggests adding more scientific backing on why SWC would be opposed to copper mining within the watershed. WDFW has advised Governor Inslee on a letter of concern opposing the permits for copper mining. Board suggests making edits to include specifics of this mining company having a track record of environmental damage due to failures within their mining practice. Michael makes motion for Richard to make edits and submit the letter on behalf of the Skagit Watershed Council, John Stein seconds, motion approved. ***Richard will make edits and submit, as well as share the letter with the 42 member organizations.**
- Marblemount Quarry- There is a proposal to significantly expand a rock quarry, requiring logging near Rockport. Community is requesting a full Environmental Impact Statement prior to allowing the permit. Comment period has been extended to May 13, 2019. Discussion around should the SWC submit a comment letter, rather than taking a stand possibly ask for a full EIS along with questions that the SWC might have on the affects this quarry will have on salmon. Bill motions, Michael seconds to draft a letter about the Marble Mount Quarry, Board approves. ***Richard will draft a letter for Board to review at next Board Meeting or via email.**
- Ecology’s Water Supply Studies – Scope of Work first draft has been produced, TWG reviewed and submitted comments. Second draft will be available soon, ***TWG will review again at their next meeting.** Hydrology protection and restoration are critical to salmon recovery. Suggested by the Board that SWC/TWG advise Ecology on areas to focus their study on to help make the results of their study more useful for SWC application in the future. And, within the scope of work, ensure clear objectives of the study are outlined, preferably linked to study questions.

- TMDL Implementation and Leadership Council (LC) Meeting – LC meeting June 11 and 12 in Mount Vernon to address temperature TMDL in the lower Skagit. Agenda is being developed, possible ready by end of April. Goal of the Leadership Council is to bring voices together to help create a plan of voluntary actions to reduce temperature in lower Skagit tributaries (since Ecology isn't currently mandating actions). ***SWC is willing to provide riparian data as needed to Ecology and Puget Sound Partnership, and to highlight good work that has been done and hotspots of where work would be beneficial to reduce temps, in the context of our salmon habitat priorities.** Suggested that Hansen Creek would be a good case study of multiple interests working together and good progress made. ***There is a consensus that having a developed recommendation of potential restoration, based off past projects and science, and outlining costs to propose to Ecology/State would be beneficial.**
- SRFB Funding Survey – A LEAN study was done at the state level to review funding process, and in the next grant round there will be changes made to how SRFB process is conducted. Richard provided Board Members with three variations of the survey that SRFB is sending to sponsors, lead entities, and regional organizations to ask if the big complex salmon projects are being funded currently, and if not, why. ***Richard will draft SWC's responses, provide to Board Members for review, and then share with sponsors within the watershed and PSP.**

Adjourn 11:54

Next SWC Board Meetings:

- June 6, 9am to noon
- July 11, noon to 1pm

Next LECC Event: May 7 and 8, all day