

Skagit Watershed Council – Final Notes
Meeting of the Board of Directors, via Zoom
April 13th, 2023, 11:00am to 12:00pm

(Underline indicates decision point; ***Bold indicates action item**)

Attending Directors: John Stein (Chair), Bill Blake, Michael Kirshenbaum, Devin Smith, Brendan Brokes, Alison Studley, Andrew Bearlin, Richard Brocksmith (Executive Director)

Guests: Aundrea McBride, Jenn Johnson

Call to Order 11:00am

Quorum achieved. SWC received an email this morning from USIT counsel saying that they will not participate today. They expressed concerns pertaining to the structure of the Board and procurement procedures and conflict of interest. ***Alison, being her first formal meeting as an SWC Director, would like an update one-on-one about this topic. *Richard to share the email with Board, as well as state Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) opinion on procurement issue. *Additionally, Commissioner Browning had a scheduling conflict and asked that the County topic of structure and conflict of interest per his letter be tabled until next month.**

Devin must leave early today and would like to participate in the discussion about the letter from Skagit Upriver Neighbors, so ***this topic will be tabled until next meeting (May 4th).**

Brendan will miss the site visits and the next Board meeting.

Motion by Michael, seconded by Devin, to approve the agenda, including tabling County's requested topic and Skagit Upriver Neighbors topic. Approved unanimously.

Motion by Bill, seconded by Michael, to approve the March notes as presented. Approved unanimously.

Executive Director and Committee Reports

February financials had nothing out of the ordinary to report, though slightly negative for the fiscal year to date. Motion to approve the financial reports by Brendan, seconded by Bill. All approve.

Brief Committee Reports (due to short agenda):

- Community Engagement Committee and staff are working on an online repository of STEAM conservation teaching resources with Skagit PUD. Also working towards STEAM

Train for BESD and MVSD being incorporated into curriculum again next year. Skagit Salmon Festival won't be happening in 2023.

- M&AM approved a monitoring project to go forward in the grant round via the Regional and State processes (included in reviewer packet that will be sent out to LECC April 17th).
- Protection Subcommittee greenlighted 2 properties for potential purchase.
- TWG recommended Kevik Rensink be appointed by the Board to the TRC and TWG appointed Rick interim chair of the TWG. Main concern there is that Rick is already doing his share by chairing two subcommittees (M&AM co-chair and Protection chair).

Old Business

Protection Strategy: The Protection Subcommittee discussed Peter's question about whether the new Skagit County code regarding offsite compensatory mitigation creates compliance concerns for implementing the Protection Strategy. It was concluded after due diligence that the new code is not relevant to voluntary habitat acquisition, though theoretically compensatory mitigation could be a tool to restore lands purchased via voluntary salmon funding. The act of restoration on lands zone Ag-NRL for offsite compensatory mitigation purposes would be out of compliance. Committee reviewers should keep this in mind, like all other code and permit compliance issues. ***The subcommittee discussed receiving training from the County sometime in the future to make sure they fully understood the law and recommended the training would be more appropriate if it included restoration practitioners and TWG.** Motion to approve the 2023 Protection Strategy by Devin, seconded by Bill. All approve.

Swinomish Channel Phase 3 Smolt Capacity Estimate Letter: USIT did not submit any further comments after asking for an extension to do so. Motion by Michael to approve the Board's cover letter as proposed, including the TWG's letter as an attachment, seconded by Andrew. Devin abstains. All approve.

Riparian Projects: The Phase 1 report is still waiting on input from SITC, but County staff are pleased with the report and, along with Bill, have discussed it with the VSP advisory committee. Phase 2 is moving along well, including purchasing 6-7 water quality meters to be installed in temperature-listed stream like Carpenter Creek in association with riparian plantings. Taylor Scott with the CD is building a riparian literature "library" page to collect references in one place for the general public and streamside landowners. ***SCL wants to contribute to the determination of how to better monitor stream temperatures.** They are engaged in quite a bit of this too. ***Devin will continue to facilitate SITC's review of the Phase 1 report.** The relicensing is taking a lot of their attention. The SWC riparian actions database currently has 20 years of data in it. We are planning on adding users and a dashboard and new data sources,

however there were no formal responses to the RFQQ for doing this work because of the aggressive timeline. ***Richard is looking for other sources of funds without the short timeline of the CD's Ecology grant money.**

New Business

Grant Round and Committee Lists: ***SWC is still waiting to hear from Brian if he will be participating on the LECC.** The Board discussed continuing to diversify the LECC with more people from the general membership. The Bylaws state that committee membership should focus on recruiting Watershed Council member group representatives with the option to recruit outside the Council if additional expertise or representation is needed. ***Aundrea will approach Tyler Porter at U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for membership on the TRC or LECC.** Andrew will abstain from participating this year due to relicensing time commitments. Motion by Andrew, seconded by Brendan, to approve the proposed list of TRC and LECC members, with the understanding that additional members may still be added. All approve.

TWG Appointment: Motion by Alison, seconded by Michael, to appoint Kevik Rensink to the TWG. All approve.

RCO Contract Amendment: \$20,000 to be added to SWC's RCO contract from unspent Stillaguamish Watershed funds. This does not have to be paid back. Motion to approve the contract amendment by Brendan, seconded by Alison. All approve. Bill notes that he abstained when this topic was on the Stillaguamish Watershed agenda.

Good of the Order

SFEG has hired a new restoration ecologist who starts fulltime in June.

Emmett will be Bill's replacement at SCD.

Adjourn 12:00