

Skagit Watershed Council – Final Notes (#2)

Meeting of the Board of Directors, SWC Office – April 2, 2020

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

Attendance: Chair Ken Dahlstedt, Brendan Brokes, Bill Blake, Michael Kirshenbaum, John Stein, Jon-Paul Shannahan, Devin Smith, and Jon Vanderheyden. Staff included Richard Brocksmith.

Not in attendance: Andrew Bearlin

Call to Order 9:00 am

- Introductions, Determine Quorum, and Approve Agenda (#1)
 - Meeting was conducted by Zoom.
 - All welcomed Devin Smith, Skagit River System Cooperative (SRSC) as our newest Board member!
 - Quorum present. Agenda approved.
- Approved Board Notes: March 5, 2020 (#2) with no changes—Motion by Bill, second by Jon V., carried unanimously.

Executive Directors Report

- Financial report for February (and March) will be reviewed at next meeting
- Richard updated the Board on COVID-19 responses, including staff being reassigned to working at home. This is going well so far and work is being completed and reimbursable, so financially hasn't impacted us yet. Scottie is likely an exception given most of her work as office manager is done in-house, so she has so far only been able to complete about half of her normal hours. ***Board provided direction to investigate federal CARES Act and need to support staff with up to an additional 80 hours of sick leave for absence related to pandemic. Track these expenses separately. John will send some links.**
- TWG, M&AM, and CEC committee reports were provided verbally.

New Business

- Greg Hood, PhD research scientist with SRSC, has been recommended by the M&AM Subcommittee to be appointed as co-chair with Richard. Bill moved and Brendan seconded the appointment, which carried unanimously.

- Lead entity committees (TRC and LECC) have been nearly finalized for the 2020 grant round. Bill moved and Michael seconded the role, with ability for Richard to add any last stakeholders necessary to meet our policies.
- SWC agreed to act as no-cost pass-through for National Forest Foundation grant for \$24,823.40 won by SRSC since it is being used as a match to a SWC-awarded SRFB grant in the Skiyou Reach conservation area and thus consistent with our mission. We've already approved the agreement with NFF, so today we will approve a sub-award contract with SRSC. Jon V. moved and John seconded the motion to authorize Richard to execute this agreement. It passed unanimously with Devin abstaining. Devin verified the project includes a [now] relatively standard practice for cultural awareness training and monitoring.
- The Protection Subcommittee and TWG both reviewed and recommended authority for Skagit Land Trust to use SRFB-funded reach level protection grants to acquire a small parcel (P15258) in the South Fork Skagit that would provide legal access to other conservation lands and limit future degradation. Board needs to make final approval since it is outside of the geographic area analyzed by our 2017 Protection Strategy Update. Brendan moved and JP seconded the motion to authorize SLT to acquire the land, which carried unanimously with Michael abstaining.
- \$476,774 of returned PSAR funds are available to re-allocate to salmon habitat projects in the Skagit. Board previously provided direction to staff to work with sponsors and TWG to recommend preferred option for advancing either our shared barrier assessment work or construction projects in immediate need. Given that Pressentin Park Side Channel construction is a higher immediate need than the barrier assessment phase 2 project, the TWG recommended full allocation to Pressentin, while the barrier project proceeds through the 2020 grant round. Pressentin, sponsored by Skagit County and Skagit Fish Enhancement Group, has a new cost estimate showing \$628.3K funding gap, but the difference we can't currently provide is likely to be covered by either external funding sources of match or budget adjustments given the relatively small percentage of the overall project scope. Michael moved and Brendan seconded the motion to authorize SRFB and the PSP to amend the grant agreement upwards by \$476,774, which carried unanimously and with Ken and Jon V. abstaining.
- Wiley Slough dike raising project is being proposed through the 2020 grant round. The preferred approach was developed outside of salmon recovery discussion. SWC staff have authorized the project to advance into application phase, but has also shared with WDFW as the sponsor that it's eligibility is uncertain at this time. The uncertainty stems from the difficulty in answering the following question. Is the project necessary due to poor project performance or is it necessary due to pre-existing infrastructure deficiencies? There are also broader questions that would be better addressed in a

process external to the grant round project review. The following were noted during the discussion:

- ***Next steps include broadening the project development circle and getting salmon stakeholders on same page.**
- WDFW capital budget award of ~\$972K for final design and permitting hasn't been signed by Governor yet.
- ***Should consider whether criteria should be developed for evaluating if salmon money should be used for infrastructure projects. If extensive repairs to infrastructure are proposed, develop technical and policy processes to evaluate linkage to benefits.**
- It is important to have infrastructure in some strategic locations as the community moves forward in time, so questions like this will increase.
- Deeply policy-laden questions, so Board needs to weigh in.
- Need to consider partners and long-term community support.
- After action reviews may be necessary so we don't end up here again.
- It has been/would be good to show we have thought about maintenance and we stand behind projects, even other types of projects like riparian, etc.

Good of The Order and adjourned around 11:30 am.