

## Skagit Watershed Council

### Final Notes of the Board of Directors Meeting – February 1, 2018

(Underline indicates decision point; parentheses indicate attachment #)

Attendance: Acting Chair Jon-Paul Shannahan, Bill Blake, Richard Brocksmith, Steve Hinton, Michael Kirshenbaum, Colleen McShane, and John Stein.

Not in attendance: Brendan Brokes, Ken Dahlstedt, and Jon Vanderheyden.

#### Call to Order

- Introductions, Determine Quorum (yes), and Approve Agenda – Richard and Steve asked that two items be added to the agenda: an update about the Salmon Recovery Council and the Near-Term Actions (NTA) process. Bill moved and Steve seconded approval of the January 4, 2018 Agenda as amended with these two items. Motion carried.
- Approve January 4, 2018 Board Notes – Michael moved and Colleen seconded approval of the January 4, 2018 Board notes as written. Motion carried.

#### Executive Directors Report

- Approve December Financial Reports – Richard provided a summary of SWC's financial status. Steve moved and John seconded approval of the December Financial Reports as written. Motion carried.
- SWC Budget Update – Subcontracts that are in place for SWC operations are being spent down, and no additional funds or subcontracts have been added since the budget impasse in Olympia. Also, a hold was placed on hiring a Community Engagement Coordinator in that time period. The Capital Budget was settled mid-January and now capital funding will be available to complete funding of the last grant round's projects and provide the match money for this year's grant round so it can proceed in 2018.

Richard updated the 2017/2018 budget to reflect 6-months going forward, which provided an overview of the funds SWC has available. RCO has been reluctant to allocate recently available PSAR funding until new contracts are in place, which may be July 2018. RCO offered to provide 3 months of capacity funding, then would negotiate a new contract for the next fiscal year (2018/2019). Richard indicated 3 months isn't enough to cover costs, and at least 6 months is needed for the work plan. **\*Richard and any other Board members that can assist will advocate that RCO and PSP fully restore all funding to 6 months minimum, not 3 months.**

**\*There was a short discussion about the need for strategic work planning now that budget was solidifying and SWC's work on protection and riparian was wrapping up.**

- SWC Staffing Update - Richard's 6-month budget update includes 3.1 FTEs reflecting Scottie's request to reduce hours from 32 to 24 hours a week (3-days a week - Mon, Tues, Thurs). The budget also included a new half-time Community Engagement

Coordinator starting in April if funding makes it possible, or it could be delayed a couple of months to gather funding with more certainty. **\*The Board agreed that SWC's Community Engagement Coordinator position will need to be delayed temporarily until the PSAR award is in place.** The Board briefly discussed ways to fund this position which would involve doing more of the consultant work in-house.

Richard sought consent of the Board on pay raises for Chris and Scottie in 2018. To reflect the value of long-term service, Richard also suggested increasing annual leave hours from 8 to 10 for Chris and himself, while keeping Scottie at 8 hrs/month (since her work hours are going to decrease it would actually be an increase as well). These changes are within the capacity of the adopted budget. Richard is completing staff evaluations now. The Board felt these proposals were appropriate and within Richard's purview. This matches or exceeds others' cost of living increases (e.g. SCL) with some extra towards merit and longevity.

Richard provided a summary of subcontracts:

- The \$13K shown in the 6-month budget update for professional services reflects what is currently contracted; nothing new.
  - No additional funds are available for M&AM contractor at the moment, though subcommittee chairs would like to find it soon.
  - Riparian and protection assessment projects are done, so no additional contractors there.
  - Kulshan Services does meeting notes and committee support. A new hire could do the notetaking, though Kulshan adds value for us.
  - Richelle Potter supports Community Art and Nature. She is about to retire and will be training a new person, assuming we find some additional funds.
- Committee Reports
    - Community Engagement – The opportunity is building now to integrate our members' programs into elementary education. The CEC position would coordinate curriculum development. Very exciting new developments.
    - Protection/Restoration combo meeting in January was very productive and timely. This strategic planning opportunity fostered coordinated communication and longer-term engagement opportunities among restoration and protection project implementers and should help determine acquisition outreach planning. An additional desire is to build more community knowledge at a reach-scale about how people, nature, and fish interact, including risks and opportunities. We don't have a reach-scale plan yet for community engagement (with the exceptions of Barnaby Reach and 3FI in the estuary). They will meet again in March to do more joint planning. It would be great to do these joint meetings periodically into the future.
  - Salmon Recovery Council Update
    - The Lummi Tribe (maybe others?) is expressing concern about the PSAR program and whether the money is going to the right places and the right way. They have

consistently pointed to the need to have more fish to catch and appear to be more frustrated at lack of progress. They have questions about where to best invest resources, potentially including hatchery supplementation. PSAR is currently funded for habitat only, but some people want to open this up. Sharing money regionally is a touchy subject and raises difficult-to-answer questions about conservation theory. **\*SRC wants to have a facilitated conversation in March about PSAR allocations.** Bill noted that the Orca issue is coming into it, as well as solving the weak Chinook stock issues limiting harvest.

- Near Term Actions (NTA) reviewers – 800 NTAs were submitted and volunteers are needed to review 400 of them which are relevant to Chinook recovery. Each SRC member has been asked to commit a person, which SWC will. **\*Any Board members or staff who wish to volunteer can contact Richard.**

### Old Business

- 2018 Four Year Work Plan – TWG recommended this for approval, but shy of a quorum, the recommendation was unofficial. Richard spoke with TWG members not present at the last meeting and they gave their consent as well. It's a strong list, though no new concepts were submitted in 2018. The March RFP might reveal an additional project and there is room for that. While the list didn't nail down construction dates, some felt that would be helpful as well as the money needed on a yearly basis. While very large construction projects haven't been on the 4YWP or implemented since Fir Island Farm, this year represents several: Illabot Alluvial Fan project and bridge, Hansen floodplain work (and bridge to follow), Presentin Park off-channel all have construction. Martin Ranch Road culvert and Kukutali are smaller but also likely moving to construction this year. Funding big picture: we have \$16M and need \$20M more to complete all the projects on the 4YWP. Steve moved and Jon-Paul seconded approval of the 2018 Four Year Work Plan as written. Motion carried.
- 2018 SWC Lead Entity Program Guide and 2018 Request for Proposals – TWG recommended very modest changes this year: administrative enhancements on pages 7 and 8; rosters in Appendix A; change to the TWG scoresheet in Appendix C; and updated timeline in Appendix G.

The Board reviewed Appendix B – the RFP which mirrors the RFP from 2016 when we advertised for both SRFB and PSAR funding and made Tier 1 and 2 and 2S projects, riparian, and monitoring eligible. **\*The RFP doesn't include SWC's recent adoption of the Protection Strategy and this should be made clear in the RFP. \*Add a hotlink to the new Protection Strategy to the RFP. \*Chris will complete those maps in February.**

**\*To promote monitoring proposals to come within the deadline, Steve and Richard will call an M & AM committee meeting to recommend and coordinate proposals for monitoring projects with the 10% set-aside.**

Clarification: Riparian projects compete against each other, but do not have to compete against other types of projects unless there are more projects than set-aside funding.

\*RFP will go out by March 15. Michael moved and Colleen seconded approval of the 2018 SWC Lead Entity Program Guide, including the 2018 Request for Proposals as amended with Protection Strategy reference. Motion carried.

## New Business

- Open Discussion of Legislative Session – New opportunities have presented themselves with the new instream flow mitigation fund of \$300M, new carbon bill and watershed and forest health adaptation funds, and fish passage removal funding. These represent opportunities to package much of what we are already doing for additional funding opportunities, but also may require reviewing old assessments or conducting new ones to be ready to bring forward watershed needs.
- “Hirst Fix” Update – Since the money in the Hirst Fix is to help low-flow streams, the Board discussed a study some years ago which identified low-flow stream conditions in the Skagit. While the Skagit is not included in the Hirst “Fix,” this is a significant amount of money earmarked for watershed basins. (It doesn’t sound like there will be a change regarding well drilling in the Skagit anytime soon.) The sentiment is that this money will move fast, so SWC needs to be ready to propose projects that address low-flow conditions.

The Board discussed if and how to discuss the Hirst Fix at the upcoming March SWC Quarterly Meeting. The desire is to stick to the ecological facts and identify benefits of projects addressing low-flow situations in Skagit without wading into the politics and regulations. The focus would be to tell the story about low-flow situations in Skagit especially in those basins that are in trouble. A perfect example is Hansen and the tribes and county effort to recharge floodplains there.

- **\*All will continue to track process in Olympia. \*Richard will draft talking points about low-flow basins and projects in Skagit and revisit at the March Board meeting if possible. Look at what have other communities that have done to address this such as Yakima. Most wanted to give some thought to this over time and consider bringing the topic forward at a later SWC Council meeting after things have settled down. Some felt this is an opportunity to use the power of the SWC Council to vet this issue in the Skagit context and create actions plans in critical basins when the time is right. In the meantime, they seemed to support a focus on the biology and more education without an emphasis on Hirst.**
- Near-Term Actions (NTA) – Steve provided a list of all Skagit Chinook NTAs submitted to PSP for the Board to be more aware of. Many are on the 4YWP, while some aren’t. The Board briefly discussed those that aren’t on the 4YWP to explore as future strategies and projects. Being on our 4YWP provides the basis for a letter of support. Steve is seeking support for other projects that aren’t on the 4YWP list. For example, with the SRSC Riverine Wetland Assessment, there’s potential to apply the LiDAR mapping produced in 2016 that could be used to identify specific riverine wetlands in Skagit, which have been significantly lost or disconnected for rearing and flow augmentation. How could these be more elevated as a component of our strategy? **\*SWC will allocate time in March, and Steve will bring a draft letter of support around certain SRSC**

projects and provide other entities the opportunity to weigh in as well. **\*Jon-Paul will speak with Steve about how to advance bank armoring reduction as well. \*Richard will speak with Brendan about this list prior to the next Board meeting.**

**Other**

- Richard mentioned two requests for letters of support that he's received recently – one on roadless areas protection and the other from Alliance for Jobs and Clean Energy with respect to carbon reduction bills. Alliance for Jobs and Clean Energy is looking for watershed groups to sign on. We'll know more in coming months on the latter as to whether the Legislature will act this year. **\*Richard will forward these two requests to the Board, so they have more information. No decision to act today as most felt this is more of a government to government conversation.**

**Adjourn:** 11:06 am

**Next SWC Board Meetings:** March 1, 2018