

Skagit Watershed Council - Final Notes

Meeting of the Board of Directors, SWC Office – January 3, 2019

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

Present: Colleen McShane (by phone), Jon Vanderheyden (by phone), Michael Kirshenbaum, Ken Dahlstedt, Steve Hinton, Bill Blake, John Stein, and Richard Brocksmith

Absent: Jon Paul Shannahan and Brendan Brokes

Call to Order 9:05 am

Introductions, Determine Quorum, and Approve Agenda (#1)

Approve Board Notes from December 6, 2018 (#2). Motion was made by Bill and seconded by Steve; approved unanimously.

Executive Directors Report

- Review November Financial Report (#3)

New bookkeeper is now on board. Due to the quick turnaround at the new year, financial reports were not in the packet, but Richard provided them at the meeting. ***Richard will determine what was included in the larger than normal telephone and Internet expenses for the month.** Richard noted that income was a bit lower than expected, but expressed no concerns noted regarding budgeted line items. Printing and advertising were over, due to recruitment expenses. Aundrea will start full-time in person in January.

The Board reviewed disbursements out of the account. Richard noted that even with the expenses, the bank account is doing well and approaching our financial goals. Thanks to Colleen and Kate at Seattle City Light (SCL), the MOA with SCL was already amended to include 2019 funding. ***November financial reports will be approved in February.**
- Committee Reports
 - TWG in December – TWG heard from nearly the last of the recent active and completed projects. Rick Hartson presented on testing and partner development on a possible Goodell Creek project. Devin reviewed their partner efforts with culvert database updates and field work. Discussions with the county are progressing regarding county-owned floodplain parcels. Bob Warinner did not present as he was ill, but ***TWG will hear about the Cascade Floodplain project in January.** They reviewed the projects on the 4YWP and changes to the Lead Entity Program Guide with ***recommendations to be finalized in January.**

Regarding the returned PSAR money, the TWG recommended waiting until at least January to decide on the technical merits of the three proposed projects pending more information (e.g. the amount of funds to be returned and more definitive project costs for Presentin). There is not consensus so far on which projects they

would recommend for funding. The Board reiterated their desire that TWG consider the technical merit of the projects, not policy implications.

The Board and Richard discussed their hopes, under Aundrea's leadership, that the work of the TWG be revitalized with more consistent attendance, broadened participation, and interesting and vital topics to address.

***At the February Quarterly meeting of members, SWC will include the work of our committees.** The Board's expectation is that their work has clear decisions points, not overpacked agendas, regular communication, and the legwork required to prepare for the meeting in order to increase participation. Ken noted the county will do its part to support this committee.

- Protection Subcommittee in December - They approved some parcels while others are under review and debate. Nice to have Aundrea on board. She'll start doing protection strategy assessments and help with reports. The County rep will participate in January for a specific project discussion. There is no Forest Service or County person on this committee full-time, mostly due to time constraints.

***Protection Subcommittee would like more people on the committee.**

- The December CEC meeting was cancelled. They will meet in late January.
- Letter and Outreach to WA Legislature – Richard provided a quick debrief regarding the Governor's Budget which looks like a status quo budget for habitat projects. While state SRFB money was doubled, that money is diluted statewide, so not much more comes to Skagit. PSAR and FbD funding was low, while ESRP funds were increased from \$8 to 12 million. They only put \$30 million in for the Fish Barrier Removal Board but are proposing to meet culvert injunction requirements of about \$300 million. The latter appears to be taking up much of the available bonding capacity.

***The Board directed Richard to develop a letter and leave-behind package for the Legislature with a strong message about the critical role of the Skagit watershed work on habitat which contributes to the health of the entire marine ecosystem and Orcas.**

The Board agreed that Skagit will fare better if SWC outlines a coordinated investment strategy with everyone in the SWC in agreement on a focused list of needs and projects that are ready to go if there's money on the table. The projects we submit must have the most habitat impact. With the orca issue influencing discussions, hatchery production will be on the table, but it's a short-term fix. We need to continue to emphasize that long-term fixes lie in funding habitat restoration and protection.

Regarding culverts and funding for the next 10 years, SRSC and their partners have made some progress towards completing their culvert study. ***Steve will present results of the culvert study at the next TWG meeting. The intent is to suggest high-priority, high-impact culvert projects to be tackled over the next 10 years. *We can outline the top issues at SWC's next quarterly members meeting and appeal to the value of a unified message and long-term vision (Coordinated Culvert Strategy) to legislators when it comes to culvert removal work in the Skagit.** There will still be plenty of loose ends particularly regarding how to address private culverts, but we can start with the most beneficial to salmon and steelhead recovery.

With WSDOT, their selected culvert removals may not always be the most important culvert removals for salmon and steelhead. In working with WSDOT, have a list and a

clear and unified message; they like it when many partners are on the same page and present unified priorities. The Board can help the County understand where the resources should be spent, and in turn, the County will support and educate WSDOT as to those priorities, for example. ***Present to the Transportation Committee and start the conversation with legislators when a package is together.**

Old Business

- PSAR Returned Funds Updates – ***The Board agreed to address this at next month’s meeting once the TWG technical review is completed at their meeting this month.**

New Business

- 4 Year Work Program Proposed Changes – Richard outlined completed projects that were removed and the addition of the Car Body Hole Revetment Removal project. Overall, these are modest changes. ***Richard will submit the revised 4YWP to the Board in a memo following TWG recommendation.**
- 2019 Lead Entity Program Guide Proposed Changes Memo (#4) – The follow-up survey received 9 responses with relatively good reviews. Suggestions included: improving communications (deadlines, new procedures, with new and existing sponsors; shortening the process if possible (while making it shorter is difficult). ***The TWG will formalize a recommendation for the next Board meeting.**

The Board discussed the required attendance rule. While the technical folks are good about attendance - with only a few exceptions - it’s the citizens committee with a bit spottier attendance. ***The Board agreed that SWC needs to address issues early, communicate attendance expectations months in advance, offer a call-in option, and encourage organizations to plan ahead to appoint a representative who can commit to both meetings. Be clear that if they don’t attend both meetings, their vote won’t count. Be clear on which meetings are mandatory.** Ken noted that as chair, he doesn’t typically vote.

- Final 2019 Meeting Calendar (#5) – Site visit dates were changed from May 6/7 to May 7/8 (Tuesday/Wednesday) to avoid Monday. ***Otherwise, please enter into your calendar!**
- Board Nominations – At next month’s meeting, we’ll need to approve a slate of Board members to present at the February 27 quarterly members meeting for approval. Michael and Brendan have agreed to serve another term. JP is still a question mark. Colleen is retiring and working through April and will continue to search for a replacement from SCL. ***Bill, Steve, Michael, and Tim Manns (outside person who served last time) agreed to serve on the Nominating Committee. *Richard will schedule a phone call for the committee to discuss appointments. *The Board suggested more outreach to membership to encourage their participation on the Board. Richard will invite members to submit any strong interests regarding Board nominations.** The Board also agreed recruitment should emphasize diversity and inter-generational representation.

- The Draft Puget Sound Steelhead Recovery Plan is out for review with comments due by February 11. The Skagit plan draft is done with co-manager technical review. Steve will have the Skagit portion out by mid-February. They will be ready to have others involved from the rest of the stakeholders in the valley. ***Richard and Steve will discuss how we can provide engagement and review among members and stakeholders this spring.** There aren't huge differences between regional and Skagit assessments of what work needs to be completed, and both put an initial priority on reconnecting isolated habitat. ***The TWG will discuss the Puget Sound draft at their January meeting.**

Note: Jon will miss the next two meetings. He may have the opportunity to call in.

Adjourn – 10:10 am

Next SWC Board Meeting: February 7, 9am to noon