

Skagit Watershed Council – Final Notes
Meeting of the Board of Directors, via Zoom
January 6th, 2022, 10am to Noon

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

Attending: John Stein (Chair), Andrew Bearlin, Brendan Brokes, Bill Blake, Peter Browning, Devin Smith, Michael Kirshenbaum, Brian Lanouette, Aundrea McBride, Richard Brocksmith

Call to Order 10:04 am

- Introductions, quorum achieved.
- Approved Agenda. Motion by Andrew, second by Bill, approved unanimously
- Approved Board Notes for December 2, 2021. Motion by Michael, second by Peter, approved unanimously **with the action item that SWC will follow up with Jack from SSIT regarding clarifying a comment he had on November notes.**

Executive Director's Report

- November Financial Report: Arrived late (just now) but appears to be in order with no issues to report. ***Will resubmit for approval next month.**
- COLA raises for staff: discussed several options. All agreed that COLA raises are meant to be implemented equally. With that goal, motion by Bill to approve 6% COLA for Holli, Aundrea, and Scottie and 4% COLA for Richard to be reviewed in May when more budget and revenue information is available, with the intention of raising Richard's COLA to 6% as well. Second by Peter, unanimously approved.
- Technical Work Group:
 - Received a presentation from Devin Smith about progress this summer at Barnaby Slough. There will be a field trip for community members January 22nd (Board invited) and a formal ribbon cutting in April.
 - Revisited changes to Strategic Approach regarding pocket estuaries (the map added after the last meeting) and sent this topic back to the M&AM Subcommittee for discussion and recommendation about the map extent.
 - Recommended the Board approve changes to the Program Guide (loan policy, target area score calculation, RFP, and riparian criteria)
- Riparian Work Group
 - North Sound Riparian Conference will be on Jan 19th.
- Community Engagement Committee
 - Working on Illuminate Skagit and Illuminight for Jan 28th.

- Holli is in the classroom teaching 450 kids about salmon science and technology of how to make luminaries.
- Next Quarterly SWC meeting is February 2nd. It will be the first of the Skagit Salmon Science Series. A Doodle Poll was sent out recruiting steering committee members.
- Eric Beamer is retiring. Mike LeMoine will be the new Research Director. Eric will continue to participate in a scaled back capacity.
- Funding update: as much as \$600k extra dollars could be added to our grant round this year and over the next 5 years due to the Infrastructure and Jobs Investment Act, or SRFB could choose to use those funds for targeted investments. Stay tuned.

New Business

- County cover letter: Skagit County has requested the SWC change its Board structure to be comprised of only 7 members—the county, a leadership representative from each of the three treaty tribes, WDFW representative, and two other members. Peter noted that the County desires better coordination, relationships, and outcomes among regulatory authorities and tribal leadership, and to reduce any perceived conflicts of interest in grant-making. Discussion:
 - All want to keep discussion moving forward
 - Historically the tribes/elected tribal leaders have entrusted staff to participate on their behalf. It would be ideal to have that kind of dedicated dialogue space among elected leaders.
 - USIT feels NGOs should not be part of regulatory decision making. Further, they support co-managers and the county
 - SWC is not a regulatory body and has never weighed in on regulatory issues, except where all members agreed recently on the Giant Copper mine in BC.
 - Any project that is approved by SWC is subject to regulatory reviews via permitting processes.
 - More voices around the table is better/leads to better outcomes.
 - One way to preserve our community partnership while also formalizing co-manager and county decision-making is to redesign our executive committee to be made up of 5 or 7 governments. They would have room for private dialogue, setting all agenda, and could even review and consent to project funding following the citizen's committee decisions.
 - Co-managers and the County have responsibility for salmon recovery outcomes.
 - There was a brief discussion of conflict of interest and perceived conflict of interest. The Salmon Recovery Act and state RCWs require collaborative decision-making via the citizens committee which is why we also have such strong rules and corrective actions on conflict of interest at SWC. WDFW, SRSC, USIT, and the County all receive

funds through the SWC and thus may be considered conflicted just the same. There was not agreement that the County's proposal adds value for issues of perceived conflict of interest. ***If this is a concern of anyone's it should be addressed directly by the Board.**

- Salmon restoration projects are only part of salmon recovery. Where does voluntary restoration fit in with salmon recovery?
 - Inclusiveness is key. Conversations can be difficult when some benefit and some are harmed.
 - Tribal leadership will have to make the decision about who participates on their behalf.
 - SWC has been constrained to voluntary habitat restoration. SWC is not a venue for the whole package of salmon recovery.
 - Maybe SWC is not the venue for achieving the improved coordination the County seeks? Or maybe it could be IF all the parties agree and start meeting regularly and we can be certain changes to organizational structure would be successful and not risk the progress we are currently making?
 - What exactly is the issue this proposal is attempting to solve; we need a common diagnosis? Peter is unique as an elected official on the SWC Board. Other governments send staff representatives.
 - Peter said there aren't current problems but that this proposal is intended to continue to improve coordination and prevent a future problem.
 - The proposal looks a lot like the structure of a Local Integrating Organization (LIO). An LIO implements other natural resource strategies. The governments would need to discuss and decide on an LIO proposal. Is there interest in non-voluntary measures?
 - ***The group needs a shared diagnosis of our structural limitations and mission opportunities. *And suggestions to have more coordination among co-managers and the County need to be brought forward by those entities.**
 - Richard does an excellent job of implementing Board decisions and not getting out ahead of the Board process; this is not an administrator issue and thus why the County is proposing we reform from within rather than start over.
- Voluntary Riparian Incentives: WSCC, SCD and SWC (Richard) have been meeting monthly and following the Centennial Accord process with the goal of improving voluntary pathways for riparian restoration for ag and non-ag landowners.
- Scope of work for potential contract to pass through money from WSCC to SCD to SWC and contract facilitator includes meeting with stakeholders and governments for guidance and other administrative steps to get the process going to empower

landowners to define solutions via voluntary riparian buffers and incentive programs.

- Motion to implement the memo (see attached) as laid out for \$25,000 (about half to SWC and half to contract facilitator) contingent on support from Tribal and County representatives by Peter, second by Brendan. Unanimously approved.
- Riparian Work Group SRSC Contract: part of the 2020 grant round project for replanting riparian areas. Includes \$11,000 from SRSC to SWC over 3 years to support the work of the Riparian Work Group, North Sound Riparian Conferences, and riparian database maintenance. Motion to approve the contract by Michael, second by Peter. All approve, Devin abstains.
- Illuminight programming and choreography have been supported over many years by our resident artist Richelle Potter. The Board discussed this years contract with Richelle to continue that work, not to exceed \$3600. Devin moved and Brendan seconded to approve the contract with Richelle, and approved unanimously.
- Strategic Approach update: Pocket estuary update has been referred back to the M and AM Subcommittee to discuss the map boundaries for qualifying pocket estuaries.
- Program Guide updates: Several questions were raised. **This will be brought forward for decision next meeting.**
 - Question if steelhead projects are eligible/in target area
 - Riparian qualifying criteria discussion needed
 - Question amounts for set asides and are they mandatory or not
- Board nominations
 - Motion to recommend Brian to the Council of Members to complete Jon-Paul's term by Michael, second by Devin, all approve.

Adjourn 12:05 pm