

Skagit Watershed Council
Meeting of the Board of Directors – Final Notes
January 5, 2017 9-11 am SWC Office, Mount Vernon, WA

(* indicates action item; indicates decision)

Attendance: Chair Ken Dahlstedt, Richard Brocksmith, Steve Hinton, Carolyn Kelly, Michael Kirshenbaum, Colleen McShane, Jon-Paul Shannahan, and Jon Vanderheyden.

Not in attendance: Brendan Brokes

Call to Order and Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 9:13 am with a quorum.

Draft Agenda Review (#1) and Notes for December 1, 2016 (#2)

Agenda approved with no additions or changes.

Steve moved and Jon seconded approval of the November 2016 meeting notes with no changes. Approved unanimously.

Executive Director Report

- November Financial Report (#3). Richard made general comments about the November financials. Financials were \$19K in the red this month, but this was due to a \$17K bill from ESA for which SWC has not yet received a reimbursement. The Board discussed procedural practices via our cost accrual basis. Richard asked any Board members to let him know if they would like the financials presented in a different way.
Carolyn moved and Steve seconded the motion to approve the November financials as included in the board packet. Approved Unanimously
- SWC Federal Tax Form 990: SWC's 990's have been done by Hoekstra Accounting for many years. It was presented for the Board's review. Approved Unanimously. ***It will be submitted before February 15, 2017.**
- Review SWC Audit Report from Trina Hoekstra, CPA: At this time, the audit is mostly completed and the summary indicated that everything is as represented and all Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) were followed. SWC 990's have been done by Hoekstra Accounting for many years. The auditor has not yet done an exit interview with Richard or Carolyn. Richard spoke to a draft recommendations letter with a few recommended practices that the auditor noted could improve our operations, however, some of them SWC already does. ***Richard and Carolyn will request an exit interview with the auditor to complete the letter and audit.**
- 2017 Meeting Dates Discussion (#4): There were no objections to the schedules below.
Board meetings: First Thursday each month, 9am-12pm unless otherwise denoted by a*
January 5, February 2, March 2, April 13*, May 4, (1-hr phone call?), May 8, 9, 10, LE Site Visits, June 1, No Board meeting July 6; July 11**, LECC Workshop, August 1, LECC,

Prioritization; August 3, (1-hr phone call?), September 7, October 5, November 2, December 7. (**date reflects adjustments so we can have JP and Ken attend)

Technical Work Group (TWG) - Third Thursday each month, 1-4pm unless otherwise denoted by a*

January 19, February 16, March 23*, April 20, May 8, 9, 10, LE Site Visits (TRC), May 18, June 15, June 28, 9-4pm, LE Technical Meeting (TRC), July 20, August 17, September 21, October 19, November 16, December 14*

Community Engagement Committee Meeting Dates - Last Tuesday each month, 9:30-11:30am unless otherwise denoted by a*

January 31, February 22-23, retreat*, March 28, April 25, May 30, June 27, July 25, August 29, September 26, October 31, November 28, December 19*

Council of Members Quarterly Meetings – 9:00am to Noon (four meetings)

March 8 – Burlington Library; June 14 – Burlington Library; September 21* – Annual Lunch (a week later than normal, but better aligned with Legislative schedules which will allow their attendance (11:30-2ish) – Location TBD; November 29 – Burlington Library

- The Executive Committee did not meet during the holidays. JP Shannahan reported that he will accept the Vice-Chair position should the Board elect him. ***Richard will resume the Nominating committee with the goal of announcing nominations to the Council in May for or June meeting. Richard will follow up with all committee members** (Carolyn, Jon, Colleen can do it by phone, and possibly Brendan) **and set a meeting for February.** Note: Colleen and Jon will not be at the February Board meeting.
- Richard provided an update on statewide funding reviews currently underway. Lower Columbia region has been receiving less than would be technically indicated while Puget Sound has received more. While theirs is a huge region with fish to recover, they don't have access to Bonneville Power Association funding because they are below the dams. SRFB could change funding allocations which could affect Skagit. Federally-recognized treaty rights and fish populations in the Skagit are good reasons for not cutting Skagit allocations. Richard is not a member of the Regional Allocation Task Force, but SWC can comment along the way. Modest reductions of SRFB project money may be unavoidable.
- Richard and Ken are following the political landscape leading up to the Legislative session with respect to funding. The Governor's budget treated our funding needs reasonably well, but whether that can be sustained by the legislature given revenue battles is questionable. ***Soon we will need to discuss legislative strategy.**
- Puget Sound Chinook Implementation Strategy is being developed for regional context and PSP action plan. It is out for comment presently. SRSC has made extensive comment on this.

Committee Reports

The Board reviewed the notes for the subcommittees as provided in the packet (#5).

Old Business

- Community Engagement: The Board was pleased with the progress of the Community Engagement project which is up and running with numerous posts each week, 25 photos submitted in the fall contest, and 170 likes - well over the expected amount for just one month's activity. The fall photo contest ends January 15. ***Richard will send an email to the Board that they can use to invite people to participate in the photo contest.**

- SWC Social Media Policy (#6): This document outlines SWC's policies as well as operational guidance to direct publication of content and communication on its social media channels and website and standards for using social media. Richard noted website changes reflecting SWC's new social media presence.
- The Board felt the Social Media Policy was a good start. The operational guidance would not need to be approved by the Board. The policy-related wording should apply to all SWC initiatives not just the social media project which is subservient to broader engagement program. These policies are in place to operate over long haul and many mechanisms. This policy should also address who the administrator and what those roles are by position (e.g. Executive Director, Intern, and Office Manager.)

***Richard will create a new document outlining social media and policies taking out specific references to Our Skagit. Richard will draft a communication policy for SWC outlining all communication procedures, covering social media therein. Creating a block diagram to show the hierarchy may be helpful. The Board will review this in February.**

- Richard met yesterday with the new communications intern, Daniel Billick, who will start in mid-January. The Board agreed this is a great start.
- Board Feedback on the #ThisSkagitLife interview project (#7)
The interviews will be transcribed into several formats: blog, social media posts, short video clips. Kulshan Services will be conducting ten initial interviews and creating the blog posts. The CEC will identify additional interviewees. Future options include partnering with Skagit Herald.
Richard handed out a 2 page summary approach and spreadsheet showing a potential list of interviewees by interest group. (not included in the packet) ***Richard will follow up with Steve and JP about reaching out to tribal candidates.** Richard also expressed he has leads for additional folks on the interview list. The Board suggested the Wildcatters/fishers be added to the list as well as developers (e.g. Dan Mitzel – developers are utilizing natural resources and their perspectives might be valuable), large corporations (ex: refineries, Burlington Northern), and government workers, utility workers etc.

A robust discussion followed with the Board expressing the following thoughts and concerns:

- Get the "right" start. Who to interview in the first initial stages is important.
- "Our Skagit" could appear ethnocentric. The possessive word "our" could be alienating to tribal representatives.
- Craft questions so they don't lead the conversation in a particular direction or this could produce results that are either inspiring or contrary to our goal of building

common ground and fostering positive relationships. For example: What do you have to say about sense of place versus what does Our Skagit mean to you?

- The questions are too focused on a person's work. Also, it might not be their work that connects them to Skagit, it might be their hobbies or family. The Board wants to know what people are thinking and how it interacts with our mission. Use words a common person will understand. Conduct the interview as an exploration of the watershed.
- Reduce the number of questions so it's more of a conversation and opportunity to explore an answer more deeply. We want to collect stories not just answers. Get to matters of the heart and their feelings. Use community based social marketing principles to learn more about people's motivations and thought processes.
- Tie the questions more into their relationship to the land, water, fish, and natural resource base, water quality, air, watershed, soils, economy.
- Refocus the questions so they are grounded in place. Examples: What is it about the place that drew you here, makes you proud to be here, and happy to stay? Why do you like the Skagit? Instead of "What is changing in your world and how should we prepare for that?" say 'How do we care for the Skagit?' What is changing in the natural world around you? What do you think about the River? Do we care what they want to do when they get up in the morning? Direct it more specifically.
- Interview social influencers. Think about how they might view these questions and see how that might lead to refining them.
- We need to draw others in as well so find an effective way to interview the general public too. Questions need to get stories from the less-engaged and general segment of the audience too. Getting statements from those who are already engaged could be considered moot.
- Take good things that are happening and build on that. We want to focus on the positive; however, if something negative comes up, we need to acknowledge that it's a perspective that should be shared. We need to be prepared with a way to respond if something negative comes up.

Actions:

- ***Richard will do a trial run of the interview questions with ag and tribal concerns before diving into other interviews.**
- ***Consider nuancing or diversifying the current theme so it's more inclusive. #Skagit Home came up as an option.**
- ***Richard will work with Kulshan Services and CEC to rework the questions to express more place and natural resource focus.**
- ***Richard asked the Board to make suggestions regarding people to interview.**
- Richard will search for access to a previous Council-sponsored poll (Voices of Skagit?) a few years ago with phone interviews by Triangle Associates (?). There may be some good questions in that document.
- Regarding the Future Plan Section of the document, the Board felt that this should be malleable and adapted as the project unfolds. They felt it was too early to approve videos produced by others. ***Richard will delete.**

- Skagit Youth Conservation Education Planning Retreat (#8):
The Board heard about the goal of this retreat to be held at NCI (co-sponsor) at Diablo Lake. Up to 30 educators will share knowledge about existing educational programs and future directions. The conference will allow us to document resources for the Skagit community to better access educational efforts; outline an action plan to build capacity and effectiveness for youth education programs; and build relational strength throughout the Skagit educational network. The planning focus will be on Skagit Watershed and watershed youth from kindergarten to 12th grade, including both school and non-school programming. An outcome of the retreat may be a Resource Guide for educators which is tied to STEM and educational standards. This retreat registration fee has been included in the SWC budget. Retreat attendees will be anyone who delivers conservation education programming to this group of youth. but not school teachers per se. Suggestions: Watch for road closures in February. Look for ways to involve educators through local or state organizations.

New Business

- Proposed 2017 Lead Entity Guide Changes (#9): The Lead Entity Program Guide sets forth the procedures and processes the SWC will use in soliciting, reviewing, ranking, approving, funding, administering, monitoring, and evaluating salmon recovery projects funded through the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) and Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB). This Guide represents the cumulative policies of past decisions, along with long term practice, to make the SWC process as effective, efficient and transparent as possible.
- This guide makes programmatic changes such as: extends time between two LECC meetings, creates a checklist submittal and more rigid timeline with appeal process. The TWG will discuss this at the January meeting. Add comments from different entities in a different color. ***The Board is invited to review this and provide additional comments before hopefully adopting in February. *Per Steve's request, Richard will provide summary of comments received in 2016.**

The meeting adjourned around at 10:55 am.

Next SWC Board Meetings:

- February 2 – 9 am – 12 noon
- March 2
- April 13*