

Skagit Watershed Council – Final Notes
Meeting of the Board of Directors, via Zoom
January 5th, 2023, 11:00am to 12:30pm

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

Attending: John Stein (Chair), Bill Blake, Michael Kirshenbaum, Devin Smith, Peter Browning, Brendan Brokes, Aundrea McBride, Richard Brocksmith, Jenn Johnson

Call to Order 10:06am

Introductions. Quorum achieved. Jenn Johnson from Skagit County is joining us today.

Motion by Peter, seconded by Devin, to approve the agenda. Approved unanimously.

Motion by Bill, seconded by Peter, to approve the December notes. Approved unanimously.

Executive Director and Committee Reports

November Financials—\$9200 in the red for November probably due to a mismatch of billing timing with contractors billing. ***Richard will look into it further and report back.**

Cost of living increase for staff proposed and approved by John and Brendan. Motion by Michael, seconded by Peter, to approve the COLA. All approve.

TWiG—Approved recommending that the Board adopt the 2023 LE Program Guide. Reviewed and discussed the M&AM subcommittee’s list of projects to add to the 4 Year Work Plan. Discussed the role of the Riparian Work Group (RWG) and if TWG needs to be addressing objectives the RWG is not.

Protection Subcommittee—Recommended the 2022 Protection Strategy be approved by the TWG (not in time for the TWG January agenda).

M&AM Subcommittee—Did not meet this month.

CEC—Discussed how to market conservation and education programs. Focused on Illuminight, Storming the Sound.

There’s an ongoing discussion about improving the riparian actions geodatabase. Ecology offered to provide funding for that work, including adding CREP planting data. Ecology only seeks annual progress reporting/data summaries and not raw data. The Conservation District wants to be included with the database too, which can be managed while still preserving some

level of landowner data confidentiality. ***Further discussions to be had off line and in meeting on January 30th with RWG.**

Meeting dates have been set for the year for Council of Members meetings, including annual lunch hopefully in person. ***Outlook calendar invites are forthcoming.**

New Business

Sauk River Plan—2 years of development being pulled together in the same format as the Middle Skagit Plan, but with improvements. Projects are screened with habitat benefits and community impacts. ***Draft will soon go the steering committee and TWG and Protection Subcommittee. *Additional landowner contacts are being updated and pursued now.** Then there will be outreach to other stakeholders. Richard is working on an outreach plan to complete review and hopefully adoption of the Plan by mid-2023. Our contract's work is almost done and remaining work will likely be completed by staff.

Voluntary Riparian Incentives—The core team sent a draft report to the tribes and county, with a powerpoint briefing to the Lower Skagit TMDL Advisory Group. They have gotten some constructive feedback which is currently being addressed. Swinomish will be providing policy feedback and isn't comfortable proceeding into Phase 2 yet. Another meeting with the county is scheduled for February 1. ***A one page summary is being developed.** Next step should be how to get assessment work and recommendations done and boots on the ground in priority subbasins.

Discussion:

- Need additional authorization for funding for Peak to support meetings and incorporate edits. And launching into Phase 2 could be supported by Peak as well with additional authorization and funding.
- Difficult to address outstanding comments without amendment to Peak contract. Current budget proviso funding goes through June, so funding is available for this.
- Can we approve \$10,000 or some smaller amount?
- ***Swinomish and Devin will meet with Richard and Bill Blake in the next two weeks.**

Motion to allow the Executive Director to expand the agreement with Peak up to \$10,000 to incorporate existing and expected comments for the voluntary riparian incentives project by Peter, seconded by Michael. All approve except Bill abstains due to MOA with Skagit CD which funds this work.

Program Guide—Looked at proposed changes.

Discussion:

- Monitoring project process is different than how habitat projects are reviewed and approved. Monitoring projects are approved to be on the RFP then approved by the

M&AM Subcommittee then put on LECC list as nondiscretionary if they are selected for funding via the Regional process. In other words, M&AM bears responsibility for generating and selecting priority monitoring projects if Board has set aside the money in advance as a policy priority, but TRC and LECC need to know and support questions being asked and answered so habitat projects could be adaptively managed if needed.

- Should the TWG be involved? Make sure the TWG is aware of monitoring projects and has the opportunity to go to the PSEMP meeting where monitoring projects are presented in the Regional process.

Motion by Michael to approve the RFP and Program Guide as presented, seconded by Devin. All approve except Brian abstains.

Adaptive Response Policy—Adaptive Response is the ability and process for responding to project-level needs when objectives are not met by the original scope of work. This discussion was started last year locally but changes in eligibility and criteria are also necessary at state level. It was supposed to be considered by SRFB last year but the topic fell through the cracks with some regional staff changes. ***Marc Duboiski will try to get it on the SRFB agenda again in March and SWC staff will participate.** The current concept is to reinforce in the 2023 LE Program Guide the need for expanded goals/objectives and adaptive management planning of bigger projects during their design phases. That would ensure we are on the right course headed into the 2023 grant round. Then that buys some time to continue working locally and with state on adaptive response policies and procedures (see attachment).

Discussion:

- We want to see this policy done. We stand behind our projects.
- ***This draft needs to go back to TWG as suggested. Will postpone vote until next month.**

Adjourn 12:35

Good of the Order

Michael—Barney Lake property will close soon. 5 acres of swan and fish habitat. SLT raised \$50K via grassroots to match salmon money.

Andrew—SCL submitted a draft license application to FERC.

Adjourn 12:00