

Skagit Watershed Council – Final Notes (#2)

Meeting of the Board of Directors, SWC Office – January 9, 2020

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

Attendance: Chair Ken Dahlstedt, Bill Blake, Brendan Brokes, Michael Kirshenbaum, John Stein, Jon-Paul Shannahan and Jon Vanderheyden. Staff included Richard Brocksmith and Holli Watne
Not in attendance: Andrew Bearlin.

Call to Order 9:05 am

- Introductions, Determine Quorum, and Approve Agenda (#1) – Quorum present, agenda approved.
- Approve Board Notes: November 7, 2019 (#2)—Motion by Brendan, second by Michael, approved.

Executive Directors Report

- Approve October and November Financial Reports (#3 & #4)—Motion by John Stein, second by Jon Vanderheyden, approved.
- Committee Reports—Monitoring & Adaptive Management Subcommittee meeting discussed the near final M&AM Report and recommendations therein, ***with the latter going to TWG in coming months to be finalized as technical recommendations.** ***Board would like to pick up “Chapter 1” as a separate policy document which covers subcommittee proposal for how to govern adaptive management of the Skagit Chinook Recovery Plan.** TWG provided recommendations for how to consider and act on results of recent barrier culvert assessment and PSAR Request for Proposal submittals, which will be covered later today under old business. CEC also met.
- SWC has a new member organization, #44: Salish Alliance. Their mission is to work with local communities to identify, adopt and implement climate adaptation strategies that provide for security and sustainability of future generations. Steve Hinton will be their representative to SWC.
- SWC Board Recruitment – With Steve Hinton’s resignation from the Board, we no longer benefit from representation from some of our local tribal governments. ***The Skagit River System Cooperative board met recently and will be forwarding a recommendation for replacement for our consideration.** They appointed Devin Smith as the new SRSC Restoration Director. ***SWC may also need to determine how to advance the Skiyou/Ross Island planning grant being returned by SRSC.**

- Richard introduced our new Community Engagement Coordinator, Holli Watne!

Old Business

- Lower Skagit Temperature TMDL (#5) – Ecology drafted a new strategy and received comments at the end of 2019 but hasn't finalized yet. It's fairly high level but might be helpful to point to for future resources for more temperature-reduction needs.
 - Disappointing that the Governor did not pick up the WA Conservation Commission's CREP improvements pilot program that would improve incentives for landowners to reduce stream temps, which may be associated with the disagreement over riparian buffer minimum sizes.
 - Disappointing that the reach-level planning NTA proposal via the National Estuary Program was pulled until future potential consideration end of 2020.
 - Briefly discussed Governor's Task Force on climate resilient riparian areas and the importance of performance-based monitoring.
 - Upper Skagit Tribe is working with county and drainage district and WDFW on East Fork Nookachamps drainage and habitat issues, trying to build core of agreement on scope, then expand out to broader circle for developing details.

***More to follow.**
- Legislative Priorities Letter (#7) – Board reviewed draft letter focused on advocating for support for addressing temperature issues and acquiring final design & permitting capital dollars for Wiley Slough dike raising. The Board advised removing \$100K detail while being more specific on why we need the money and what we'd do with it. Also, add reference for monitoring performance of CREP pilot and concept of this really being development money for both projects and program enhancements. Add statewide context for CREP. Note that DFW has briefed legislators on Wiley topic. Change working to asking for their consideration of Wiley.
 - While there may be some disagreements among our members on some issues like CREP and Wiley dikes, we must keep moving forward. We won't always have everyone on board but want to accommodate and support everyone as much as we possibly can.
 - Motion by John Stein, second by Jon V. to approve letter as edited. Passed with Brendan recusing himself and Jon-Paul abstaining.
- Coordinated Culvert Strategy and Interim Approach to 2020 SRFB Funding – SRSC, with the help of several partners, is wrapping up the SRFB-funded project for identifying and prioritizing steelhead barrier culverts (BC). Devin provided TWG with a relevant summary in December, noting that there are about 15 BC in documented or presumed Chinook distributions (mostly private ownership and some county, but also 1 or 2 in city, fed, state, and drainage), which are likely eligible already for SRFB funding via SWC.

Also, while there are zero culverts in SWC Tier 2 areas, there are about 30 BC in the upper reaches of those Tier 2 tributary/mainstems (or in other words, in their subtributaries), which likely are not currently eligible for SRFB via SWC.

- After several technical and policy-level discussions on how to consider culverts moving forward, there appears to be relative comfort among members to:
 - Utilize this new BC information to go after any and all outside funding sources (i.e. Coordinated Culvert Strategy),
 - Continue to advance via SRFB only currently eligible culvert projects benefitting Chinook salmon, and
 - Support additional (phase 2) BC and habitat inventories, database development, and BC removal scoping, potentially through set-aside or returned funds,
 - While not amending our current 2015 Strategic Approach.
- Returned PSAR Funding (#6) – Motion by Michael, second by John Stein to approve re-allocation of \$363,019 to six existing SRFB-funded projects to address budget shortfalls; passed unanimously.

Project Name	Sponsor	Current SRFB/ PSAR Funds	Current Match	Return PSAR Funds Request	Additional Match Required
Skiyou Rock Removal Feasibility and Design	Skagit Co. PW	\$108,501	\$0	\$20,000	\$0
Skagit Forks Wetland/Britt Slough Reconnection	SFEG	\$286,056	\$50,480	\$25,600	\$4,508
Barnaby Reach Restoration Phase 1	SRSC	\$750,000	\$135,000	\$224,950	\$37,050
Skagit Basin Ongoing Project Maintenance 2019	SRSC, SFEG	\$167,858	\$30,122	\$30,000	\$4,795
Cedar Grove Fish Passage Improvement	Skagit Co. PW	\$564,892	\$103,180	\$19,969	\$31
Martin Ranch Road Fish Passage	Skagit Co. PW	\$221,000	\$39,000	\$42,500	\$7,500
TOTAL		\$2,098,307		\$363,019	

- The Board discussed how to allocate the remaining \$309,444 (assuming Sauk Tributary Culvert Design reduces their scope of work as expected). ***They provided direction to work with the culvert partners to scope out a pragmatic phase 2 as described above while also ensuring that any critical construction projects scheduled for summer 2020 implementation (e.g. Presentin side-channel) are considered before any final decisions on funding are made.**

New Business

- 2020 Lead Entity Process – The Board was briefed on the status of updating our 4 year work plan and the current draft Request for Proposals to be released in February.
 - The Board had no concerns about increasing the riparian set-aside from \$200K to \$300K in the PSAR grant round year.
 - They also initially support including approximately \$150K set-aside for culvert inventory/assessment phase 2 depending on how the returned funds process evolves.

Adjourned at 11:00 am