

Skagit Watershed Council – Final Notes
Meeting of the Board of Directors, via Zoom
July 22, 2021

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

Attending: John Stein (facilitating), Andrew Bearlin, Brendan Brokes, Michael Kirshenbaum, Peter Browning, Devin Smith, Jon Vanderheyden, Jon-Paul Shannahan, Richard Brocksmitth, Aundrea McBride (notes)

Not in attendance: Bill Blake

Call to Order 11:50 am

- Introductions, Determine Quorum, and Approved Agenda
- Approved Board Notes for June 3, 2021. Motion by Peter, second by Andrew, approved unanimously.

Executive Director's Report

Financial Report:

- In the black. Nothing unusual to report. Motion to approve May financial reports by Michael, second by Peter. Approved unanimously.
- We've selected BC Accounting Service to fill the bookkeeping vacancy.
 - Their team will be working out of their own offices to help us.
 - Scottie will pick up some bill paying tasks.
 - We are attempting to streamline bookkeeping processes. Though hourly rates are higher with BCAS, we hope to have about the same monthly costs as previously.

Salmon Recovery Council Preparation:

- While harvest is central to SWC's mission, we share concerns over PSAR Large Cap Program focusing solely on harvest-limiting stocks because of the lack of certainty of success and the lack of an ecosystem approach. Of course there is political advantage to involving sport fishers in fundraising and education about habitat.
- We also want to focus on science behind recovery planning and areas with known certainty and multiple stock benefits, such as estuaries.
- ***We should advocate for scoring criteria that weight more than one policy to find those projects with overlaps in benefits.**

Old Business

Communications:

- Peter is the point person for the next 4 years; County will work through him. They want all of us to be successful in the mission. Wants more harmony in communications. Social media isn't a good venue for policy deliberations, nor should they be considered county positions. For instance, County wants us to be successful at Barnaby.
- Board discussed 2017 SWC Protection Strategy, which has broad support currently at the organizational level. We want to continue to identify opportunities for improvement; ***what issues would the county identify?** For instance:
 - County has some concerns about loss of tax base. Seattle City Light has the ability to offset losses for their mitigation program, but ***we also need to work together to find solutions to the County's recent concerns and objection to some conservation purchases that might be barriers to implementation of the SWC Protection Strategy.** In most cases there are no financial impacts since tax status is often only changed from agriculture or forestry to open space, plus there are usually savings in other public dollars by reducing flood costs or improving public access. ***We hope this conversation can enable county to be more supportive of purchases approved through Protection Subcommittee.**
 - County is supportive of properties purchased for salmon recovery but questions remain about wildlife purchases.
- Several pointed to the need to improve how we expedite efforts to acquire degraded lands (not just high quality lands as prioritized by the 2017 Protection Strategy). SWC needs a pathway/protocol for patching together reach-scale restoration projects. Ecological corridor concepts were discussed and the value of clearly identifying, and moving to preserve and restore, via both voluntary and regulatory processes. ***Staff and committees are working on this and will turn focus here.**
- ***Robust monitoring and assessment processes are needed.**
- ***There is more ground to be covered on these topics in future meetings.**

2021/2022 Work Plan Dialogue — tabled

Adjourn 1:10pm