

Skagit Watershed Council - Final Notes

Meeting of the Board of Directors, Zoom Call – June 4, 2020

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

Attending: Jon Vanderheyden, Michael Kirshenbaum, Bill Blake, John Stein, Devin Smith, Richard Brocksmith, Aundrea McBride, Andrew Bearlin, Ken Dahlstedt, and Brendan Brokes

Not in attendance: Jon Paul Shannahan

Called to order 9:01 am

- Introductions, Quorum present
- Reviewed Agenda-approved
- Approve Board Notes: April 2, 2020 (#2). Jon moved, Bill seconded, carries unanimously.

Executive Director's Report

- Covid-19 Update: Functioning well with everyone working from home except Richard in office Monday to Friday and Scottie in office on weekends. VPN is working. Scottie's 80 hrs of sick leave will be replaced as required by CARES Act. When we go to Phase 2 in Skagit County Aundrea and Holli will likely come in one day a week, while RB will only be in 3 days a week. Phase 3 might allow more normal staff locations.
- February/March/April Financial Report (#3): Bill moved approval, Devin seconded, carries unanimously. In the black for year to date. Governor has asked all state agencies to take a 15% cut in next year's general fund budget, including RCO. Currently, in the short-term, being asked to cut a few thousand dollars from our budget. There will be more pressure on natural resource budgets. Big question will be PSAR next year and longer term.
- Committee Reports: Written committee reports coming out today to full Council.
- Staff approved no-cost scope change on Nookachamps planting project from 2017 where an LWD assessment task was dropped and money instead is being used for planting at confluence of East and West Forks. Description was provided in advance to TWG, which sounded their support.

Old Business (Review Past Accomplishments & Workshop 2020-2021 Work Plan (#4) Priorities)

- Tasks 1-5: Many tasks are static (Lead Entity Program, regional and state coordination and communication, updating HWS/SRP, 4ywp) and the same for the next year. Discretionary portion of the work is tasks 7, 8 and 9 — SWC participation in various community engagement, projects in the watershed (i.e. capital project development,

TMDL project with DOE; 5-10 year plan for the estuary including Milltown, Deepwater and Wiley) and monitoring and adaptive management, respectively.

- What is the status of the Steelhead Plan? NOAA has come out with a regional plan. SRSC is in a holding pattern, adopting the regional plan until NOAA requests local chapters and provides guidance on what they want. ***Richard will talk with NOAA and put together a brief for the Board, including timing.** What is NOAA expecting with watershed chapters? Are all co-managers in same waiting pattern?
 - The existing local draft is extensive, but there are remaining gaps.
 - The overall priorities in the draft may not be in dispute and may still be good guidance. Can SWC advance some agreement on habitat priorities with what we have now or do we need to wait?
 - The lack of science regarding how to prioritize actions is the issue at heart.
- Is the SWC required to have a local Steelhead plan before advancing projects?
 - This may be more of a SWC discussion because RCO is willing to fund Steelhead already. There is not necessarily a need to have a local chapter if there is a regional plan and SWC members agree on priorities in Strategic Approach.
- A clear strategy for the next 5-10 years is needed in light of allocation formula likely changing at PS Salmon Recovery Council and funding situation getting tighter.
 - We need a unified voice for the basin as funding gets more difficult.
 - Citizens' priorities are focused on COVID-19 and protests, not fish.
- Task 7 Community Engagement (CE): We need to provide hope and inspiring the community.
 - Implementation plan for CE will come up in July.
 - SWC should coordinate/centralize a watershed-wide effort.
 - Single species focus misses the big picture.
 - SWC will focus on social distant tools (such as social media) and planning for future engagement in light of COVID.
- Task 9:
 - 2019 M&AM report is ready except for Eric Beamer's input.
 - Riparian database and coordination of practitioners will be a big focus in next year.
 - SRSC is working on improved hydrography and delineations, which will improve accuracy in multiple other assessments.
- Task 11: Sauk restoration plan: Behind schedule, so still in beginning stages. This could be a Board agenda item in July or August to approve RFP. Align reach-scale projects, specifically Skiyou/Ross Island, Sauk, and Upper Skagit. Hope is to finish by June 2021.

- Task 12: Protection strategy will be expanded to include Sauk (part of Sauk Restoration Plan). Would also like to do the landscape assessment in East Fork Nookachamps given the TMDL and drainage planning and overlap with Chinook salmon tributary priorities.

New Business

- SWC 2020-2021 Budget: No concerns as proposed, assuming protection strategy assessments can be covered by Sauk Plan budget. Michael moved, Brendan 2nd, carries unanimously. *Richard will add percent column to page 2.
- Contract Extension with Kulshan Services: Previously part of a competitive process to support community engagement work. This is an extension of the original contract. Bill moves, Devin seconded, carries unanimously.
- Contract Extension with The Roving CFO: This is bookkeeper contract for which term is ending. This is a time extension; cost is not increasing, *though will later in year. Devin moves, Brendan seconded, carries unanimously.
- Board of Directors Nominations: John Stein's term is expiring. He is willing to run again. Three more will be expiring in September. There will be a call out before annual lunch for additional volunteers. Richard consulted with Tim Manns, our non-Board member of Nominating Committee who supports nominating John Stein. Devin nominates John Stein to be renewed, Michael seconded, carries unanimous. *Richard will send out nomination to Council, and a list of director terms to rest of Board.
- Lead Entity Program Discussion: Any concerns with the process? ***Consent for any video recordings need to be gotten in advance, through a clear process.** Project list may yet change. Otherwise we still have more projects than money.

For the Good of the Order

- National Estuary Program funding list is out. Not having an LIO is impacting Skagit resources and funding potential for other member agencies (several hundreds of thousands of dollars). "Hate to leave money on the table." We may need to refresh on that conversation. Who is a neutral host? ***SWC to engage on this issue for next meeting.**
- Chief of Lummi passed away June 1st.
- Adjourn 10:57 am