

## Skagit Watershed Council - Final Meeting Notes

### Meeting of the Board of Directors – June 7, 2018

Attendance: Chair Ken Dahlstedt, Brendan Brokes, Bill Blake, Richard Brocksmith, Michael Kirshenbaum, John Stein, and Jon Vanderheyden.

Not in attendance: Steve Hinton, Colleen McShane, and Jon-Paul Shannahan

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

#### **Call to Order: 9:10am**

- Agenda (#1) - Board agreed to push Protection Strategy budget to next meeting. Agenda was approved. Agenda was approved.
- Board Notes: May 3, 2018 (#2) - Michael moved John seconded approval of the May 3, 2018 Board notes as written. Motion carried.

#### **Executive Directors Report**

- Richard provided an update on the April Financial Report (#3) – Costs for phone and Internet have been more than expected for the year while other line items are within budget. Most subcontracts are completed. Kulshan Services has some remaining funding for notes, interviews, and CEC support still, as does SCEA. Barbara Werner, bookkeeper, will be leaving about August. Richard has been looking for another person to replace her. Renee Relin, Office Manager for Kulshan Services, is being considered. Bill moved Jon seconded approval of the April Financial Report as written. Motion carried.
- Committee Reports (including acquisition report) – Richard reported on the CEC and TRC. CEC met in June. They will meet again in July and renew activities in the fall. Lisa Miller is leaving the Skagit Land Trust and her committee replacement will stay on through the summer. Outreach is continuing with school districts. Illuminight’s January date may be changed to a warmer month. Richard spoke about Andeavor’s offer to bring in a program from the Kenai noting that the CEC members didn’t feel a need to add on another program but may approach Andeavor about funding for programs grown in the Skagit.

The TWG didn’t meet. The TRC will meet again later in June.

Richard updated the Board and showed maps regarding five land acquisitions (2 SLT and 3 SCL) over the last 8-9 months amounting to about 24 acres total. This is not a large number, but as with property acquisitions, it’s dependent on what comes available and timing. With the new Protection Strategy online, multiple new acquisitions are in the pipeline.

In response to Jon V’s question, Richard noted there is a database of the ~4,000 acres of acquired lands over the last 20 years. Jon suggested it might be worthwhile to share this information with the Forest Service leadership team to keep them apprised of what SWC is

doing and the status of these acquired lands. **\*Richard agreed to reach out to Erin Uloth of the Forest Service to keep them apprised of efforts of the Skagit Watershed Council.**

- Council of Members Update – The meeting next week will focus on brief overviews on each of twelve salmon habitat projects. John Rose of the Department of Ecology will present on instream flows, biology and ecology. **\*Richard will be reviewing the presentation prior to the Council meeting.**
- Richard asked the Board for permission to sign forms which legally bind SWC as an authorized organization with RCO for the two SRFB grants. The Board supported this action.
- The Board met the new Community Engagement Coordinator, Andrea Reiter. Richard has been getting Andrea's office set up as well as introducing her to key partners and orienting her on issues in the watershed. She's been getting started on posting to social media. Andrea spoke a bit about her background. She completed her MA in Education at Western with a yearlong residency at NCI. She's been looking for more of a leadership role in environmental education. She stayed for the discussion about the work plan.

### **Old Business**

- Protection Strategy Project Close-out  
The maps and final report are available online. They discussed the protected lands concern Steve voiced about expectations for filling the database gaps between the floodplain database and the watershed-wide database. **\*The group felt further discussion should occur when Steve is able to attend the meeting.**
- Riparian Assessment Project Close-out and Next Steps – **\*The Board decided to table this discussion for next month when more members are present.**
- 2018/2019 SWC Work Plan and Budget (#4 and #5) – Richard outlined the big picture: continue the Lead Entity program to thoroughly vet and fund projects, continue efforts to support our member/partners particularly with priority project development, expand our community engagement efforts amidst growing pressures to do more for salmon and the orcas, and continue M&AM. The track changes in the draft reflect input received since the last meeting.
  - Regarding Near Term Actions (NTAs), Bill wanted to make sure they are included in the work plan for next year. There are some projects and NTAs coming up which will require time and attention.
  - We need to be explicit as possible and having good conversations with other sectors. SWC will track and support the culvert prioritization process and how it should fit. Directors noted they've had good conversations with others like the farm folks and SWC anticipates putting more resources toward this effort. The Board discussed shifting organizational structures and opportunities for the SWC to extend its outreach and build relationships. Richard pointed to a need for SWC to conduct a process to prioritize its outreach efforts and identify focus areas. The Board felt very positive about wrapping M & AM into our outreach efforts. Ken pointed out that

there are people moving around which could break open entrenched positions and bring renewed opportunities.

- Brendan asked about 3FI and the efforts of a newly-formed consortium of drainage and diking districts for which Jenna Friebel is now responsible. Ken noted Skagit County is working on flood, drainage, and hydrodynamic modeling for the Comprehensive Flood Hazard Management Plan. Western WA Ag is engaging on policy issues. **\*Brendan and Ken will reach out to Jenna at the consortium.** Perhaps they could become a member of the SWC so we are connecting on common issues of interest. **\*Richard will follow-up with the County on SWC's efforts in relationship to the County's Comprehensive Flood Management Plan.**
  - **On Task a) Richard will replace the words 'segments of society' with 'members of our community'.**
  - Ken suggested the SWC continue to highlight the good work being done at a future quarterly meeting to acknowledge successes, keep conversations moving forward, and align with expectations.
- Budget Discussion

Richard spoke about the proposed budget and outlined the percentages of staff time that will be spent on work plan tasks. Brendan moved, and Bill seconded the approval of the 2018/2019 Work Plan and Budget. Motion carried.

## **New Business**

- Richard noted that Jon Paul Shannahan's Board membership term needs to be renewed. The Nominating Committee recommended that the Board bring forth JP for reelection next week at the Council of Members meeting. Michael moved to nominate Jon Paul Shannahan to a second term as SWC Director and John seconded. Motion carried.
- Richard provided an overview of the Lead Entity Grant Program Status & Project Review – Some Board members were out of town for the site visits and others were able to attend one or more days. The next step involves ranking of the projects by the Technical Review Committee (TRC). The Board members appreciated Richard's overview as follows:
  - 1) Similk Bay – This is a proposed \$300K design project with potential large expenditures for a bridge if it gets to the project phase. Richard discussed technical and cost-benefit questions regarding this project. While we have improved fish capacity return estimates for saltwater projects, some Board members are uncomfortable with measuring the value of a project by the "cost per fish" given the broader complexity of the topic.
  - 2) Smokehouse – Since the last grant round, the cost-benefit issues have been detailed, technical questions about drainage and coastal engineering addressed, and public outreach efforts planned. The Board also discussed the potential of the Swinomish River causeway creating salinity barriers which impacts potential future fish numbers.

This project is listed on the Tidegate Fish Initiative (TFI). The tribes and SWC are not signatories on the TFI. NOAA has said that this project will result in credits for infrastructure maintenance, though the Swinomish Tribe does not support that.

**\* Board members agreed that this issue is not for SWC to take a position on. They agreed SWC cannot speak for either “side” and it’s up to the project proponent to make the case for it. They felt it important to state that the project will be evaluated on its merits without any nod to its potential for receiving credits through NOAA.**

**\*They asked Richard to reach out to the TRC and the sponsor to clarify the smolt estimates on this project, including with and without the causeway.**

- 3) Skiyou Planning, Planting, Armor Removal Projects –**\*Regarding tree planting they need to answer what they are doing differently to reduce the failure of plantings in the past.** The planting project has taken a fresh look at how channel migration and erosion should be addressed. **\*Regarding the planning project, the Board wondered what SWC’s role might be in conversations with landowners and constituents.**
- 4) Anderson Creek fish Passage – No major policy issues.
- 5) Cedar Grove – Richard outlined cost benefit and design questions. They would like more analysis on ways to save costs and maximize habitat regarding the footings and the size of the bridge opening. **\*Some thought WDFW could be working with internal habitat engineers to determine final details on technical questions.**
- 6) Hobbit Corners (Sauk River) – The Sauk is taking back land here. The questions focused on cost-benefit. They can’t rock it without a lot of mitigation, but the NSD feasibility study hasn’t been completed. The County has to do something with the road which is only one lane and constricted by the hillside wall. **\*This project has some questions still to be answered before we can answer the cost-benefit question.**
- 7) Sauk Plan – The suggestion is to resist scope creep on this plan and instead focus on reaches and concepts. **\*Scale back and don’t commit to changing foundation documents.** In response, Richard bulked up the concept development, outreach, and technical development to improve the assessment. This project is a year-off in implementation (i.e. later half of 2019).
- 8) Tenas creek Feasibility Study – No major policy issues.
- 9) Collaborative Riparian Planting & Restoration – No major policy issues.
- 10) Skagit Watershed habitat Acquisition – **\*Ensure that we add in feasibility planning for Car Body Hole property restoration.**

The Board liked Michael’s suggestion for the next grant round regarding the first \$200,000 for riparian set aside funds.

The Board discussed using the metric of ‘dollars per fish’ to evaluate a project’s efficacy. They seemed to feel that it would be better to focus on future production. Dollars per fish is a comparative, but they felt it can be misleading when used in a public context without more information.

July 19<sup>th</sup> has been set for a Skagit tour with Federal staffers. They will be meeting with Steve and Todd at Smokehouse, then moving upriver to Utopia area with SLT and SFEG and County.

June 29<sup>th</sup> has been set for a visit from the Governor to visit a project site. Richard pointed out that the Fir Island Farm would be a great site since the parties agree the dikes and drainage systems are performing as planned and land control has been transferred to the dike district. Brendan felt that this is an opportunity to celebrate working together, but he would want to have the new Director for WDFW in attendance. Brendan updated the Board on the status of their new agency hire.

**Adjourn: 12:08pm**

**Next SWC Board Meetings:**

- July 12 & August 9 (both are short, from noon to 1pm at Skagit Publishing, following LECC meetings from 9am to noon)
- September 6, 9am
- (September 8 - Salmon Festival)
- (September 19 - Annual SWC lunch)