

Skagit Watershed Council - Final Meeting Notes

Meeting of the Board of Directors – May 3, 2018 9-11 pm

Attendance: Chair Ken Dahlstedt, Bill Blake, Richard Brocksmith, Brendan Brokes, Michael Kirshenbaum, Colleen McShane, Jon-Paul Shannahan, John Stein, and Jon Vanderheyden.
Not in attendance: Steve Hinton

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

Call to Order: 9:05 am

- Introductions, Determine Quorum, and Approve Agenda (#1) - Bill moved and John seconded approval of the Board agenda as written. Motion carried.
- Approve Board Notes: March 1, 2018 (#2) - Bill moved and Colleen seconded approval of the March 1, 2018 Board notes as written. Motion carried.

Executive Directors Report

- Approve February and March Financial Reports (#3 and #4)
Richard provided a review of the financials which are largely positive after many challenging months due to the State Capital Budget impasse.
Jon Paul moved and John seconded approval of the February and March Financial Reports. Motion carried unanimously.
- Committee Reports (#5) – Richard
 - The Protection Subcommittee met twice in April. They greenlighted potential acquisitions of a few smaller parcels. They also reviewed the purchase of a property and proposed a course of action to be discussed and voted on by the Board later today. ***At the next Board meeting, Richard will report on a summary of property acquisitions made over the past six months.**
 - TWG met once in April and discussed the proposed protection activities. They also spent significant time looking at the M and AM report with data and recommendations. The TWG was asked to provide formal comment during the month of May. The Board will hear about a governance piece of the report later during today's meeting.
 - Richard spoke about the SCL relicensing and TWG joint meeting where members heard a presentation on sedimentation & hydrology from Eric Grossman et al.
 - The Community Engagement Committee met this month. They outlined and discussed coordination with school districts and how to support partners in their programs to integrate their efforts into the schools. The Board will discuss the work plan pertaining to such engagement efforts.
- Lead Entity Grant Program Update – Richard indicated that we are in the draft application phase and TWG will provide formal comments to all projects before any final

decisions. ***He invited Board members to participate in the field trips and indicated that Board members can also ask questions or make comments about the projects.**

TRC replacements – Richard noted three replacement participants in the process: Janet Curran, Lindsey Desmul, and Emily Derenne will participate. We have at least 50% non-conflicted participants this year. Richard asked for a motion to appoint Janet, Lindsey, and Emily to the TRC. Brendan moved and John seconded approval of the appointment of these three members to the TRC for this grant round. Motion carried unanimously.

- The next SWC Quarterly meeting is June 14 with presentations of the final applications to the full Council as well as Ecology’s streamflow restoration work. ReSources signed on as a Council member last week as they are doing education work in the Samish River. When Richard joined the SWC as director, there were 18 members, now there are 41. ***Agenda will go out soon.**
- Community Engagement Coordinator Hiring Update – Richard
 - Richard indicated there is nothing in the Board packet for the preferred hire, but he did pass around her cover letter and resume as well as the job description. The hiring committee included: Richard, Scottie, Alex DuPont and Richelle Potter and they interviewed 6 of 15 applicants last week. The last applicant, Andrea Reiter, was a standout.
 - In a second meet and greet, Chris Vondrasek, Lucy deGrace (SFEG) and Michael Kirshenbaum (Board rep) had a chance to meet Andrea. Andrea worked with the PS Restoration Fund and ReSources and developed water quality curriculum; has a Master’s degree in environmental education from WWU Huxley and North Cascades Institute; and has worked for the Community Boating Center, Yakima Area Arboretum, and ReSources as an educator. She has educational standards training, social media experience, and grant writing experience.
 - The Board discussed 20 hours per week for the position but also supported growing up to 30 hours if funding was proven via budget updates. The Board also suggested a work plan for the next year with finite and discrete deliverables since the position is created as a 1-year term initially.

Colleen moved and Michael seconded a motion to fill the position for the Community Engagement Coordinator. Motion carried unanimously.

Old Business

- Approve Potential Use of Reach-level SRFB Grant(s) for Car-body Hole Protection and Restoration Project
 - The TWG and Protection Subcommittee passed the decision onto the Board following the stepwise project review protocols for land with degradation.
 - In mid-April, the Skagit Land Trust was approached about purchasing an estate composed of 4 parcels (3 in the floodplain and 1 across the road) between Rockport and Marblemount which would be going on the market. Included in the 2005 Chinook Recovery Plan, it’s a high-priority restoration site at a critical

location for Chum and Chinook. The property needs riprap removal and native vegetation restoration. There have been multiple attempts to purchase the property, but the owner indicated that the heirs would make the decision, which has now the situation.

- The Board discussed the ways in which such an acquisition could be configured for protection strategy reach level block grants. They discussed the step-wise framework that indicates importance of habitat first, then connectivity.
- The parcels cannot be split up and while the smallest parcel scores on habitat, the two larger parcels don't score due to degradation of the property. However, by applying connectivity, they do score. The fourth parcel doesn't qualify for funding and thus would need a secondary funding source as it must be part of the larger purchase. The level of degradation requires additional review.
 - levees: There are no flood protection levees on this property.
 - hydromods: 90% of the property's shoreline is armored by car bodies & rock
 - tree cover: 73% of the land is cleared
- Richard will circle back with Steve Hinton who is not here. Steve's desire is to get to the best restoration possible as outlined in the Plan. The sponsors concerns are that they can't agree to full restoration in advance of acquisition and feasibility planning. The motion can include an aspiration to do as much as possible using a collaborative process. ***Tom Slocum indicated the Conservation District could do the needed feasibility and design at modest cost.**

John moved and Jon seconded to approve use of reach level funds for the purchase of this property because of the high-quality habitat and connectivity and the restoration potential, with the inclusion of the condition that the purchaser must also generate a feasibility study for the restoration work with the goal of addressing both the hydromodifications and the riparian replanting work consistent with the Chinook Recovery Plan. Motion carried unanimously.

- Protection Strategy Project Close-out: Maps and Final Report – ***Tabled until later.**
- Riparian Assessment Project Close-out and Next Steps – ***Table until later.**

New Business

- Draft 2018/2019 SWC Work Plan Discussion (#6)
 - The Board looked at the Progress Report document included in the Board packet showing status of projects from July 2017 to June 2018. (David Roberts of Kulshan Services called in participate in a discussion about the potential for strategic planning regarding work plan development.)
 - ***Several Board members expressed that community engagement efforts should ID key segments of the community that we need and the support we need from them to better implement protection and restoration projects.**

***They expressed a desire for performance measures to be added to the community engagement work plan to measure progress towards our needs.**

- Discussion of policy direction and priorities – The Board reviewed objectives of the work plan and provided some input regarding scope and scale. They discussed the tasks that are required by contract, operational tasks, and strategic planning tasks. ***Richard took hand-written notes regarding additions and wording changes to appear in the next version of the work plan.**
- ***Board members thought that the Board should discuss the NTA project effects ahead of time and how these aspirations would be accomplished as well as look at opportunities for multiple-benefit endeavors. They wanted to tie in the accomplishments and successful outreach efforts into the quarterly meetings. Suggestion was to have a larger master plan and reach out to many audiences while keeping the base of SWC partners on board.**
- ***The Board discussed the importance of engaging community stakeholders early and often such as farms, flooding, & forestry (e.g. Sustainable Lands Strategy and 3FI (they are currently reassessing their focus and looking at how they move their collaborative work forward)). The Board discussed the need to further define strategies and actions needed to reach these segments effectively.**
- They acknowledged the need for more focus in planning for the lower Skagit which has been a focus of the Farm, Fish, and Floods Initiative (3FI).
- They acknowledged the need for a plan and process for the mainstem of the Sauk River – a highly-impacted river – from just above Darrington and down. They expressed concern about the Sauk’s low returns for spawners. They noted that the Suiattle and White Chuck are mostly publicly owned with fewer stresses.
- They anticipate that Seattle City Light’s upcoming FERC process will present an opportunity for access to new and updated data in the Upper Skagit but will be a couple of years out.

Items for discussion: Richard has heard input regarding possible areas of future focus for SWC or others which could be part of a strategic planning effort. He suggested a couple options: 1) David could speak with Board members between now and the next Board meeting; 2) Or wait until fall or winter to have further discussions. Generally, the Board acknowledged that the following list represents giant tasks. The Board seemed to feel that it would be good to pick one or two on which to engage more thoroughly immediately and stay apprised of the others. The overview covered the following:

- Skagit Flood/Drainage/Salmon Planning – ***look at restoration and protection as a part of this planning with an emphasis on natural, not engineered fixes.**
- Climate Change Adaptation – for example: resiliency, forest conservation, floodplains, and sediment/hydrology issues. Keep people up-to-date on the latest data. Explore how we share this information. Examine use of social media in communicating about this issue. ***Consider establishing SWC as a clearinghouse for emerging data and info.**

- Stream flow restoration/protection in planning – relates to the Hirst decision and efforts to monitor water and stream flow. ***Desire to ensure SWC actions are taken in context** and understanding of this issue as it pertains to the watershed.
- Forest landscape conservation planning
- Protection/restoration in project planning – clearly in SWC wheelhouse, but perhaps much of the need for a more comprehensive picture is being addressed in this year’s SRFB applications? ***Reflect in work plan.**
- LID (Low Impact Development) restoration planning
- Salmon Safe Certification
- Orca Recovery – keep track of this. ***Keep pushing on the issue of food for the orca.**
- Culverts – ***how are we going to engage on this topic and work with the Fish Barrier Removal Board?**
- Forest Conservation Planning

The Board will review these items at the June 7 Board meeting. Richard asked that members consider where the gaps are in SWC strategic planning efforts. What is SWC not doing that should and can be done? Consider ways that the SWC can help organizations accomplish their goals. How can we broaden our communications and yet not oversell the capacity of the SWC. ***The Board is encouraged to further suggest thoughts, edits, and additions to Richard if not already shared today.**

- Draft Monitoring & Adaptive Management Report (#7) Time did not allow a discussion, but Richard presented the first two chapters which lay out the recommended procedures to make changes to the Chinook Recovery Plan via the M&AM Subcommittee. ***The policy question is if the SWC is up to the task to do this. *Steve and Richard will brief the Board on recommendations and data regarding the M&AM in coming months.**
- ***Board members would like an update on the Draft Skagit Steelhead Recovery Plan, likely from Steve.** There is question about when it should go out for review.

Adjourn – 12 noon

Next SWC Board Meetings: June 7, 2018 (9am to noon) & July 12, 2018 (noon to 1pm)