

Skagit Watershed Council – Final Notes
Meeting of the Board of Directors, via Zoom
November 3rd, 2022, 10:00am to noon

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

Attending: John Stein (Chair), Bill Blake, Michael Kirshenbaum, Brian Lanouette (10:12), Andrew Bearlin, Peter Browning (10:20), Devin Smith, Brendan Brokes, Aundrea McBride, Richard Brocksmith, David Hawkins (10:42, guest), Clyde Halstead (10:47, guest)

Call to Order 10:04am

Introductions. Brian will be a few minutes late. Quorum achieved.

Motion by Bill, second by Brendan to approve the agenda with the addition of DeBays Slough Cost Increase. Approved unanimously.

Approved Board Notes for October as presented. Motion by Michael, second by Devin. Approved unanimously.

Executive Director and Committee Reports

Richard thanks the Board members for being here and making the Watershed Council a priority amid their busy schedules.

September Financials—In the draft presented, Seattle City Light MOA funds are shown as revenue but should instead be shown as deferred revenue and apportioned out as expenses are incurred, so this needs to be redressed before approval. Otherwise, nothing additional of note in the month's financial statements. Richard provided a 10-year review of total assets and liabilities for SWC which shows an increase in reserves over early years with higher but consistent reserves in recent years. ***Two months of financial statements will be presented at the next meeting.**

TWiG: Recommended DeBays project cost increase. Discussed pocket estuary relative habitat value and decided this could be assessed within existing scoring criteria. Motion to appoint Taylor Studzinski to the TWG by Bill, second by Devin. All approve, Brian abstains. ***Devin requested the Program Guide for 2023 be sent to the Board as soon as possible, in November if possible.**

Protection Subcommittee did not meet this month.

M&AM Subcommittee did not meet this month.

Riparian Work Group did not meet this month. ***Will be meeting early December and will consider Ecology's proposal to utilize and enhance the SWC riparian actions geodatabase.**

New Business

DeBays Slough project cost increase and time extension sought to add fish monitoring and community outreach. Motion to approve by Devin, second by Brendan. All approve, Brian abstains.

2021/2022 federal tax form review is complete by Richard and John and it has been provided to the SWC Board members for their review.

Sauk Habitat Plan cost increase: NSD has completed several tech memos. Richard has finished mapping 35 potential project concepts and Natural Systems Design continues their work to document channel stability proposals. Plan outline is drafted and ***staff will go over this with TWG in November.** Goal is to finish the first draft of the report between now and December and to implement an outreach plan beyond SWC committees in the first half of 2023. Created a webmap with many data layers. As budgeted, SCL money will be used to finish the project report with project concepts and a list of priority parcels to enable protection and restoration. Process for approving the draft report will be via the Protections Subcommittee, TWG and Board, then through stakeholders, governments, and landowners in the outreach plan. Then back to SWC membership. Discussion identified the importance of involving Snohomish County government, not just staff. ***Will need to talk with Bill Blake and Kit Crump to understand Snohomish County process.** Cost increase is for tasks 6, 7, and 8. \$15,000 to expand NSD's scope of work and wrap up. Motion to allow Richard to expand the Sauk contract not to exceed \$15,000 by Devin, second by Brendan. Approved by all, Brian abstains.

Bylaws: David Hawkins and Clyde Halstead joined the meeting. David states that USIT supports the County's original position and request documented in County's letter last year asking to reduce SWC Board down to mainly governments. He has no language to propose today. USIT's focus is on decisions impacting treaty rights. This is a longer-term topic so USIT believes SWC needs to keep doing it's current, important job. He also thinks that SWC's conflict of interest policy needs to be reviewed for how it is implemented to make sure it is being implemented correctly.

Discussion:

- Tribes and County have different standing than other members of the SWC.
- There is still discussion that needs to happen between the tribes.
- SWC needs to be able to keep functioning.
- Conflict of interest should apply to people having input on evaluating projects.

- There is a logistical problem of finding outsiders with enough knowledge of the basin to be good reviewers.
- The way the statewide lead entity process is supposed to function as set up by the Legislature is to have all interests from the watershed share in decision making to improve coordination and buy-in, while managing conflict of interest.
- Those with conflicts or perceived conflicts do not score or rank projects they are conflicted on.
- Individual conflict and organizational conflict are both considered.
- ***SWC can reinforce policies and roles of committee members to ensure good governance.**

Riparian Incentives Proviso Draft Findings and Recommendations: Peak Sustainability has been interviewing landowners and practitioners and program managers and working with that data and the core team (WA Conservation Commission, Skagit CD and SWC) in making draft recommendations to improve voluntary landowner incentives. Draft report near completion, which will allow further review by local and tribal governments and then other stakeholders. Requesting \$10,000 increase in the Peak contract to finish tasks outlined in contract amendments and the draft report.

Discussion:

- ***Make sure the report is reviewed directly by Swinomish policy folks.**
- Many good incentive ideas in the draft report.
- Add to CREP rental through state program, with bonuses for wider buffers and connected parcels.
- Support practitioners to work together to coordinate with one facilitator who works with landowner

Motion by Michael, second by Andrew to increase Peak contract by \$10,000. All approve, Brian and Bill abstain.

Riparian database—Ecology would like to collaborate on database and report out every year on riparian progress. SWC and it's members already do much of this data collection and assessment, but there are ways to improve it. *SWC Riparian Working Group to start this discussion.

Announcements—Marcus Reaves is new “Bob Warinner”, comes from San Juans and Coast. WDFW is considering if he will replace Bob on the Protection Subcommittee. Elizabeth Tate might be Bob’s replacement on the TWG, the new Skagit Habitat Biologist. Wayne’s position writing HPA permits was transferred from LaConner to the Southern District.

Adjourn 12:00