

Skagit Watershed Council – Final Notes

Meeting of the Board of Directors – October 4, 2018

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

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

Not in attendance: Brendan Brokes, Steve Hinton, and Jon-Paul Shannahan

Call to Order 9:05

- Quorum present
- Approve Agenda (#1) - no additions
- Approve Board Notes: September 6, 2018 (#2) - Bill moved and Jon seconded approval of the September 2018 Board notes. Motion carried unanimously.

Executive Directors Report

- Approve August Financial Report (#3) - Michael moved and Bill seconded approval of the August Financial Report. Motion carried unanimously.
- Personnel Update
- Budget Updates (Richard provided a handout at the meeting):
 - SWC carried forward more than expected from last fiscal year, gaining ~\$14K.
 - SRFB monitoring proposal – After consultation with partners, SWC withdrew this proposal and thus forfeited the funding since SWC no longer has the project, losing about ~\$31K. The Board was comfortable with Richard’s decision on withdrawal of the monitoring project.
 - The state has provided new guidelines and caps on tracking income/expenditure of operating (HWS, education/outreach work not resulting in projects) vs. capital funds. This involved modifying SWC budget, timesheets, and invoicing. There will be less money for HWS and we will need to focus more of our engagement work on project development needs. ***Work plans will be adjusted modestly.**
- SWC Watershed Coordinator – Huge response and interest in job announcement with over 50 applications, including about 25 qualified. Each has been assessed relative to minimum and preferred qualifications. A spreadsheet and several top applications were shared with Board. Regarding direction on hiring, the Board suggested looking at SWC’s priorities over the next three years to finetune the hiring strategy. Regarding the best fit, if there is a serious short-term need, then focus on that, otherwise, for the long-term, they suggested looking for a balanced combination of skills including communication, people skills, personal qualities of flexibility, team player, tribal experience, and being a self-starter. This is not a research position. There’s a necessary threshold of providing technical support to our sponsors and to the organization that

needs to be met. Also, Richard would value someone with knowledge of the people and place to get them up and running right away with less investment.

***Process: The hiring committee will include Richard, John Stein and Jon Vanderheyden. Then a second interview will be conducted with Bob and Alison and Denise possibly from SWC committees. Staff will participate along the way to ensure team aspects.**

- Committee Reports
 - CEC – Met in September but won't meet again until mid-November. Good turnout with strong partnerships continuing to evolve with SCD and SFEG and SLT, others.
 - TWG – Only ~6 members present at the October meeting. They decided priorities over the next 6 months with a focus to keep up on key project decision points and joint protection/restoration planning particularly as new protection strategy is implemented. They will also discuss the Steelhead Recovery Plan which will need technical review and community vetting starting in 2019.
 - Protection Subcommittee – Cancelled given heavy member work on many already greenlighted parcels. Several sites were briefly discussed.

Old Business

- 2018 SRFB Project Proposals – The SRFB process is essentially done at this point as all proposals except one were completely cleared early in the process at all levels of review. Sauk Tributaries culvert project at Hobbit Corners on County road is in the process of narrowing down to a list of three options via a county contractor. ***SWC's TWG will engage during selection of preferred alternative and subsequent design.** Final step is SRFB funding decision in December, with some funding available in December and most (hopefully) in July 2019.

New Business

- Review and Approve SWC Capital Priorities Letter to Governor (#4a)
 - Noted importance of communicating with Gov & OFM the importance of PSAR funds and that the Skagit is key to the orca issue. The Board reiterated the importance of the leadership and vision of the SWC and partners working together in advocating for the accomplishments of this area in building habitat and protecting salmon.
 - 2019 Legislative Priority table was distributed. Jon V wanted to know if there is a list like this chart from the County. ***Richard will reach out to Dan Berentson at the county asking if they will put forward a letter to the Governor to add an additional voice on the issue of salmon funding here. *Ken suggested reaching out to local DOT reps where there is strategic alignment on priorities and get their support. *Richard will provide a draft letter to members of SWC asking them if they could send their own version of a letter to the Governor about how Skagit is part of the solution on salmon and orca. *Seattle City Light would be willing to send a letter as well.**

- Other handouts: (#4b) This shows the Budget Buddy chart representing a state-wide funding focus for all agencies. (#4c) This is a narrative budget briefing that is more specific to funding in the Puget Sound region.
- The group discussed adding other important programs to the priority list such as Floodplains by Design, CREP, stormwater but felt adding this could dilute the message. This and other SWC member letters will need to be sent within the next couple weeks.
- Michael moved that this is a basis for writing a letter consistent with our discussion today to our partners and John S. seconded. Motion carried unanimously.
- Review and Approve SWC Comment Letter (#5a) to [Governor's Orca Task Force Draft Potential Recommendations Report](#)
 - The Governor's Orca Task Force will be done with their report by November. The report currently includes some 70-80 recommendations. John S. outlined the major orca issues and strategy summary: contaminants, vessel noise, habitat protection and restoration, and hatchery supplementation.
 - ***The Board agreed the SWC letter should reflect SWC's priorities and policy limitations and not add anything more, nor will it include anything that splits the SWC solidarity on issues around salmon and habitat. Allow others with the power and authority in other areas of the issue to speak out on their own behalf.**
 - Much discussion on the letter's content. ***Richard will provide a redraft to the Board later today incorporating their suggestions. They will review it before he submits it on Sunday but are comfortable with the content as discussed.**
- Briefing on City and County Stormwater Conversations - Richard spoke about the new stormwater permitting process for NPDES jurisdictions to address planning and retrofitting old stormwater systems and the funding limitations. He mentioned convening meetings with city and county officials to do more voluntary and collaborative work such as rain gardens and retention facilities. While there is some interest and support on rain gardens and new partnerships, we weren't able to go after a 2019 Ecology grant given some structural and eligibility problems. ***Other funding sources are available and will be pursued to support these partnerships.** He let the Board know that he has been spending some time on stormwater, while it's not a large part of his work plan. The Board didn't express any discomfort with this activity at this time. Ken did indicate that the county is stepping up its efforts on rain gardens and pervious surface.
- Summary List of SWC/SRFB Habitat Projects and their Status (#6) – Master list of previously funded projects was provided and briefly reviewed. The Board asked if there are any projects that are at risk. Richard spoke to Milltown Preliminary Design as one with differences of opinion about how to proceed. A new stakeholder advisory group will address these differences. ***TWG is working through all projects now and can report back.**
- Colleen provided background on the Skagit Joint Taskforce on Water use set up by 2018 House Bill. Curiously, the taskforce had questions about how much habitat restoration

has been done in Skagit. The Taskforce committee is tasked with identifying data gaps and authorize studies. ***Richard will reach out to the committee chair, Representative Kris Lytton and provide data.** Floodwater retention and discharge issues came up which could link in with SWC priorities. Bill indicated there's a piece about irrigation efficiency and water retention to be considered.

- PSAR Returned Funds (~\$500-900K) – Richard will be releasing an RFP for these returned funds. Background: The Illabot project is underbudget. \$500K ready to be returned now and another amount subsequently. Do another RFP for projects that could spend \$500K by June 2019. Hansen is possibly \$700K short, so Hansen may need some of this money. Acquisitions as well. ***Richard will have the RFP released by next week.**
- Briefing on Washington RCO Lead Entity Process Lean Study (#7) – Richard summarized that state government has embraced Lean principles and RCO followed suit. Some of the processes may be slimmed down to make it less cumbersome. Timelines could be shortened by lopping off final review panel reviews, and money awarded sooner. They also suggested streamlining and/or pooling the funding sources. The process might start in January instead of March to further avoid summer work season, so this could affect our timelines. There may need to be some WAC changes as well. They are considering a 2-year grant process, which could be a negative for SWC. Many of these recommendations seemed like they could be helpful. Richard is meeting October 29-30 with the 25 Lead Entities. ***TWG will discuss further in October.**

Adjourn: 11:30am

Next SWC Board Meeting: November 1, 9am to noon