

Skagit Watershed Council
Meeting of the Board of Directors – Final Notes
September 1, 2016 SWC Office, Mount Vernon, WA

(* indicates action item; indicates decision)

Attendance: Chair Ken Dahlstedt, Richard Brocksmith, Brendan Brokes, Carolyn Kelly, Colleen McShane, Jon-Paul Shannahan, and Michael Kirshenbaum.

Not in attendance: Steve Hinton, Jon Vanderheyden

The meeting was called to order at 9:08 am with a quorum.

Introductions, Determine Quorum, and Approve Agenda. (#1)

Richard asked that the Board add an agenda topic today for a contract amendment for additional community engagement activities (in packet #8). The Board agreed to this addition.

Board Notes: August 4, 2016 (#2)

Jon Paul moved and Brendan seconded approval of the August 2016 notes. Unanimously approved.

Executive Director Report (#3)

July Financial Report

- Richard made general comments about the July 2016 financials. The new bookkeeper and he are streamlining processes and reporting. Sub-awards tracking sheet was presented.
- Michael moved and Jon-Paul seconded the motion to approve the July 2016 financials as included in the board packet.
- Richard indicated that a full audit, which happens every four years, will be launched this month with SWC's CPA. Richard asked for input on recommendation from bookkeeper, himself, and the Treasurer that the lump sum that SWC received from Seattle City Light last fiscal year will be adjusted to be shown as deferred or unearned income. This will reduce the income in the last fiscal year while allowing better balance in future months. Richard provided a summary of the impacts from the Salmon Recovery Board's 24% reduction in lead entity capacity funds. He noted this was a response to decreasing state salmon recovery account funding, which in turn lowered our ability to match federal PCSRF money, which will then negatively impact project funding in the watershed. Since OFM has indicated state agencies can't ask for more general funds (though others like SWC can), the SRFB and RCO proposed solution is to ask for increased capital funds this year and provide lead entity project development capacity therein. Last year's ask was \$40 million and for the next legislative session, lead entities and the state provided justification for a \$56 million ask given the number of projects planned in coming years. ***Richard will be crafting letters to Legislators regarding the upcoming issues of importance, particularly project funding.** Richard and Ken are setting up a meeting with Sen. Ranker and will discuss this among other things.
- Richard discussed Fish Barrier Removal Board (FBRB) recent inclusion of two Skagit County-owned culvert projects in their funding package to the Legislature; it was less than what SWC

nominated. He noted that the TWG was briefed on this. Next steps include getting county approval to replace the culverts and securing matching resources so the county doesn't bear the full cost burden. It's a 15 or 25% match and engineering designs are only conceptual at this point. ***Richard will get more financial details on the cost of these two culvert projects.** The Legislature established the FBRB to identify problem culverts and is staffed by WDFW with many other state agencies participating.

- SWC Outreach – September is a big month for engagement with the Children's Festival, Salmon Festival, Surge at MoNA, and the SWC Annual Lunch. The Upper Skagit Tribe has been very generous and committed to supporting the annual lunch. Focus of the Annual Lunch will be to accentuate the positive progress and activities over the past 15 years. Finding ways to make progress is essential or negative campaigns can have negative consequences and make relationships challenging. Here in the Skagit, we work through our challenges with many organizations working together. Everyone wants to be inspired and be on the positive side of the story. Great quote: "If it's going to happen – it's going to be here." ***Richard will call and invite Herald reporter as recommended by the Board.**
- SWC has been asked by Skagit County to comment on the Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) work plan which represents an alternative to the critical areas ordinance. Carolyn discussed recommended benchmarks which could be reviewed for alignment with our voluntary approaches. The first benchmark is protection, not recovery. ***The Board supported a TWG review and technical briefing as well as request to County staff to brief Board soon.**
- Folks from the Tidegate Fish Initiative (TFI) also approached Richard about SWC involvement. Richard has already spoken with the Board officers who felt information exchange could be helpful. ***Further discussion will occur at the October Board meeting.**

Committee Reports (#4)

Richard shared activities of each of the following subcommittees as outlined in the reports:

- Community Engagement Subcommittee (CEC) August 2, 2016 Draft Notes
The committee met for the first time and learned more about the engagement process and shared their hopes for greater engagement. They heard from the subcontractor, Kulshan Services, regarding a draft engagement campaign. They will meet the 1st Tuesday each month.
- Protection Subcommittee August 18, 2016 Draft Notes
The subcommittee reviewed and green-lighted three parcels, reviewed the results of the decision support framework in development, and in a joint meeting with the TWG considered emerging, draft outcomes of protection assessment in the tributaries.
- Technical Work Group August 18, 2016 Draft Notes
This was the first TWG meeting since spring. They were updated with initial model results of the Protection Strategy. TWG will consider this further and provide comments in coming months. They were briefed on SWC riparian project status and the RFP and asked for volunteers. They discussed specific projects that need updating in HWS and reviewed a list of project concepts from the four-year work plan to incorporate. They also reviewed Fish Barrier Removal Board outcomes, heard an update on a culvert replacement design, and provided feedback on the lead entity review process for 2016.

Old Business

- Lead Entity Program Review and Feedback (#5)

Richard spoke to addressing concerns and adapting potential solutions for the next grant round to firm up the process. Concern was expressed that the citizens committee and project sponsors didn't have enough time (only 14 days this year) to address the policy concerns that came up with projects. Discussion with the Board isolated the following observations and improvements to the process:

- Schedule and Time: Alter the schedule with more time between the first hearing at the LECC meeting and the final decision. Extend the time available to work on remaining concerns. More thoroughly outline and predict where possible the timing issue. Richard indicated that the process can start a month earlier this year which should allay concerns that this schedule will crunch time for the proponents. Summertime vacations inherently crunch this process as well. Should a good project need extra time, define an appeal process including provisions for who they approach and for how to get more time should it be justified.
- Clarity: Where foreseeable, alert those on the tour to any anticipated or problematic areas of the project so from the first lead entity meeting, they have time to discuss these issues first. Provide a better expectation of roles and responsibilities for the LECC and create a refresher document about the process. Strongly encourage the citizen committee members to attend the tours and review the available information up front. Recognize that the first time through the process for new members can be overwhelming. SWC will more clearly stick to a checklist and set of deadlines. It is anticipated that this will reduce the amount of time spent addressing issues on one project and information coming at the last minute.
- Accountability: Some of the most problematic concerns were not timing or policy issues. Expect accountability from the sponsors to adhere to a robust checklist of requirements, ensure they meet deadlines, and submit complete proposals. The checklist could include convenient hotlinks to each project.

***Carolyn moved and Brendan seconded for Richard to take the Board's input on the Lead Entity process and bring revisions to the process to a subsequent meeting.**

- Riparian Strategy Project Workshop

Richard spoke to the Board about the Riparian Strategy Project for which the SWC is the SRFB grant lead. Member organizations have been drafting a list of all riparian projects showing where progress is being made and what the project outcomes are. The second task is to update information about new project priorities with a current conditions assessment by reach and habitat type.

It continues to be apparent that maintenance work on past projects is important to keeping those investments viable. SRFB will want to know when maintenance is warranted and this information will help meet future project requirements. We should document where collaborations worked to support and encourage these best practices with sponsors. We have an adopted work plan and we need to create ten planting plans. The budget includes \$40K for internal staff and \$7K for indirect expenses, and \$80-90K for external consultant support.

Richard indicated need for a partner who can assist with planting plan development in spring or alternatively the need to expand the RFP for outside technical help.

- Richard provided an overview on the RFP which received nine applicants that met the August 30 deadline. Chris outlined his initial assessment process. The RFP asked for GIS help to identify historic and current conditions to assist with monitoring and adaptive management; facilitate local conversations and agreement about priority areas; discuss maintenance issues and best management practices; and document how to apply this data-driven approach. Proposals ranged from \$40K to \$120K. The two to three most promising proposals will be selected and the companies interviewed with internal and partner staff. A consultant will be selected by October. ***The Board will be asked for their approval of a contract and scope of work at the October meeting.**

Chris pointed out the wide range in the proposals regarding cost, use of field work, trends analysis, inclusion of local knowledge, interactive GIS, reliance on remote sensing, and ways to include stakeholder input. Talking with the top three will allow SWC to further delineate the project and identify areas to expand or reduce elements in the proposal to meet funding parameters.

- Chris felt that the Board could provide guidance about what is most important to get out of the plan. An implementers group met to develop Task 1 in the plan. Richard asked for any Board members who could provide their staff help to work on an advisory group to guide the consultants by reviewing their plan. ***The County, the SLT, SCL, and the Conservation District will see if they can allocate a staff member to assist on the advisory group which will have 3-5 meetings total this fall and winter.**
- Community Engagement Program (#6)
Kulshan Services, the subcontractor on this project, and Richard provided an overview of the basis for community-focused engagement. We are building awareness to bring about behavior change – not just on the land – but in support and participation. The proposal to focus on community-building first, followed by natural resource values, then challenges, all over several years, was discussed. The reality is SWC needs more partners, input, resources, and a clear implementation plan to do this right.

The Board supported the community-based approach and provided input on the campaign and social marketing principles as follows:

- Tagline: The Community Engagement Committee (CEC) took a quick survey on a tagline for the campaign: Imagine Skagit; Our Skagit; and Natural Skagit scored the highest in that order. Richard noted the SLT book by the name of Natural Skagit. It was thought that that tagline may be more skewed to a natural resource, rather than community, theme. The Board is not ready to agree to a tagline - it's too early. Get more input. ***Consider extending the CEC survey to the Board at some point.** Additional tagline suggestions: Spectacular Skagit and Awesome Skagit. Be aware that different taglines will resonate with different audiences.
- Themes: Be careful of words that can create a negative reaction. Cultural heritage is more than the pioneer perspective; what is the plan for recognizing the Native American perspective? Find commonalities and avoid polarizing. Add small forestland owners and innovation economies to the natural resource conversation. Find a nexus - hit the areas

where there is most potential and the focus isn't too broad. For example, both the farming and fish community could be more united around protecting the existing system that still functions and supports them both, so tie in to what they are both excited about – clean water, fish, healthy environment, scenic beauty. This is more of a place-based theme – not a people-based theme.

- **Implementation:** ***Secure more resources than we currently have to reach people on the issues.** Decide how this campaign will measure success, and develop measurable metrics such as number of partners added to move the process forward, social media stats, website analytics, number of people who show up.
- **Focus:** ***Define the 1-2 behavior changes desired before identifying themes and message.** Scenic beauty is a rallying call to Skagit from one end of the watershed to the other. ***Suggestion to add a big focus on young people and school-based programs.** One idea being developed is a youth education summit hosted with SFEG, Samish, and NCI.
- **Audiences:** ***Talk further with relevant County programs.** This includes the County Parks Department (Brian Adams?). They do surveys and engage the public as a matter of course. Also, consult the coalition that is looking at the broader lifestyle in Skagit – (Health Dep't- David Jefferson?). ***Reach out to existing organizations and focus on a community theme they are already leveraging or supporting.** This could create a nexus. Is there a plan to take into account the divide that exists between communities, socio-economically, and culturally? Are Non Industrial Private Forests part of natural resources & economy? How many languages for our audience?

New Business

- Update to Personnel Policies in Section 4.3, Payroll and Paydays (#7) which establishes pay periods from the 1st to the 15th and the 16th to the end of the month (instead of every two weeks) and *paid on the 5th and 20th of each month* (instead of the Monday following each pay period.) Additionally, if a pay date occurs on a holiday or weekend, pay will instead be distributed *on the preceding day* (instead of the last Friday of the pay period.)

This approach will use QuickBooks more effectively and saves a little money by eliminating the administrative fees on two pay periods that would have existed under the old system.

Carolyn moved and Brendan seconded the motion to approve the updates to the personnel policies in Section 4.3, Payroll and Paydays with the addition of the words “or weekend” after the word holiday in the last sentence. Unanimously approved.

***Richard will provide the revised policies to the Board at the next meeting.**

- Existing Contract Amendment
Carolyn moved and Jon-Paul seconded to extend the personal services contract to Richelle Potter to not exceed \$3525 to add capacity for her and SWC staff to participate in Surge with MoNA.

The meeting adjourned at 11:49 am.

Next SWC Board Meeting is October 6, 9 am to noon.