

Skagit Watershed Council
Meeting of the Board of Directors – Final Notes
September 3, 2015 SWC Office, Mount Vernon, WA

(* indicates action item; indicates decision)

Attendance: Chair Ken Dahlstedt, Richard Brocksmith, Loren Everest, Margaret Fleek, Steve Hinton, Colleen McShane, and Jon-Paul Shannahan.

Not in attendance: Bob Everitt and Carolyn Kelly. Margaret had to leave at 10:15 and Ken had to leave at 11:06. Steve served as chair for the rest of the meeting.

The meeting was called to order at 9:05 am with a quorum.

Draft Agenda Review

Board Notes (#2)

Richard noted that he and Steve had proposed minor clarifications to the notes regarding the Milltown proposal.

Steve moved and Colleen seconded approval of the August 6, 2015 Board notes. Unanimously approved.

Executive Director Report

- July Financial Report (#3)
 - Richard noted that the financials were slightly negative due to a \$2,500 expense for co-sponsoring the Skagit River Salmon Festival. Otherwise there's nothing unusual to report.
Colleen moved and Loren seconded the motion to approve the July 2015 financials as included in the board packet. Unanimously approved.
- Lead Entity Program Update and Discussion
 - The group discussed the recent ruling identifying Goodell Creek as a Project of Concern (POC). Jon-Paul indicated they are doing due diligence and will soon firm up their response. ***The Board agreed they should draft a joint message showing a united voice in support of the project.** More will be known by the next Board meeting in October. Jon-Paul noted the expense of the project reflects the new reality that low-hanging fruit projects are becoming more difficult to find. The timeline for comment is October 13 and a person-to-person dialogue could be on October 26. ***By November 10, SWC must decide whether to move this project forward, in consultation with USIT.**
 - Richard explained the comment form used for replying to the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) review panel. If the review panel doesn't make a favorable decision then it will be adjudicated by the SRFB in December. The SRFB can withhold the money if the petitioner loses; however Richard has never seen that happen to date. Often times the lead entity retains their authority of the local decision making process; however, appeals become very time and resource intensive.
 - In the future more expensive projects will require we bring more partners and legislative support for additional funding to address increased competition for limited resources. Members also agreed it's important to speak with one voice and we need to stand behind project proposals once they've been vetted and approved locally. They agreed that "clean" proposals free of any potential trouble are critical and that uncertain matches are undesirable. The Milltown proposal was cited as an example where it got out of sync due to

last minute changes, the promised match became unavailable, and as a result, WDFW was put in a bind without the match. ***This requires sticking to the process, following protocol, and keeping communications open throughout the process.**

***Richard indicated that he will be distributing the form documenting the Goodell POC and responses to POC to the Lead Entity Groups.**

- Upcoming events include the Annual Lunch coming on September 9, 2015 followed by the Skagit River Salmon Festival on September 12.
- Ken will be meeting with Allen Rozema (Executive Director) and Richard has met with Julie Blazek (Director) of Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland and they are seeking ways to work together and enhance communication with SWC.
- Richard discussed an effort led by the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office to improve advocacy at the state level about how intricate pieces of the Salmon Recovery Network (SRNet) and funding fit together. The group of partners refers to themselves as the Salmon Recovery Network. They are surveying capacity needs that aren't being met. Richard felt that monitoring and adaptive management and community outreach are areas where SWC and its members should have more capacity to meet the current work plan.

***Richard was asked to send his draft response to the Board to review it by email. Richard has to submit a draft by 9-9-2015 and then has a month to finalize it, though the discussion will proceed for a few months thereafter integrating multiple requests from all members of SRNet before forming a 2017-2019 capacity request to the legislature.**

Committee Reports

Richard shared activities of each of the following subcommittees:

- ***Protection Subcommittee March Draft Notes (#4)***

They have a deadline for the Protection Strategy update at the end of the year. Chris is working on the tributary analyses, Richard on broader refinements, and climate questions were submitted to SCSC, all under guidance of the subcommittee.

Steve will be engaging more with the Protection Subcommittee and TWG in the future with Phil's retirement. ***Steve felt that Phil Kincare's upcoming retirement is good timing to look at composition of the committee.**

- ***Other Committee updates***

The TWG will be ramping up in the fall. The M & AM subcommittee will pick up again in the fall and winter. The Steelhead and Bull Trout subcommittee will apparently stay on hold for awhile.

***Steve and Richard will meet to look forward 6-8 months regarding the M & AM schedule and they will report back.**

Old Business

- **2015/2016 Budget Refinement (#5)**

Richard outlined changes to the budget. PSAR was spent down a bit more than anticipated but also received an additional \$40,000 for project capacity which bumped the PSAR number up in the end. Carolyn (Treasurer) had previously recommended adding documentation for reserves. Additional income of \$25,000 from the Puget Sound Partnership will possibly be sent to each watershed over the next biennium to bring all watersheds up to a common standard on monitoring. Skagit is ahead of others regarding M&AM, so meeting the PSP's minimum deliverables should be fairly easy.

Noted: In the future, Steve would like the old and newly proposed budget side-by-side to make comparison easier.

Richard spoke to an additional financial hurdle as a result of a change to the way federal funds are being managed by RCO. Sponsors and lead entities across the state have to wait on contracts and payments because RCO contracting has been tied up with the Attorney General's office. SWC therefore does not have a current contract in place but there is a guarantee for back-billing to July 1. (SWC hasn't been able to bill RCO for the past 2 months.) An adopted budget gives Richard authority to sign the contract as soon as it is ready for the whole amount described above.

***Richard will consult with the Treasurer and ask her to review the Budget Refinements and provide her recommendations to Richard.**

Steve approved pending Carolyn's review and approval. Loren seconded the budget refinements. Unanimous approval.

New Business

- ***Approve SWC Nomination of HUC 10 to Fish Barrier Removal Board (#6)***

The Board discussed at length the request by the FBRB for a nomination of a HUC 10 size subwatershed for a systematic approach to optimizing barrier culvert removals associated with transportation corridors. The TWG recommended the letter provided to the Board which nominated the middle Skagit/Finney subwatershed. Concern was expressed that the draft letter included three HUC 10s as it also included Samish and the Frontal Skagit areas given their habitat potential. The Board finally agreed that a focused message regarding the Finney HUC 10 as the priority and proposal with the greatest certainty is the best approach. They agreed not to dilute the request or add potential ambiguity by adding multiple HUC 10 areas. There were varying opinions about the benefits and complexities of asking for funds for Samish, but it was felt that SWC should wait on this for now. Also, asking for funding for the frontal Skagit are potentially problematic given water quality and permitting sensitivities. There was complete consensus that middle Skagit was best for this proposal.

Note: The board would like to have had a more definitive answer from the TWG, instead of asking for them to provide any comments or concerns via an email request without a date certain.

The Board discussed the current momentum for funding culvert removals and their expectation/hope that future funding opportunities will emerge that will be suitable for the Frontal Skagit and the Samish.

Steve moved to approve the FBRB letter striking the last sentence in the first paragraph about Samish and Frontal Skagit with a friendly modification to make all attachments consistent in highlighting Finney as the priority. Loren seconded. Unanimous approval.

- ***Facilitated Work Session on Community Engagement Plan Development (#7)***

David Roberts of Kulshan Services introduced the draft community engagement plan. The plan at this point includes input from five Skagit organizations that primarily focus on education. David distributed a document outlining basic information about the five partners' programs. Next steps on this inventory process include developing an analysis and graphics that illustrate the areas of common focus to strengthen and the gaps that might exist that SWC can address. Richard distributed a bulleted list of some of SWC's current engagement activities as well.

***Board members suggested that North Cascades Institute's input will be included as well as possibly WWU, WSU Extension, and the MRC.** The educators suggested that SWC participate in their frameworks as necessary to gain input and integrate efforts.

The Board made some changes to wording and text deletions which are indicated in the attached document.

Assumptions:

- SWC doesn't have all the answers and we want to acknowledge two-way dialogue and acknowledging we are listening to local constituents.
- Richard added that there may be more specific and measurable objectives that emerge with metrics around those.
- Water quality is important, but not the driver. The Board was comfortable imbedding it into the statements about fish needs when it is limiting habitat, and integrating with other programs.
- What is the value in the science? There's perceived success and real success that needs to be based on merit. For example: It's more about the number of fish that return, not the number of projects we've done.
- Disseminate results – Pay attention to subtleties around baselines. Keep a simple message but keep the technical credibility through science and monitoring and adaptive management.
- Why downplay the Council on the last bullet when setting goals and messaging? We are all united under the Council, so we are working together. Leave out the last half of the sentence.
- Why focus on all positives regarding the salmon recovery story when there are ongoing threats and problems too? Where is the motivation to change if it's all positive and moving forward? Need to state why people should care and motivate others for change. The negative is the motivator and changes behavior as well. Make the message positive and show *documented* success.

Task List

- Phase 1 – Until October meeting. Reach the other three entities noted above in the interim.
- Phase 2 – Key messages and working with Chris and others to build watershed-level analytical tools. Reach out to the M & AM subcommittee.
- Phase 3 – Create tools that can be updated and is interactive (live) as well as print material.
- Phase 4 – Develop work plan and engagement strategy.
- Phase 5 – Implementation to the broader community.

The Board felt this draft plan and a structured approach to community engagement in phases and levels is a good start. There is a gap and has been for some time.

The Board agreed they need to scale this to available staff resources which are committed into fall and early winter. The Board acknowledged they will need to address the resource demands by phase. This meeting is to get Board input and confirmation that we are headed in the right direction.

The meeting adjourned at 11:52 pm.