

Skagit Watershed Council - Final Meeting Notes

Meeting of the Board of Directors – September 6, 2018

Attendance: Brendan Brokes, Richard Brocksmith, Steve Hinton, Michael Kirshenbaum, Bill Blake (left at 10:45), and Colleen McShane, and Jon-Paul Shannahan (acting Chair) (left at 10:45).
Not in attendance: Ken Dahlstedt (Chair) (arrived 10:45), John Stein, and Jon Vanderheyden

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

Call to Order

- Quorum present
- Approved Agenda (#1) with intention to switch order of New and Old Business. Richard also added a personnel matter to the agenda under Executive Directors report.
- Board Notes: August 9, 2018 (#2) - Richard added to the notes that Board members discussed the need to be thinking about shovel-ready projects for Orca recovery. Colleen moved and Brendan seconded approval of the August 9, 2018 Board notes as written with one addition as noted above. Motion carried unanimously. Steve abstained.

Executive Directors Report

- July Financial Report (#3) – Richard noted a purchase that was classified under website design that should be under office expenses. ***Also, Richard will clarify the \$45 charge on repairs and maintenance at the next meeting.** Regarding the financial reports, Jon Paul moved and Steve seconded approval as amended. Motion carried unanimously.
- Discussion about staffing change and decision regarding an appropriate separation package.
- Committee Reports included that TWG met this month to greenlight a property acquisition in the middle reaches of the Skagit River.
- The Board reviewed the recent draft of the Annual Lunch agenda. The event will be held at Hillcrest Lodge on September 19. Richard has arranged for several speakers for this event. The Upper Skagit are providing the salmon and Kiwanis are BBQ'ing. Recommendations:
 - ***Extend time on the intro and make sure to acknowledge the hard work and achievements of the past year:** reaffirming that the strategies and science are solidly supporting salmon recovery. Also include what gets built and land protected and/or acquired as has been the typical approach to the “annual report” item.
 - ***Richard will prepare a PowerPoint and send to JP, Brendan, and Steve to review fish escapement numbers and adaptive management conclusions.**
 - Regarding the facilitated discussion on the agenda, ***present the science rather than offer an opportunity for dialogue and go with a Q&A approach more fitting for this length of time and setting.**
 - The Board looked forward to hearing the speakers. They reiterated the Council play a helpful role in members understanding the process, the science, and level of awareness as their work will be touched by these policy discussions.

- Richard outlined actions taken to apply for a ~\$57K grant with NFWF (\$800,000 is available this grant round) to provide curriculum development & deployment on stormwater, salmon, and Orca in partnership with the Skagit Conservation District as well as stormwater retrofit analyses and construction of 2 rain gardens. The ~\$57K required match fits into the SWC and SCD budgets. Richard and Andrea have met with SFEG, SCD, school districts to focus our programs to the right grades and topics. He reiterated that this grant is one piece of a community engagement program.
- ***Next month we expect updates from RCO looking for efficiencies at the Lead Entity level.**

New Business

- SWC Watershed Coordinator Position Description & Hiring Process (#6) - The Board supports the continued focus on communication/collaboration and GIS skills as essential. Richard outlined how the process unfolded last time with two rounds and a second interview with the finalist. The Board would like the preferred qualification of proficiency in GIS to be a minimum qualification. ***Recommendation is to take the finalist to lunch to see how they interact with the team. The goal is to get the job opening out through various channels as soon as possible. Steve moved and Brendan seconded a motion to waive the two-meeting rule and approve the position description with GIS proficiency as a minimum qualification. Motion carried unanimously.**
- TWG Priorities for 2018/2019 (#7) – Richard met with Alison Studley and created a list of possible activities for the TWG to prioritize at their meeting on September 20. Meetings will be consistent through the winter into spring. Richard acknowledged the support from various organizations who send representatives to serve on the TWG and the need to engage them in this important work. The Board felt that collaborative skills in the future TWG coordinator will move the work of the committee forward. They look forward to the TWG’s decisions on their work priorities. ***Add Orca science & common indicators to the list of potential activities the TWG considers.**
 - SWC’s members (and others) can expect an opportunity to review the Draft Puget Sound and Skagit Steelhead Recovery plan in early 2019. The Board discussed the latest update on the 2017 joint protection and restoration planning, which is being forwarded via several SRFB-funded grant opportunities and committee work. We need to send out the LE survey and process improvements. The LEAN study and habitat work schedule will have some impact on their work as well.

Old Business

- Review Community Engagement Implementation Plan v8.13.18 (#5)
Richard and Andrea updated this draft implementation plan. They added a second strategy (bullet 2) to “increase our focus on communicating the causation of salmon and steelhead declines, the status of recovery efforts to reverse those declines, and areas of opportunity for the community to engage.” They also added Table 1, which delineates audiences, messages, and strategies.
Board recommendations: Keep working on community engagement; keep in mind capacity and scale, recognize this may take years to grow and get to the right niches. Community

engagement efforts should be about doing a few things well with the best use of time and resources. Richard and Andrea will continue to bring updates on this process to the Board.

- Add more detail to the Skagit Families/Citizens category and the Skagit Valley Floodplain/Riparian Landowners and managers sections.
 - Determine the resources available to reach each of the audiences.
 - Prioritize and focus on certain audiences. Determine the groups that are most important to furthering the SWC mission.
 - Youth in Skagit is a wide-range audience. Tailor the message to different age groups. Is STEAM still the priority or is there something more fine-tuned?
 - Regarding farmers and floodplain landowners, develop directed outreach and tailored conversations. Develop different messages for landowners in different parts of the watershed: i.e., delta, foothill, and upriver farmers and some are newer to the area and others descended from the pioneers.
 - SWC is in the process of developing capacity. SCEA and EcoNet are also changing. The CEC needs to clarify the capacity SWC is bringing to the table and how we bring it – information, facilitation, strategy?
 - The key holder to any project is the individual willing landowner who has control over any decision – so get the landowners to a place where they want to say yes. How does the SWC get us to yes? Do the work of developing a more directed and targeted focus taking into account Sense of Place.
 - Think about history and what has already transpired: Know who is in the opposition and how to engage them.
 - There are issues all around, but does SWC want to wade in and how? Recently, SWC has focused on generational approach with teachers and kids. How can SWC and its partners get better at this generational approach and speed the process up? We should not abandon what we are doing, just beware spreading ourselves too thin.
 - Make sure the public properties in the estuary get maximum focus for now to ensure their optimal restoration. Use our capacity to do story mapping with compelling media, photos, videos into an easy-to-access platform on digital media to tell the story.
 - Connect Andrea with Lindsey (WDFW) who did a story map on the Shohomish. The Skiyou/Ross Island, Barnaby and Sauk reaches will be great places to focus future efforts. Work this community to engage them ahead of time with a grassroots effort.
 - Note: North Cascades National Park programs doesn't exist anymore.
- Tabled until next month: estuary restoration updates and discussion of potential next steps. Richard has spoken with the authors of the 3FI analysis and how to bring forward what next steps are for the estuary discussion. ***Board suggests a presentation on this analysis at the quarterly Council meeting in November.**
 - Update on the Skagit Leaders Invite Letter - SWC reached out and is in early conversations with members and non-members of the Council to hold a discussion regarding the Orca whale situation. Richard hopes for “Big Ideas” for salmon and Orcas if members can become comfortable together and work through early questions. A facilitated discussion in October would share information about the science and data, and compile different outstanding questions. The Governor’s Task Force may have a framework which could provide a basis

for the conversation. Also, ask leaders to create the agenda regarding what they want to talk and know about.

- Ken suggested finding areas of mutual benefit and agreement and take a regional focus. Fish and culverts will require influx of money – push for a federal allocation to make significant progress. A data-driven discussion is needed and decide what the discussion should be about: predation, culverts, habitat, supplemental hatchery in the near-term, and/or water quality/contaminants? SWC should be about building relationships together at a leadership level. We can reaffirm we are all doing good work and we need to do more of it. We should be supportive of what each other is doing.
- The Board's suggestion is to come to this conversation without a predetermined message. Success will be getting everyone in the room talking about how to work together on this challenging topic, building mutual respect and relationships.
***Richard will invite more leaders to the lunch to increase engagement with them.**

Adjourn 11:53am

Next SWC Board Meetings:

- September 19 (annual lunch), 11:30 to 2:15pm
- October 4, 9am to noon
- November 1, 9am to noon