

## Skagit Watershed Council - Final Notes

### Board of Directors Phone Meeting – September 7, 2017

(Underline indicates decision point; \***bold indicates action item**)

Attendance: Chair Ken Dahlstedt, Richard Brocksmith, Brendan Brokes, Steve Hinton, Colleen McShane, Michael Kirshenbaum, Jon-Paul Shannahan, John Stein, and Jon Vanderheyden.

#### Call to Order – 9:04 am

- Introductions, determined quorum present, and approved agenda
- Approve Board Notes for August 3, 2017. Jon Vanderheyden moved and JP Shannahan seconded approval with one amendment (removing “ESA”). Motion carried unanimously.

#### Executive Directors Report

- Richard reported that overall the 2016-2017 fiscal year P & L was \$15,500, while the month of July was -\$2,900. Brendan Brokes moved and John Stein seconded approval of the July Financial Report as written. Motion carried unanimously.
- SWC and WA Capital Budget Update – Richard updated the Board on the status of the state capital budget, which has been contentious in the Legislature due to differences over the Hirst decision affecting water rights. No capital budget has been approved for this biennium and there may not be one before the next session in spring 2018. PSAR program has not been fulfilled for this biennium so there is \$4.5M in projects that SWC approved last year that are not being funded yet. If there’s no salmon account money this year, we can’t leverage and match the NOAA money so there’s no SFRB money for projects this year, which is another \$1.1M. Our operating budgets are almost 70% from capital budgets, leaving us in a pretty grim situation. SFRB did allocate some additional operating funds for the lead entity program. That and other funds from Seattle City Light and Skagit County will cover staff costs through the end of the year. If there is no capital budget by December, we will have to consider additional measures.
  - Richard suggested he could reduce his hours to 80% temporarily to preserve capital and delay potential larger impacts to all staff since his salary is the biggest expense in the budget. The Board was concerned about the impact to our work plan. They also felt we may be able to delay the budget problem by expediting partner matching funds. **\*Each month, the Board should strategically look at the budget situation and consider the risks we want to take. \*Richard will bring more details to next meeting on budget outlook and options, including the implications for what work plan tasks would not be accomplished if reductions were enacted.**
  - The budget situation has the potential to affect the timing of the next grant round. **\*SWC should clearly communicate that uncertainty to current and potential project sponsors.**

- **\*It would be helpful if the groups that are being impacted by the funding would itemize what exactly is being affected.** Legislators often don't know what is at stake in their districts. A good metric to communicate is the number of jobs being affected.
- The Board adopted an interim 2017/2018 budget in June, intending to come back to the topic of the Skagit Capacity Fund. **\*Now larger forces require us to consider additional changes in coming months. \*We should also reconsider the draft 2017/2018 work plan.**
- Community Engagement Program Updates – The Resource Guide and fliers have been completed. 100 guides and 1,000 fliers have been distributed to all school districts in the watershed. SWC and our members have been marketing the programs at resource fairs and there was a nice front page article in the newspaper. This program is going very well and people are excited about it. Good connections are being made with schools and new partnerships with Skagit STEM and others.
  - Two interviews have been completed – Saul Weisberg of NCI, and Scott Schuyler and Marilyn Scott of USIT. Looking for someone from a pioneer family for the next one. Blogs will be presented to the Board before publication.
- Annual lunch – Ken Dahlstedt, John Stein, Brendan Brokes, Michael Kirshenbaum, and Steve Hinton will attend. Jon Vanderheyden may attend. JP Shannahan and Colleen McShane will not make it.
- The lead entity survey was distributed and there have been nine responses. TWG will discuss this next week, which will come back to the Board at a later date.

## Old Business

- SWC Communications Policy discussion – A slightly modified policy responding to previous comments was reviewed and is generally in good shape. It is also important to recognize our sensitivity to the different member groups' needs and interests and to reflect this more tangibly in the policy. This is an issue if SWC makes a statement that may not reflect an individual group's needs and interests. This policy should apply to all of SWC, not just the Executive Director. Consider adding to Section B. **\*Richard will add new language to the policy and bring it back for approval at the next meeting.**
- Resolution #2017-01 – This has been revised since June with input from Doreen and JP to expand focus beyond the estuary to address fish and habitat goals across the watershed. This policy formalizes the sideboards and goals to better guide future proposals and justify those decisions. It brings the mission statement to a more tangible level, clarifies what the organization is doing, and reaffirms our focus on fish and habitat. The policy also expands the concept that we recognize that we are in an altered environment, that we have a specific sustainable fisheries mission, and that we are looking for multiple benefits whenever possible without negatively impacting our mission. John Stein moves to adopt and Colleen McShane seconds. Motion carries unanimously with one amendment correcting a syntax error.

- Board Nominations – Steve Hinton and Ken Dahlstedt will serve another term on the Board. Other Director opportunities continue to be discussed. Bill Blake is ready to sign on with Board approval. Board members expressed hope that Bill’s participation among other recent developments will be yet another step toward cooperation and stronger partnerships. His energy and approach will be an asset. Michael Kirshenbaum moved to forward this slate of three nominees (Steve, Bill, and Ken) to the full Board of Directors and Tim Manns (joining as a Nominating Committee member) seconded. The committee (Michael, Tim, Colleen McShane, JP Shannahan) approved the motion unanimously. Michael moved to accept the slate and forward to the Council of Members for election and Jon Vanderheyden seconded. The Board unanimously approved the motion with Steve and Ken abstaining.
  - With this set of board members and their current 3-year terms, there will be two Board member cohorts with terms expiring in a staggered pattern in 2019 and 2020, which addresses our need for continuity.
- Colleen McShane moved to elect Brendan Brokes as Secretary/Treasurer. Steve Hinton seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
- Environmental Science Associates Contract – Due to several moving pieces, Richard provided an update rather than proposing a contract amendment today. We have completed developing the new riparian datasets and the online mapping tool, all of which have been shared widely with TWG, who meets next week. Richard noted that a he is working with SRSC to ensure which aspects of their underlying data is appropriate to share before a wider distribution. Steve Hinton clarified that the SRSC data is provisional and so should be presented as such. Next step is to determine the right metrics and the right scales to tell the stories about changing conditions with the data and questions we have. The canopy height models may not be comparable but new lidar is coming out soon and the framework we’ve developed will enable it to be easily incorporated. Detecting change in the land cover data with greater than 80% accuracy is difficult. Conservation Reserve Enhancement program (CREP) spatial data is not available due to NRCS policies and privacy issues but they did provide aggregated data at fine scale reaches allowing us to inventory their significant contributions to riparian planting. CREP sites are generally considered healthy, though it is unclear if we would know if riparian areas are cleared when CREP leases expire.
  - Final documentation in the form of a riparian habitat protection and restoration strategy update is being redrafted now. We will characterize conditions; provide conceptual assessment, restoration, and protection frameworks; and riparian strategies, but we won’t rank or prioritize reaches or be heavily prescriptive in the recommendations. It will take two or three months to work through the update. **\*A time extension will be needed with RCO for a couple months but it is unclear at this time if an amendment will be necessary for our contract with ESA.**

## New Business

- 2017 Skagit Conservation Education Alliance Contract –Steve Hinton moved and Brendan Brokes seconded to approve this new contract to administer Skagit ECO Net. Motion was carried unanimously.
- Tribal Management Conference recommendations - Steve Hinton provided a verbal briefing. PSP is working on Chinook implementation strategies to focus funding efforts for the next four years. The Tribal Management Conference provided feedback that the strategies needed more focus and advanced a slate of recommendations. A couple key provisions regarding buffers and water rights were very controversial. From the tribal perspective, there is a lot of deep seated concern that we keep doing the same thing over and over and seeing the same, downward result. We need to do the hard things because we are losing this battle. There are no guts to the protection element, and we can't buy our way out of the impacts coming our way from expanding population and development. We need a regulatory backstop and a framework that is efficient across watersheds. We need a cohesive regionwide strategy to make sure we are protecting what we have left. The Tribes are trying to advance that discussion. Protection is not just acquisition. There has been a lot of nuanced discussion around land use policies and DFW's authority under HPAs for civil enforcement. If approved and included in the PSP Action Agenda, this will set the framework for Near Term Action (NTA) and funding. The TMC will continue to forward these concepts, but their hope is that the Salmon Recovery Council will approve the remaining two strategies tabled at their last meeting.
  - **\*New language for these two strategies will be circulated and feedback will be needed. \*Richard will need direction from the Board regarding how to represent us at the Sept 28<sup>th</sup> Salmon Recovery Council meeting since he abstained in previous votes on these two strategies.** It would look good if we showed consensus around package being presented at that meeting.
  - Ken Dahlstedt commented that the biggest challenge from the Washington State Association of Counties perspective is the Growth Management Act. County codes and planning are guided by the GMA and any changes will require amendments throughout. There is concern about what the county can do legally and financially. The county wants to support salmon restoration but doesn't want to promise something it can't do. Clearly the tribal partners are very discouraged because funding is limited and there's no push for strong support for the recovery effort. ESA is a federal responsibility so if they don't fund projects, it is difficult for counties.
  - GMA was spawned by Clean Water Act. There is a lot of overlap between GMA and water quality and quantity.
  - Brendan Brokes expressed appreciation of the recent effort from tribes to clarify issues that can be resolved rather than holding up the process, and for the members of SWC to sit down together and have these difficult discussions while

also showing some progress. It's refreshing to have discussions focused on getting things done.

- Richard expressed that the detail in the new language is the critical component in that if there is too much controversial and components are too far out of SWC's area of focus then it will be very difficult to consult thoroughly and find consensus in short order.
- SWC members continue to grow, which is great in many ways as we spread our ability to affect our mission, but also complicating as those issues become more impactful. There is no way we all agree on Hirst and other, similarly impactful regulations. But if we have areas we can agree on, we can move forward there.

Adjourned 10:47 am

**Next SWC Board Meetings:** October 5, 2017 and November 2, 2017

**Other SWC Meetings:** September 21, 2017 Annual Lunch