

Skagit Watershed Council - Final Notes

Meeting of the Board of Directors, Hybrid Meeting at Skagit Watershed Council

December 7th, 2023

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

Attending Directors: John Stein (Chair), Devin Smith, Alison Studley, Emmett Wild, Michael Kirshenbaum, Brendan Brokes, Richard Brocksmith (Executive Director)

Guests: Aundrea McBride

Call to Order: 10:40

Quorum achieved.

Motion to approve the agenda by Devin, seconded by Alison. Approved by all.

Motion by Michael, seconded by Emmett, to approve November notes. Approved by all.

Executive Director's Report and Committee Reports

Financials: Accounts are in the positive for the month due to SCEA gift and about even for the year thus far. ***Accounts receivable seemed high so Richard will look into that.** Motion by Devin to approve the October financial reports, seconded by Alison. All approve.

Protection Subcommittee: Met November 16th and greenlighted a conservation easement on the Sauk.

Technical Work Group: Met November 16th. Discussed and tabled a scope change proposal by the County for their Lower Day Slough project. Decided to consider at a future meeting the idea of incorporating HEAL Act (environmental justice) criteria into our scoring process. They think this may be more of an LECC topic than a technical one.

M&AM Subcommittee: Met November 27th. Narrowed down sampling sites for the alluvial fan project they are championing. Started discussing a workplan for the committee for 2024.

Washington Salmon Coalition, RCO, and SRFB Updates:

- WSC is hosting a Salmon Day in Olympia with the Council of Regions and Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups on January 31st. The goal is to meet with legislators to inform them about salmon issues. Having a board member join Aundrea would add more flexibility for SWC to advocate for funding. All are invited. ***Aundrea will make a bullet list of topics from past work plans and letters that are appropriate to share.**

- WSC and PSP, along with COR and RFEs, are advocating with the SRFB to eliminate match requirements for projects at the SRFB meeting in 2 days. All these groups have written letters and are giving testimony. SWC may be able to as well, though the date is late. ***Aundrea will look into drafting a quick letter.**
- RCO is requesting an additional \$20mil from the legislature. If they get it, the funds will go towards a Targeted Investment/Large Projects grant round at the state level. Projects will use the previous Targeted Investment Program policies from Manual 18 (going through the LE process and then state process) but are not required to be 'targeted'. All projects requesting between \$1 and \$5 million can apply. ***This will be added to our RFP.**
- Still no word on our ability to apply SRFB Riparian funding to 2023 grant round.
- Aundrea is the newly elected chair of the Washington Salmon Coalition starting in January.

Old Business

The Board went into executive session to discuss the hiring process. ***Second interviews will happen in January** since things are slowing down already for the holidays.

Organization administration for the next month or two: Richard is willing to continue at part time through January and then revisit. The Board agrees this is the best approach and thanks Richard for his flexibility and commitment.

Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council:

- Last SRC meeting—The SRC approved “option 1” for allocating riparian funds across the Region, resulting in the lower amount for riparian funds coming to Skagit (\$1,048,855). The SRC did pass a compromise motion that added the ability for the SRC to re-allocate unobligated riparian funds in the 2024 grant round if other lead entities can't use it.
- SRC member—Motion to appoint John the Skagit Watershed member of the Salmon Recovery Council (Puget Sound Partnership) by Devin, seconded by Brendan. All approve. ***The appointment of an alternate will be postponed until after the new Executive Director is hired.**

New Business

County service contract with SWC: The county delivered to SWC their usual service agreement to pay SWC \$27,000 (a decrease of 10% compared to previous years due to County-wide budget cuts) for Lead Entity program support, including a riparian data summary. However, this year the draft agreement included stipulations for structural changes at the organization's Board level and veto authority over any potential executive director selection. The Board decided a service contract was not the appropriate place for these policy decisions, nor should it be negotiated by lawyers. Those should happen instead at the Board level, as advised by our

member organizations and Treaty Tribes. ***Richard will reach out to the County to share these conclusions and arrange a time to discuss the County's objectives and elevate them to the appropriate decision-making arena for resolution. *Richard will propose revisions of the contract to the County, deleting the above mentioned language.**

Barnaby Phase 2 Scope Change Request: SRSC has had to eliminate some tasks from their original scope of work due to changes in landowner willingness. SRSC will not complete the Martin Road Culvert. The completed project also came in under budget, thus returning funds to the state. SRSC is requesting approval of a scope and cost reduction and will be asking RCO for a time extension as well. Without the scope change the project will be marked incomplete in PRISM. This request normally would go to the TWG first and then the Board, but it is time sensitive. Motion to conditionally approve a scope change contingent on TWG approval, by Emmett, seconded by Alison. All approve, except Devin who abstains.

Good of the Order

- The Conservation District hired a new planner who is also half time office assistant.
- There was an article in the Skagit Valley Herald about the potential land use change on Fortera properties near Hamilton.

Adjourn 12:30pm.