

Skagit Watershed Council - Final Notes

Meeting of the Board of Directors, via Zoom – June 1, 2023

(Underline indicates decision point; parentheses indicate attachment #)

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Meeting ID: 823 4752 2403

Attending Directors: John Stein (Chair), Bill Blake, Michael Kirshenbaum, Alison Studley, Richard Brocksmith (Executive Director), Brian Lanouette, Andrew Bearlin, Brendan Brokes, Peter Browning

Guests: Aundrea McBride, Jenn Johnson, Mike See

Call to Order: 11:06

Quorum achieved.

Motion by Peter, seconded by Brendan, to approve the agenda as revised, with the ED and Committee reports moved to the end, adding appointing Rick chair of the TWG, and tabling the annual work plan until staffing becomes clearer (still approving the budget this meeting).
Approved unanimously except Brian who abstained.

Motion by Bill, seconded by Michael, to approve the May 5th notes as presented. Approved by all except Brian who abstained.

Old Business

Committee Appointments: Rick Hartson has been recommended by the TWG for appointment as chair. He has been serving as interim chair. He is also chair of the Protection Subcommittee and co-chair of the M&AM Subcommittee. He will step down from co-chair of M&AM Subcommittee if appointed chair of TWG. Motion by Andrew, seconded by Alison to appoint Rick chair of TWG. All approve except Brian who abstains.

Motion to approve Mark Knutzen and Emmett Wild as members of the LECC for the 2023 grant round by Michael, seconded by Peter. All approve except Brian who abstains. Mark and Emmett participated in the site visits in May.

The Targeted Riparian Buffer Incentives Pilot Project Report: It was drafted in December and went out for review with governments and practitioners. Comments were received and incorporated into a second draft in February. This phase 1 report needs to be finished and approved by the end of the biennium to meet grant's legislative proviso deliverables. The TWG looked at the 2nd draft and thought it was within SWC's realm of operation to produce such a report, but not a technical product—more of a social science report and a policy issue. The TWG passed the report to the Board for their consideration. Discussion:

- There is some money left over that is tentatively scheduled to go towards SWC's riparian database improvements next biennium.
- Joe and Emmett at the CD have already used the incentives listed in the report to get 13 new property owners on board for installing buffers.
- Swinomish wants science-based standards regarding buffer widths referenced in the report. This project was not trying to define standards regarding buffer width, so we weren't able to accommodate that request. Rather it was just trying to find incentives that would increase voluntary participation in installing buffers, make progress.
- The Skagit Irrigation and Drainage Consortium also does not support the report because we weren't able to incorporate all their comments.
- What is the justification for SITC's science-based buffer width? WDFW has made recommendations for guidelines (not a rule) based on site potential tree height. The width would vary based on soil types.
- Will the outcomes of the report be used in implementation/spending of the \$25 million allocated to the Conservation Commission? Yes, as far as we understand that is the intention. This was a pilot study.
- What is phase 2? Further database development and adding new users, monitoring for meeting water quality standards. A resource website has been set up. There are 10 or 12 recommendations in the phase 1 report for phase 2 including reach-scale planning to identify priorities and prescriptions, and establishing long-term relationships with landowners to implement restoration using multiple programs and strategies.

Motion by Bill to approve the Phase 1 Targeted Riparian Buffer Incentives Pilot Project report, seconded by Brendan. All approve except Brian who abstains.

New Business

Staff Update: Richard is giving notice that he's intent is to resign in the near future. He plans to work full time through the end of June to finish up the Sauk Plan and the Riparian Phase 1 reports and offers to work half time for one to three months to facilitate the transition to a new Executive Director (ED). He will initiate a final audit and keep all the paperwork and reporting and staff supervision moving. Discussion:

- John recommends we move in a timely way to rehire and keep Richard on at half time for the transition. He would also like to set up a subcommittee today to work on an announcement and scope of the search.
- Brendan is disappointed to hear this news and thankful for Richard's nearly 10 years of energy, time and effort. Brendan agrees with John. He also wishes Richard well.
- Alison is also thankful and happy to be part of the transition team. She did this for the last ED when Richard was hired.

- Michael notes this is a unique job and that it won't be easy in the current job market to find a replacement.
- Peter volunteers for the subcommittee. Bill volunteers for the subcommittee. Also John and Alison.
- Staff should have an advisory role.
- There will be time in the future to toast (and roast) Richard.
- Does it go to the Council of Members to hire or stay with the Board? The Board has the authority to hire and fire the ED.
- ***The subcommittee will lay out a process and develop a job description for the Board to consider.**
- All agree that they would like Richard to stay on at 50% time until a new ED can be on-boarded. Richard will continue to function as the ED for all that time.

Budget for the Next Year: Under the status quo we would be up against budget limits, however, Holli has raised \$16,000 for outreach programs and the Lead Entity program has had an increase of \$38,000 as of this year (first increase since 1998). Assuming the new ED comes on at a rate similar to Richard's, we would still have a buffer. See attachment for budget numbers with ED at 50% for 3 months and 100% for 9 months. Motion to approve this budget by Andrew, seconded by Brendan. All approve except Brian who abstains. ***The workplan will be drafted for an upcoming meeting.**

Executive Director and Committee Reports

Financials: Nothing out of the ordinary. The 15% indirect is tight. ***We need to negotiate a new one with RCO (typically between 15% and 22%) for this coming year based on the rules in place. Data about the indirect rate coming next month.** Motion to approve the April financial reports by Bill, seconded by Michael. All approve except Brian who abstains.

Committee Reports:

- TWG: Recommended Rick Hartson as chair. Reviewed the Sauk Plan, focusing on chapter 6-the prioritized actions.
- Community Engagement Committee met. They are working on STEAM Train.
- M&AM Subcommittee: Did not meet, however the monitoring project continues to go through the State process and received an NMI classification from the State Monitoring Review Panel. Also, the Regional review comments came back requesting the project scope be expanded (this is not possible for available funding).
- Protection Subcommittee: Greenlighted two properties.

- Riparian Work Group: Did not meet, but a continuation of its work tasks have been included in a grant for this round (via SRSC).
- Lead Entity Process: All but 1 project was cleared. Tenas Creek was given an NMI.

Good of the Order

SFEG and Skagit County had a good experience working with Seattle University students on project design on Wiseman Creek and recommends this as a resource.

Adjourn 12:00pm.