

Skagit Watershed Council - Final Notes

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

November 2nd, 2023

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

Attending Directors: John Stein (Chair), Devin Smith, Alison Studley (11:45), Emmett Wild, Peter Browning, Michael Kirshenbaum, Brendan Brokes, Richard Brocksmith (Executive Director)

Guests: Jenn Johnson, Aundrea McBride

Call to Order: 10:33

Quorum achieved.

Motion to approve the agenda by Michael, seconded by Emmett. Approved by all except Peter who abstains. Peter notes that he supports the important work SWC does.

Motion by Devin, seconded by Emmett, to approve September and October notes. Approved by all except Peter who abstains.

Executive Director's Report and Committee Reports

Financials: Accounts are in the black. Motion by Devin to approve the August and September financial reports, seconded by Emmett. All approve except for Peter who abstains.

Richard is still looking for an auditor. Devin and Michael may have some leads.

Protection Subcommittee: Met October 10th. Recommended Rebecca Rising and Marcus Reeves for appointment to the cttee. Preliminarily reviewed 1 parcel, waiting on a site visit for more information before greenlighting. Discussed how the acquisition component of new riparian funding might be used in conjunction with riparian goals and suggested forming a joint ad hoc group with some TWG members to discuss possibilities and priorities.

Technical Work Group: Met October 19th. Reviewed and approved the 2024 Program Guide with RFP and recommended it to the Board. Approved the Sauk Plan contingent on seeing final revisions and responding by Nov. 1 for Board discussion today. Approved and recommended to the Board a scope change proposal for SFEG's Lower Day Slough culvert project, for Board discussion today.

M&AM Subcommittee: Met October 23rd. Reviewed, approved, and recommended to the Board the draft monitoring letter to send to RCO. This is a discussion topic for the Board today. They plan to start developing a Subcommittee work plan at the next meeting.

Old Business

Motion to approve and send the letter to RCO regarding the SRFB monitoring project process by Devin, seconded by Michael. All approve except Peter who abstains.

Motion by Michael to approve the expanded scope for SFEG's Lower Day Slough fish passage project, adding one additional bridge for the same total cost, seconded by Emmett. All approve except Peter who abstains.

Executive Director hiring process: There has been one highly qualified applicant and a few less qualified applicants. These will go to the hiring committee before any calls are made to applicants. The ad said the recruitment initially closes November 1, but also said it would be open until filled.

- The position may need to be offered at a higher salary to attract more applicants. Richard will update the ad to have a range of salaries from \$80k to \$105k. The range of pay gives flexibility.
- The hiring committee will proceed with the current 1 candidate and also keep looking for more candidates.
- ***Richard will check into the budget constraints on offering the higher salary.**

Committee Appointments:

Motion by Brendan to appoint Jenn Johnson and Jenny Baker to the Monitoring and Adaptive Management Subcommittee, seconded by Michael. All approve except Peter who abstains.

Motion by Devin to appoint Jess Lange and Alex Richard to the Technical Working Group, seconded by Brendan. All approve except Peter who abstains.

Motion by Michael to appoint Marcus Reeves and Rebecca Rising to the Protection Subcommittee, seconded by Devin. All approve except Peter who abstains.

Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council:

New Skagit representative on the SRC and alternate—John Stein proposed for primary member and potentially Peter Browning or the new Executive Director proposed for alternate. ***These proposals will be voted on next meeting after members have time to discuss with their leadership.**

Riparian funding allocation method—The SRC is considering two different approaches for distributing the state riparian funds. Option 1 will give SWC about \$1 million for riparian funds. Option 2 will give SWC \$1.4 million. Option 2 implements the original allocation formula that prioritizes the watersheds most likely to recover salmon. Option 1 gives \$300k to each lead entity before applying the allocation formula.

Applying new riparian funding to the 2023 project list: Funding may not be available in 2023 due to administrative issues with RCO. If funding does become available, it could be applied to ensure Tenas Creek gets fully funded and SFEG's Upper Skagit riparian project gets funded in 2023. Motion to approve funding all projects on the 2023 list with riparian funds if they become available (option 1) by Devin, seconded by Michael. All approve except Peter who abstains.

New Business

Sauk Plan: Motion to provisionally approve the Sauk Habitat Plan contingent on Richard finishing the last few technical edits requested by USIT and SRSC, seconded by Devin. All approve except for Peter who abstains.

2024 Program Guide for the grant round: The riparian set aside was changed from the TWG recommendation of being equal to the available special state riparian funds to be a minimum of \$300k if the special state riparian funds should be less than \$300k without being supplemented by SRFB funds. A discussion about a long-term policy for the riparian set aside is necessary for next year. Also, a discussion about whether to score and rank projects applying for the set aside. Motion to approve the Program Guide, including the RFP, by Devin, seconded by Michael. All approve except for Peter who abstains. ***The Board would like the Conservation District to educate all about their expanding programs.**

Adjourn 12:30pm.