

## Skagit Watershed Council - Final Notes

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

September 7th, 2023

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

**Attending Directors:** John Stein (Chair), Michael Kirshenbaum, Devin Smith, Brian Lanouette, Andrew Bearlin, Alison Studley (10:20), Richard Brocksmith (Executive Director)

**Guests:** Jenn Johnson, Aundrea McBride, Holli Watne

**Call to Order:** 11:25

Quorum achieved.

Agenda approved. Motion by Devin, seconded by Andrew. Brian abstains.

August 3<sup>rd</sup> notes approved as presented. Motion by Michael, seconded by Devin. Brian abstains.

#### **Executive Director's Report and Committee Reports**

*Financial Reports:* May and June (tabled last month) and for July were presented. June was the end of the fiscal year. Accounts were in the black for all three months and for the fiscal year. Richard working half-time since July 1 is already included in the budget. Hiring a consultant to help hire a new executive director will come out of reserves, as it is not in the budget. SCEA gave the Watershed Council \$9,750 upon dissolution. **\*Richard has contracted several firms to do the audit, but no agreements signed yet.** Motion to approve the financial reports by Devin, seconded by Andrew. All approve. Brian abstains.

*Richard's Report:* He has been at half time since July, focusing on the Sauk Plan. A new draft of that is out for review with a review committee meeting scheduled for next week. Co-managers and TWG have been invited to the meeting. Richard is waiting on last comments from comanagers. The biggest change has been increasing the focus on habitat value while still characterizing landowner impacts.

*Schedule Issues:* Alison has an ongoing schedule conflict with this time (10-11). Peter usually has a conflict for moving the meeting later (12:00-1:00). It was proposed that the meeting time be changed to 10:30-12:30 or 10:30-12:00, managing the agenda tightly. **\*The topic was tabled until Peter is present.** The meetings will be in person with a hybrid option.

*Protection Subcommittee – 8/8/23* Reviewed 1 property at Dike Rd. on the delta outside the dike and tabled it.

*M&AM Subcommittee – 8/28/23* Discussed a new funding opportunity through PSP for Lead Entities to submit monitoring projects. No formal scoring and process is necessary locally, but the project should be approved by the LE and if we submit more than 1 we need to rank them. The M&AM discussed rescoping the Alluvial Fan project for the higher dollar amount. Mike, Catherine, and Jen O’Neal are working on this. They will present the project to the TWG on the 21<sup>st</sup> and **\*it will come to the Board for approval on October 5<sup>th</sup>**. The grant deadline is October 12<sup>th</sup>. Briefly discussed the letter to RCO and agreed to review via email after initial comments from the meeting were incorporated. Jeff offered to do a high-level review of the monitoring work done by SCL at the October meeting. **\*Staff will make sure Board gets an invite in case you are interested.**

*Riparian Work Group—9/6/23* Introduced new Skagit County VSP coordinator Rebecca Rising and had CD staff there for the first time (Emmett, Joe, and Taylor). Briefed on state Riparian policy. They had no comments. Made some improvements to the noxious weeds data tracking to better align with PSP’s data collection. Reinitiated discussions of incorporating CREP data into the database. Conference has a full slate of speakers and draft agenda.

*Community Engagement:* Holli is getting ready for the K-12 school year. There is a social media training coming up next week provided for our member organizations.

## **Old Business**

*Succession Plan:* Devin will provide some guidance on position description since SRSC has hired a lot of people recently. The hiring committee appointed by the Board will make recommendations. Staff and committee chairs will act in an advisory capacity. Board has final decision.

- Brian expressed thanks for being responsive to including tribal interests.
- Job announcement should include info about living in Skagit.
- Indeed is not a good source of applicants or site to post on.
- Sites like the Texas A&M Conservation Jobs board may be better place to post the announcement.
- Richard has applied for a new job. He can be flexible on how long he stays, but the new job application is a consideration.
- We have had no luck finding a ‘head hunter’. **\*John will ask PSP about their process.**
- The Board felt the succession plan was ready for implementation. **\*Brian asked for more time to review the succession plan before approval. It was agreed that he has until Wednesday, September 27.**

*Annual Lunch:* USIT donated salmon. Still looking for cooks. **\*Devin was asked to reach out to Swinomish and Sauk-Suiattle to participate in the welcome. \*Once the agenda is approved, a more formal invitation (beyond calendar invite) will go out.** The agenda will cover:

- State of the SWC and Richard’s departure.

- Transition plan and role of Council of Members
- Director elections.
- Year in review and highlights of the last 10 years accomplishments
- Future of the SWC

**\*Richard will send out a 'headline' version of the agenda, with flexibility to refine the details.**

## **New Business**

*Nominating Board Members:* Devin has been recommended for a second term and Emmett Wild recommended for election to the Board by the Nominating Committee. Motion by Michael, seconded by Andrew to approve the nominations go to the Membership meeting for a vote. All approve. Brian abstains. **\*Recommendation to add Board member terms to the webpage listing Board members.**

*RCO Riparian Policy:* Puget Sound LEs are coalescing around option 1 (\$250k to each LE, ~8mil to regions to allocate, and ~\$8mil to state process/competition). We will advocate for a better option next grant round. Riparian assessment at the state scale makes sense, but a state-wide competition for riparian funds is likely to be scattershot and bring Skagit's efforts significant uncertainty. The scale of acquisition projects versus planting projects is very different. We may still need a set aside for riparian since this funding includes acquisition. **\*Richard will send a letter.** More to come after the SRFB meeting. **\*Once funding is known (and which rounds it applies to) SWC will need to provide authority to SRFB to use it to fund the rest of our approved project list.**

*Monitoring Letter:* Tabled. Brian needs more time to review it. Timing relative to Manual 18 revisions at RCO is a concern. **\*Aundrea will check with RCO on that.** Some revisions have come in from M&AM members since this draft was sent out. **\*Aundrea will send the revised version back to the M&AM for final approval before coming back to the Board for approval.** Suggestion to make it shorter and more focused.

*PSAR Large Cap RFP:* The current draft developed by the Puget Sound Partnership and Salmon Recovery Council (SRC) scores projects addressing stocks limiting fisheries 20 points higher than other projects, ostensibly handicapping Skagit projects. The draft RFP is open for public and Tribal comment.

- Has there been a population viability study? Trying to move the needle on weak stocks is complicated. Funding should go to stocks that can move the needle.

- SRC should not be making decisions about recovery priorities without comanagers (SITC's view). PSAR has not consulted with harvest managers to come up with the right stocks.
- This policy says delisting is not the objective
- It is not technically based
- Do USIT opinions align with SITC?
- This RFP does not serve the larger objective and is bad for Skagit.
- It's "baking a cake without a recipe"
- This is a major funding source and thus a big deal.
- Tribes will have to carry the water since they have the most influence.

### **Good of the Order**

SWC Annual Lunch – September 20, 2023

**Adjourn 12:00pm.**