

Final Notes, Skagit Watershed Council Technical Work Group (TWG) November 17th, 2022 1:00pm-3:00pm, Zoom Meeting

(decisions underlined, **action items in bold**)

Attendees: Alison Studley (SFEG, Chair), Aundrea McBride (SWC), Colin Wahl (SRSC), Regina Wandler (Skagit Land Trust), Rick Hartson (Upper Skagit Indian Tribe), Jeff Fisher (Seattle City Light), Taylor (Studzinski) Scott (Conservation District)

Absent: Jeremy Gilman (USFS), Emily Derenne (Skagit County)

Guests: Richard Brocksmith (SWC)

Beginning Business

Introductions and check-in: quorum achieved.

- Jeremy will be removed from the committee because USFS does not have capacity to support him being on the committee. He would still like to receive materials. Alison will inquire if there is another FS person who could join TWG.
- Doug is leaving the committee for health reasons. Alison has identified someone who may replace him.

Agenda review: approved the agenda with addition of Program Guide as decision

Notes: Approved as revised. Motion by Colin, seconded by Regina, all approve.

Committee Updates

Board: Met November 3rd. Approved DeBays Slough cost increase. Were briefed on the Sauk Habitat Plan and approved a cost increase for that project. Were joined by David Hawkins from USIT who reiterated that they support the County's original position regarding the SWC Board structure. In the interim, however, SWC work needs to continue to move forward. Received update on Riparian Proviso work and approved a small cost increase.

Protection: Did not meet.

M&AM: Did not meet. Will be working on 4 Year Work Plan

Riparian: Will meet December 7th to work on database collaboration with DOE.

Cape Horn Road acquisition approval

SRSC (Colin) and Michael collaborated to create a memo stating that the hydromodification at the Cape Horn Road site should not impede acquisition and does not provide enough of a habitat benefit if removed to warrant restoration/removal.

Discussion:

- What % of the shoreline is modified? Exposed and unexposed length is about 500ft (from historic photo). Total shoreline is 2660ft, so about 19% (less than the 35% cut off requiring Board approval).
- Update the parcel tracking form with the % modified and specify in item 4c of the memo that the subject is the hydromodification.
- The joint memo is sufficient for the “letters of commitment”, at the TWG’s discretion.

Motion to greenlight Cape Horn Road property for purchase with the edits to the tracking form noted above by Aundrea, seconded by Jeff, all approve, Colin and Regena abstain.

Sauk Habitat Plan

Goal: Create a science and community based approach to identify and prioritize the best opportunities to protect and restore the lower 40 miles of the Sauk River, with a focus on rearing habitat.

- First report is done, prioritizing reaches using Middle Skagit methods and existing data on reaches from the Skagit Chinook Recovery Plan.
- Currently have a list of potential projects (35) with areas of effect, with goal to narrow them down to 5-10 conceptual projects.
- Report will include properties to acquire for habitat protection and for implementing restoration.
- There will be an outreach plan for other governments (Snohomish County, Darrington).

NSD created REM, compiled channel migration history, determined erosion rates and completed GIS wood stability and function assessment in priority reaches (50, 30, 60).

NSD developed a plan to treat the valley in reach 50 with ELJs.

- Goal is to stabilize forested islands so trees have longer to grow
- Enhance sinuosity and complexity, go from braided to anabranching channel
- ELJs 100ft-120ft wide and 80ft to 150ft apart

Discussion

- We are limited in drawing conclusions about outcomes of the ELJ treatment by the lack of a reference condition.
- It is a well-supported hypothesis, but we will have to accept some uncertainty.
- How will this kind of work (ELJ) be incorporated into the Skagit Chinook Recovery Plan?
- Is there any monitoring data for this type of restoration? 10-15 years of channel change monitoring in Nooksack, Elwha, etc.. Found it take large scale ELJs.
- These questions need to be captured in our process.
- Mobility of channel is due to so much sediment coming through the system. Sediment still has to go downstream. What happens downstream?
 - Role of sediment supply still needs to be refined
 - Anticipate this approach will increase sediment storage
- Have you looked at relative sediment budgets? The Sauk is more sediment than other rivers.

- What is the root cause of the braided channel formation from anabranching? Forestry?
- **Folks are invited to the steering committee.**

Box site is available to TWG members.

Next step is Protection Subcommittee finalizing the Protection Strategy including the Sauk.

Tabled Program Guide

Adjourn 3:06

Upcoming TWG Meetings:

December 15