

**Final Notes, Skagit Watershed Council Technical Work Group (TWG)  
March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023, 1:00-3:00pm, Hybrid Meeting at Skagit Watershed Council**

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

**Attendees:** Alison Studley (Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group, chair), Rick Hartson (Upper Skagit Indian Tribe), Aundrea McBride (SWC), Regina Wandler (Skagit Land Trust), Emily Derenne (Skagit County), Jeff Fisher (Seattle City Light), Taylor Scott (Conservation District), Pat Stevenson (Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group), Kevik Rensink (Puget Sound Energy)

**Absent:** Colin Wahl (Skagit River System Cooperative)

**Guests:** Richard Brocksmith (SWC), Jenny Baker (WDFW),

### Beginning Business

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Introductions and check-in: Quorum achieved. All present TWG members will join the TRC this year. Jenny will represent WDFW. Pat has been officially appointed to the TWG and TRC by the Board. Kevik is recommended to the Board for appointment to the TWG and TRC.

Agenda review: Approved the agenda by consent.

Notes: Motion to approve February notes by Emily, seconded by Regina, all approve.

Convene: 1:08

### Committee Updates

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**Board:** Met 3/2/23. The Board did not approve the Swinomish Channel project letter because USIT and the County wanted more time to review it. They reviewed the Council of Members meeting agenda, elected Alison to the Board (to start in April), and reviewed the Protection Strategy recommended by this body and asked questions about whether it conflicted with the County's law regarding mitigation funding being used for restoration on agricultural lands. It was announced that all staff at Western Washington Agricultural Association resigned, but they WWAA would still like to participate in the grant round. They have yet to identify a replacement for Brandon to the LECC.

**Protection:** Met 3/14/23. Greenlighted a revised purchase proposal. Outlined work items for revising the Protected Lands database. Discussed the question sent to them by the Board regarding the Protection Strategy potentially conflicting with the County's law regarding mitigation dollars being spent on restoration on agricultural lands. This topic is on the TWG agenda today.

**Riparian:** Met 2/22/23. Agreed to add a new funding request to one of this year's grants to continue the Riparian Work Group and its work on the conference, database, listserv, and mentoring. Updated the listserv code of conduct.

M&AM: Met 2/27/23. Received a presentation by Mike LeMoine and Eric Beamer about modeling fish response to habitat and status and trends monitoring. **The video will be posted to Box once available.**

### Protection Strategy

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A question was sent to the committees by the Board regarding the Protection Strategy potentially conflicting with the County's law regarding mitigation dollars being spent on restoration on agricultural lands. The Protection Subcommittee put forward that the County law did not apply to Protection Strategy purchases because mitigation funds were already not allowed to be used for protecting lands according to RCO policy. However, SWC may need some training from the County regarding how the County defines mitigation funds. The Protection Subcommittee also asked why the Protection Strategy should include reference to the County's law in particular when no other laws were referenced, and it was implied that all laws would be followed.

Discussion:

- The County law applies more to restoration practitioners than the Protection Strategy except for the 'Restorable Lands' policy.
- It would be helpful if the County came to the TWG to train restoration practitioners.
- The Protection Strategy should go back to the Board for approval, no changes.

### Grant Round Updates

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Review of Letters of Intent. One project, RM59, sounds like more of a road protection project than a salmon project thus in the 'grey' area for moving forward to draft application stage and will be discussed by TWG:

- Language needs to be changed in the proposal to talk more about fish and restoration goals rather than road protection goals. The tribes need to be consulted.
- **The above conditions will be added to the invitation to proceed, and it noted that the sponsor proceeds at their own risk.**

Other projects discussed:

- Martin Slough fish passage—This project did not meet its last grant deliverables (gave back design money). This will be a new design grant.
- Mill Creek—eligible for bridge funds so new options are possible. Conditions have changed at the site so a new preliminary design and new outreach are needed. The road design will be done to 10% and the rest of the design elements to preliminary design requirements to save costs.
- Tenas Creek—Other funds will have to be brought in (expensive road project).

TRC membership: All present will be on the TRC.

Schedule for Site Visits: We will visit one riparian site for each of the riparian projects even though they have multiple sites in each proposal. Each project gets 45 minutes. Emily has three projects to present and would prefer the final schedule be Tuesday and Wednesday. Alison and possibly Jenny will miss Tuesday. **Aundrea will work out the schedule and finalize this week.**

O'Brian project has requested a cost increase of \$20,000 for outreach. That amount is within the administrative approval limit and was approved.

#### Riparian Actions Database

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We are working on updating the database to be more functional for data entry, improving data quality for older data (pre 2008) and including more practitioners. We also plan to create a dashboard of summary metrics for the public. RFQQ out for this work.

#### Updates, Announcements, and To Do's

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- **\*Aundrea will contact Mike LeMoine about presenting at the May and June meetings regarding fish density prediction models.**

Adjourn 3:00

#### **Upcoming TWG Meetings:**

No meeting in April due to site visits the first week of May

Site visits May 2, 3, and 4 (may only take 2 days)

May 18

June 15

July 13, 9:00-4:00, TRC meeting followed by a short TWG meeting