

Final Notes, Skagit Watershed Council Technical Work Group (TWG)

Special Meeting, July 26, 2018, 11:00 -11:20am

Skagit Watershed Council Meeting Room, Mount Vernon

(actions underlined)

Attendance: Alison Studley, (SFEG, Chair), Tom Slocum (Skagit Conservation District), Bob Warinner (WDFW), Chris Vondrasek (SWC), Erin Lowery (Seattle City Light)*, Rick Hartson (Upper Skagit Indian Tribe)*, Erik Andersen (Aspect Consulting)*, Devin Smith (Skagit River System Cooperative)*. (*) indicates remote participation.

Guests: Denise Krownbell (SCL)*

Alison Studley formally began the Technical Work Group meeting with the 8 TWG members present. A quorum was confirmed.

There was no formal agenda provided pre-meeting. Via email TWG members had been notified of the need for a special TWG meeting to complete a time-critical review of a property with high habitat value. This additional TWG review was required by the SWC Protection Strategy due to a small amount of relict hydromodification at the downstream edge of the property. The high habitat value of the property and the pressing interest of other potential buyers urged a prompt TWG review.

TWG members had confirmed in advance of today's meeting that they had received the 6/19 Protection Committee meeting report, and also maps illustrating the property in the Ross Island floodplain reach. They confirmed they had adequate time to review the materials. The report and the map documents were provided to the TWG after the Protection Committee reviewed the property and unanimously approved it. In addition, Denise has answered several TWG members' questions in advance of today's meeting via email.

The property scores 1.700 in the Protection Assessment and all of it lies in the Ross Island reach floodplain. The property covers 213.8 acres, with over 6000 linear feet of Skagit River and off-channel aquatic habitats. The property has 150 acres of functioning floodplain forests. 64 acres of the property are former pastures or hayfields, lacking functioning floodplain forests. This amount equals slightly less than 30% of the property area in need of potential replanting restoration.

The reason for an additional TWG review of the potential acquisition is due to a length of relict hydromodification at the downstream edge of the property. According to the Protection Strategy protocol any amount of hydromodification initiates a required TWG review and approval. Depending on the accuracy of the GIS layers, either 100.9' or 563.1' of hydromods contact the property. The 2 hydromods are tenuously connected to the property at the

downstream corner of it. Relative to the >6030' of aquatic edge habitat length, 100.9' equals 1.67% of that length, 563.1' equals 9.35%.

TWG Discussion: A TWG member expressed concern about the cost of the property. This member remarked that this property adds to a recent list of new potential acquisitions, and asked about the potential that the list of properties approved for acquisition could exceed the available funding.

Denise answered that SCL has sufficient funding to continue to negotiate with this property's owner and realtor. SCL has credibility and staying power as a potential buyer. She stressed that SCL and our other main acquisition partner, Skagit Land Trust, have already been making advance efforts to balance the available funds with the roster of willing sellers by prioritizing the sellers' needs with our focus on acquiring the best habitats first. She also pointed to the reality not all potential acquisitions that SCL and SLT seek can be completed due to issues that have nothing to do with funding.

TWG Decision: Bob Warinner moved that the TWG approve the acquisition. Chris Vondrasek seconded.

The TWG members present and voting unanimously approved this acquisition proposal. Erin Lowery did not vote, as he is conflicted as an employee of SCL. Alison Studley did not vote, as she is the TWG chair and does not vote unless to break a tie.

Additional TWG discussion: Alison asked if TWG members had any forecasts from these organizations about the potential requests to the LECC to use ~\$126,000 remaining from the Skagit PSAR allocation. Devin replied it was likely SRSC might seek funding for aspects of the work at Hansen Creek. Tom Slocum and Denise confirmed the feasibility work at the acquisition upstream from Rockport could use some support also. Chris said that he'd share with the TWG any requests that come in to the watershed council.

Adjourn: 11:20