**Skagit Watershed Council Technical Work Group (TWG)**

**Meeting Notes Final**

**March 15, 2018, 1:00 – 3:00PM, SWC Office, Mount Vernon**

\*(numbered attachments in parentheses, actions underlined)

**Attendance:** Alison Studley, (SFEG, Chair), (in alphabetical order), Ed Connor (Seattle City Light), Emily Derenne (Skagit County), Jeremy Gilman (USFS), Rick Hartson (Upper Skagit Indian Tribe), Kari Odden (Skagit Land Trust), Tom Slocum (Skagit Conservation District), Devin Smith (Skagit River System Cooperative), Chris Vondrasek (SWC), and Bob Warinner (WDFW).

**Absent:** Erik Andersen (Aspect Consulting), Doug Bruland (PSE), Erin Lowery (Seattle City Light).

**Guests:** Richard Brocksmith (SWC), Erin Murray (PSP), and Allison Roberts (note taker, Kulshan Services)

Start: 1:09 pm

1. Introductions. The TWG was introduced to Erin Murray, the new PSP Ecosystem Coordinator. The TWG approved the Draft Agenda (#1).
2. Reviewed January Meeting Notes (#2) – Richard suggested a few changes for clarity and intent, and Chris made the changes in real time prior to the vote.

Emily moved and Chris seconded approval of the notes with the changes. The approval motion carried.

1. Subcommittee and Board Reports

* Board of Directors March 1 meeting summary – (Richard Brocksmith). The Board discussed providing letters of commitment for Near Term Actions (NTA) projects proposed by the SRSC. Richard will draft a letter of commitment from SWC which represents a statement of knowledge and participation in the projects. \***Richard noted that project proponents can contact him if they too would like a letter of commitment for projects already on the 4YWP.**

The Board also discussed regional initiatives such as in-stream flow issues (Hirst) and threats to orcas.

* Review Technical Review Committee membership

Chris has reached out to members on the TRC outside of the Skagit. Chris distributed a list of the TRC members from the SWC TWG and at this meeting, and asked that they confirm their participation.

* PSP Near-Term Action Review

**\*Erin asked TWG members to get the word out that they need 50 more volunteer NTA reviewers (they have 800 NTAs to be reviewed!) and to contact her if interested.** To sweeten the deal, volunteers will conduct the reviewing at a two-day retreat at Seabeck on June 6 and 7.

* Citizens Committee Review: \***Over the next couple weeks,** **Richard will be reaching out to Board members and others to serve on the Lead Entity Citizens’ Review Committee.**
* Monitoring and Adaptive Management Committee had a March 7th meeting – Richard clarified that he and Steve Hinton are co-chairs. They had an excellent meeting and are nearing completion of the draft monitoring and adaptive management report which will include: showing status and trends, recommendations for changes to strategies, and a proposed framework for adaptive management decision-making. The M and AM subcommittee recommended that the two monitoring LOI’s go out for review as part of this year’s SRFB grant round. \***SWC will send out the draft M&AM Report to TWG members so they can discuss at their April meeting.**

1. 2018 Lead Entity Program – Chris V

The TWG reviewed 13 habitat project proposal LOIs for this year’s SRFB grant round. There were four projects not on the 4YWP, and the TWG reviewed them to decide if they are consistent with SWC’s foundational documents and eligible for including in the 4YWP. (Skiyou and Ross Island Reach Restoration Assessment and Acquisition Planning, Anderson Creek Fish Passage and Channel Restoration Preliminary Design, Sauk Tributary Culvert Replacement Design, and the Plan for Habitat Protection and Restoration in the Sauk River and Tributaries.) Chris went through the rest of the list and confirmed for the TWG that the remaining 9 projects were on the 4year Work Plan.

Richard indicated that collectively the project proposal requests received by the SWC for this grant round may not utilize the complete allocation of PSAR and SRFB funds for the round based on there being less funding currently indicated than the approximately $5.3M target. To avoid leaving unallocated funds from this surplus, Richard outlined four options (in no prioritized order):

1. Get another project in the loop that could fill the gap.
2. Increase the scope on some of the projects and use more of the funding available for projects that might warrant that.
3. Coordinate with neighboring watersheds and loan them money. Assuming PSAR is funded, SWC gets that money back in a future biennium. Richard outlined how these loans have worked in the past; however, Skagit has not done this before.
4. Allocate the money to Hansen Creek (as was done last year) and/or other projects that are approved, designed, and under-funded from past years.

Richard noted that the total funds expected for this year will be about 1.5 million dollars greater than the total current amount in project requests.

\*

Project review (of proposals not on the 4-year Work Plan)

* Anderson Creek Fish Passage – (not on the 4YWP) This project has been on the radar for years. Replacement of the culvert will restore tributary processes and positively impactthe floodplain downstream, but it’s on the edge of the SWC-mapped floodplain which is the issue regarding whether it qualifies. The culvert backs up during flooding and a nearby house is being affected. Richard referred to the Strategic Approach’s priority objectives to help with this decision. The TWG also reviewed maps and LiDAR imagery. All agreed that the LIDAR shows it is in an alluvial floodplain, is mostly Tier 1, and is consistent with the 4YWP. Note: many TWG members concurred that the floodplain layer in this area needs updating.
* Skagit Tributary Culvert Replacement Design (Hobbits Corner) – (not on the 4YWP) The Sauk has migrated and is eroding and undercutting the culverts. The feasibility of moving the road or keeping it in place is being discussed by Skagit County. Natural Systems Design is reviewing the multiple issues affecting this area and how to fix it. The issue is that documents don’t show the road and these culverts in the floodplain, but they do show 2 of the 3 culverts in alluvial fans. The County knows it can’t fix the fish passage without fixing the culvert. The possibility exists that the County could seek matching funds for the culvert because LIDAR shows it is now in the geomorphic floodplain. The other two culverts are identified in the floodplain. Note: The floodplain layer in this area needs modifying. All agreed (minus those who are conflicted as project sponsors) that the LIDAR shows it in the floodplain and so it is Tier 1 rearing habitat and is consistent with the 4YWP.
* Skiyou and Ross Island Reach Restoration Assessment and Acquisition Planning – (not on the 4YWP) – What part should go forward? For SRSC and SFEG, it’s a capacity request. All agreed it qualifies and is consistent with the 4YWP.
* Plan for Habitat Protection and Restoration in Sauk River and Tributaries – Align this planning effort with the protection strategies and habitat restoration strategies previously done in the Middle Skagit. Richard suggested future collaboration on issues like this – especially on the Sauk.All agreed it qualifies and is consistent with the 4YWP, but it’s best to look at reach level maps and photos first, and not do too much. Given public ownership of most of the suggested tributaries, their inclusion in the modeling effort may not add much value

**\*Devin recommended SWC investigate the Army Corps flow model which could provide more up-to-date information.**

**\*Chris will add projects to Habitat Work Schedule and PRISM. He will confirm to sponsors that their project LOIs have been reviewed by the TWG, are eligible, and that they may complete their draft applications in PRISM.**

* Review TWG and TRC schedules

**Next TWG Meeting**: April 19, 2018

**TRC Site Timeline and Site Visits**: May 8, 9, and 10 (possibly only 2 days, TBD)

* RFP released February 8
* Letters of intent due March 12
* Draft applications will be invited on March 19
* Draft applications due April 12
* Project site visits May 8, 9 and possibly 10th
* Comments due May 24
* Final applications due June 6
* Presentations to the Council of Members June 13 (9 – noon)

1. Draft Skagit Monitoring Report – A presentation of the report will be prepared for April Review. See M and AM committee report above.
2. Project Update Round Robin

* Skagit River System Cooperative project update - Devin noted most projects are going well with specifics on the following:
  + Illabot – Construction started and going well. They’ll be done by August 15. TWG recommended the SWC get a date on the calendar and line up dignitaries, landowners, and stakeholders for the ribbon cutting.
  + Barnaby - SRSC hired Natural Systems Design and an outreach specialist to help move the project concepts forward. Community engagement is going well. They even obtained letters of landowner support. Project received Floodplains by Design funding and they did culvert drainage analyses.
  + Culverts - Project was bound up in capital budget impasse, but the initial phase of database update got done. Devin noted SRSC found that it was sometimes more efficient to do new fish passage surveys and habitat surveys to update their data.
* Skagit Land Trust project update - Kari provided updates regarding their projects:
  + The dock project is not quite done and was held up by DNR concerns and ownership issues.
  + They closed on a new property yesterday. Only one other property remains to be acquired in Muddy Creek confluence area.
* Skagit County project update - Emily provided updates regarding their projects:
  + Martin Ranch Road is now addressing engineering with culvert to be built in 2019.
  + Martin Slough riparian planting is in its final year of maintenance. This project had had issues with tree thievery, but it’s moving along and may need additional stewardship.
  + Their South Fork DD#3 project should go out for final design next week.
* WDFW – Bob Warinner
  + Deepwater just getting underway
  + Milltown is mostly done for preliminary design. April - discuss Milltown progress then as Jenna is scheduled for a presentation.
  + Cascade floodplains got money before the capital budget impasse, and so the modeling work there was completed with alternatives discussion to follow soon.
* SFEG – Alison Studley provided a quick summary of the following:
  + Kukutali Tombolo, Swinomish Tribe – Will begin the build this summer.
  + Carey Slough - no contract yet.
  + Pressentin – There were some delays with the Army Corps and the County permits, but they have funds now and all permits are filed. No building until summer of 2019. They may have to find a different construction management firm.
* Fish Barrier Removal Board (FBRB)

Richard asked if anyone had questions about the Fish Barrier Removal Board given imminent due date; none noted. One purpose of the FBRB is to fund projects not funded by SRFB. He noted that it’s too late to change anything this year with respect to state procedures. A couple projects may resubmit for funding this year.

1. Adjourn: 3:39 pm