

Snoqualmie Watershed Forum
MEETING SUMMARY
February 9, 2011
Meeting 6:30-9:00 pm
Snoqualmie Tribal Office

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Elizabeth Walker	City of Duvall Councilmember, Forum Chair
Charles Peterson	City of Snoqualmie Councilmember, Forum Vice-Chair
Chris Garcia	City of North Bend Councilmember
Kathy Lambert	King County Councilmember
Jim Berger	City of Carnation Councilmember
David Burger	Stewardship Partners, Non-profit Representative
Kent Renno	Citizen Representative - Unincorporated King County
Allyson Schrier	Citizen Representative - Unincorporated King County
Derek Young	Citizen Representative – Snoqualmie Valley Governments Association
Bill Knutsen	King Conservation District Representative

MEETING PROCEEDINGS

Introductions and Minutes

- The Forum held a “meet and greet” prior to the meeting to welcome new members.
- Councilmember Lambert suggested one edit to the November 17 meeting summary. The Forum approved the meeting summary with the requested change incorporated.

Updates and Announcements

Yvette Lizée-Smith (Watershed Coordinator) gave the following announcements:

- *Welcome New Members/Orientation* – Yvette welcomed the new representatives to the Snoqualmie Watershed Forum. Over the next few weeks Forum staff will arrange orientation briefings for new members to provide additional background on the Forum and our activities. The orientation can be done individually or in groups depending on convenience. Yvette will follow up via email to coordinate briefing times. Following this announcement each new member was invited to introduce themselves. The new members are:
 - **Allyson Schrier** (unincorporated King County citizen representative): Allyson is a Fall City area resident and professional writer who lives near the Raging River. She is a co-founder of Partnership for Rural King County and has been a core volunteer organizer on the Stewardship in Action project– a project that seeks to link local landowners in the Raging and Patterson sub-basins to appropriate conservation services and resources.
 - **Kent Renno** (unincorporated King County citizen representative): Kent is a waterfront landowner along the Tolt River who works as a youth environmental educator and Director of Outdoor Education at the Overlake School in Redmond. He has volunteered on a variety of restoration projects with Mountains to Sound Greenway, Washington Trails Association,

Green Redmond and also brings first-hand knowledge and experience of the watershed from the perspective of a river runner, kayaker, rafter and avid fly fisher.

- **Derek Young** (Snoqualmie Valley Governments Association citizen representative): Derek is a City of Snoqualmie resident. He owns and operates Emerging River Guide Services where he works as a professional fly fishing guide – leading trips in eastern Washington as well as the upper Snoqualmie Watershed. Derek is a member of Trout Unlimited. He has volunteered on fish passage and river clean-up projects and is interested in educating upper watershed residents on ecological impacts of human activities.
- **David Burger** (Non-profit representative): David Burger is the Executive Director of Stewardship Partners – a non-profit organization that supports stewardship and conservation in the Snoqualmie Watershed and in other targeted regions of Washington State. Stewardship Partners has been working with farmers in the Snoqualmie Watershed to plant over eight miles of riparian buffers and implement agricultural best management practices that improve water quality and enhance fish and wildlife habitat. They’ve assisted many local farms in gaining Salmon Safe certification as well. Stewardship Partners also assists local governments, businesses and landowners to implement low impact development (LID) technologies like rain gardens.
- *Project Tours* – Some of the recently completed habitat restoration projects in our watershed (like the Lower Tolt Floodplain Reconnection Project and the Chinook Bend Restoration Project) are showing significant habitat improvements in response to recent high flows. Staff would be happy to arrange an informal tour of these projects in the spring for those interested in seeing how they have changed. In addition, staff expect to hold a more formal tour of the lower Snoqualmie Valley [or Duvall area] projects as part of our annual Forum tour in July.
- *Nature Vision – School Program Update* – At our last Forum meeting Clay Heilman of Nature Vision gave a presentation on the School Conservation Education Program. She also sought input on alternative funding sources that Nature Vision might approach for funding – to replace the KCD grant funding that was not secured for 2011. Since that meeting, Forum staff have been working with Nature Vision to investigate some of these sources (REI, Nintendo, Puget Sound Energy, Seattle City Light/Public Utilities). We also provided input on a grant application that Nature Vision submitted to Community Salmon Fund. So far REI has committed \$1,000 to the program (with possibility future additional funds); City of Seattle advised us that they have no funds for outreach; and Puget Sound Energy has encouraged us to apply to their PSE Foundation which offers small grants generally in the range of \$2,000-3,000.
- *Miller River Channel Migration Closes Old Cascade Highway in Skykomish Watershed* - On January 16, 2011, the Miller River breached the training levee and avulsed through the Old Cascade Highway just west of the Miller River Bridge (approximately 2 miles west of the Town of Skykomish). The river cut an approximately 100’ wide path through the Old Cascade Highway which is now the river bed. The highway remains closed to all traffic indefinitely. King County Roads is investigating possible solutions. Earlier in January, King County and Forum staff submitted an Ecotrust grant proposal for a Miller River Feasibility Study. The proposed study would evaluate and recommend a long-term solution for transportation, flood hazard reduction and salmon habitat restoration needs in the same reach of lower Miller River.

Puget Sound Partnership – Local Organizing Structure

Morgan Schneider, staff to the Puget Sound Partnership (PSP), provided an overview of PSP's purpose, Action Agenda, and regional structure. PSP formed as a state agency in 2007 with the goal of restoring Puget Sound by 2020. The Action Agenda provides the road map to reaching ecosystem and human health goals including activities related to: (1) habitat restoration, (2) habitat protection, (3) stopping pollution, (4) working together and (5) measuring performance. PSP's major accomplishments related to the Snoqualmie Watershed include securing funding for habitat restoration projects through the Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration fund (PSAR) and through various other grants from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Establishment of Local Integrating Organizations (LIO)

Morgan advised the forum on an upcoming process to establish a Local Integrating Organization for the Snohomish Basin. Some key points included:

- The Puget Sound Partnership enabling legislation originally divided Puget Sound into seven Action Areas to assist with planning for the Action Agenda. The Snoqualmie Watershed and Snohomish Basin are part of the Whidbey Basin Action Area. The Whidbey Action Area spans portions of 5 counties (King, Snohomish, Island, Skagit and Whatcom County) and includes 4 watersheds (Skagit, Stillaguamish, Snohomish and Whidbey Island). The Whidbey Area boundaries were set because the 4 watersheds within it share ecological and hydrologic functions.
- PSP is seeking to form Local Integrating Organizations (LIOs) at the action area or sub-action area level to help coordinate Action Agenda implementation and decisions from the bottom-up. Among their responsibilities LIOs would: advise the Partnership on local priorities; coordinate planning, priority setting and implementation across local governments and delivery partners (i.e. serve as a coordinating body) within their defined area; develop funding strategies for local Action Agenda implementation; and provide assistance to enhance implementation by local groups. Morgan also specified that LIOs would focus on advancing elements on the Action Agenda that are not covered by the current Lead Entity salmon recovery groups (like the Snohomish Basin Salmon Recovery Forum), including actions related to habitat protection, water quality and water quantity.
- PSP and other groups across the Whidbey Basin have been trying to determine the best way to organize locally given our Action Area's large size. Based on feedback, the end proposal is to establish a two-tier organizing structure in the Whidbey Basin that would consist of:
 - a) Forming LIOs in each of the 4 watersheds (Skagit, Snohomish, Stillaguamish, and Island);
 - b) Establishing a communication network across the entire Whidbey Basin to facilitate information sharing and coordination on cross-boundary priorities (such as marine issues).
- As a next step, PSP will be working with the 4 watersheds in Whidbey Action area to establish individual LIOs. At this point it is assumed that the Snoqualmie Watershed Forum would input into and be part of the structure for the Snohomish basin LIO.

Forum Comments and Discussion

- *What is the objective of today's PSP presentation and what is being sought from the Forum?* Yvette explained that, given many Forum members were not involved in the PSP Action Agenda development in 2008, Morgan was asked to provide an overview on PSP. She was also asked to advise the Forum on the upcoming discussions related to the Snohomish Basin LIO development. Among objectives, staff would like Forum input on how best to involve members in the upcoming LIO discussions. To expedite the process, Yvette suggested that staff work with a small taskgroup (including Morgan and 2-3 staff from King and Snohomish Counties) to sketch out some optional structures for the Snohomish LIO. These sample structures could then be vetted by the Snoqualmie Watershed Forum and other delivery partners in our watershed and Snohomish Basin for input and refinement.
- *Following on the above point, Yvette asked whether the Forum would be open to separate meetings to discuss the LIO process or whether it was better to piggy-back on existing meetings.* **Recommendation:** Forum members asked that any future discussions on the Snohomish basin LIO be done in existing meetings due to the high demands on their time. Forum members also encouraged that any LIO structure that is proposed for the Snohomish Basin seek to piggy-back on our existing foundation to avoid further stretching and diluting our resources, staff and member commitments. It was noted that the Snoqualmie Watershed Forum is already working in many elements of the action agenda (not just salmon recovery) and that we already have a strong foundation for coordinating across these actions.
- *How are other Action Areas organizing?* Morgan explained that the structures have varied. In some action areas local jurisdictions and delivery groups are using existing Salmon Recovery Lead Entity groups to serve as the LIO. In others they are establishing new stand-alone LIOs that are separate and sometimes structured quite differently from the Lead Entities.
- *Can you give examples of which watersheds utilized existing Lead Entity structures and which formed new organizations?* Morgan responded that Hood Canal Coordinating Council plans to build on their existing Lead Entity. Alternatively, San Juan Action Area, Island County, and South Central Action Area plan to form new decision bodies separate from the WRIA forums.
- *Which of the Puget Sound Action Areas need more assistance or are highest priority in the Action Agenda?* Morgan explained that each Action Area has specific priorities but there currently is no prioritization across them. Forum members asked for PSP to provide more direction on Snoqualmie Watershed priorities relate to Puget Sound priorities. **Action:** Yvette offered to provide copies of the "Snoqualmie Watershed Status, Threats, and Priority Actions" worksheet that staff developed to inform Forum input during the Action Agenda development.
- *Have flood hazard concerns been incorporated into the Action Agenda?* Morgan explained that flooding is related to the Action Agenda but flood hazard reduction is not a goal.
- *What is the value to the Forum in participating in the LIO process?* Yvette agreed that the Forum needs to explore the benefits and drawbacks of being heavily involved in the LIO process. One of the key reasons to be involved may be funding related. She noted that the Forum, together with our Snoqualmie-based partners are already implementing many elements of Action Agenda, but funding is progressively dwindling for many of these activities. The Forum has been an important advocate for small city/rural/interior watershed priorities in the Action Agenda process. It may be important to have a voice at the table to ensure these issues continue to have a priority and some level of funding going forward.

- **Action:** The Forum authorized staff to work with Morgan, King County and Snohomish County to sketch out some optional structures for the Snohomish Basin LIO. Forum members agreed that staff could begin the dialogue but also noted the need for more information to ultimately determine our level of involvement.

In closing, Morgan added that PSP plans to have more clarity on implementation and organizational capacity funding for the LIOs by July 2011.

2011 King Conservation District (KCD) Grant Rounds

Perry Falcone described the KCD Assessment distribution and the two Snoqualmie Watershed KCD grant programs. The King Conservation District (KCD) collects an annual \$10 per parcel assessment for conservation efforts. The current 2010-2012 assessment generates approximately \$6 million in collections annually. These collections are broken out across various programs including: KCD operating and conservation services, WRIA grant programs, and member jurisdiction grant programs. The Snoqualmie Watershed Forum administers grants rounds and recommends grant allocations for approximately \$675,000 in KCD assessment funds annually. These funds are allocated through two Forum grant programs co-administered by the Forum and KCD:

- *KCD Regular Round (\$475,000)* – provides grant funding for various high priority projects and programs identified in the approved Forum 2011 Funding Priorities. In particular, this grant program prioritizes projects that align with high priority actions, projects and river reaches identified in the WRIA7 salmon recovery plan as well as water quality actions consistent with our *Snoqualmie Watershed Quality Synthesis Report*.
- *Opportunity Fund (\$200,000)* - provides small grants up to \$30K for small habitat projects on private and public lands. Projects that promote local stewardship and landowner involvement are particularly encouraged. It also extends beyond the mainstem and priority reaches identified in the salmon plan to include projects in tributaries and headwaters.

Perry reviewed the breakout of past grant funding and the schedule for the 2011 KCD Regular Grant Round. The Forum approved the 2011 Regular Round Funding Priorities and timeline via email in January 2011. Following this approval, the RFP was launched on January 21. Draft applications are due on March 9. The Project Review Committee will review projects and provide the Forum with a recommended list of grant allocations for consideration and decision at the Forum's May 18th meeting. Perry added that the Opportunity Fund round is on a later schedule. It may open in April and will be on the Forum agenda for allocation decisions in September.

- Charles Peterson reminded the Forum that the current distribution of KCD funds across the watersheds is unfair. He suggested that a watershed with a land area comprising 40% of King County should receive more than 20% of the watershed funding available.
- David Burger suggested that KCD revisit the policy restricting non-profits to \$50,000 per KCD grant. He explained that many non-profit partners feel they should not be restricted, since there is no such limit on government organizations. Jessica Saavedra mentioned that KCD is currently reviewing its grant policies and that this issue will be added to their list of policy questions.

Snoqualmie Watershed Five-Year Salmon Plan Status Report Recommendations

At the November 17 Forum meeting, Janne gave a preview of the Snoqualmie Watershed Five-Year Status Report. To follow up at today's meeting, Janne presented possible topics for future Forum discussion stemming from the report findings (see Attachment A for the list of suggested topics). Janne explained that staff would like direction on where to focus energy and what future topics the Forum would like to further explore. To help narrow the topics, it was suggested that Forum members note the topics they felt warranted a) further study, b) development of response alternatives or c) just updates (no action) in their meeting handout.

Action: Forum members noted their preferences for the 6 topics in the handout provided and returned the handout to Janne. Forum members were also invited to email Janne after the meeting if they needed more time to consider the topics. *[Note - Janne will present the feedback he received and his subsequent topic recommendations at our March 16 Forum meeting.]*

Chris Garcia asked if there were currently rural residential stewardship programs. Janne responded that King County still has forestry and agriculture programs, but otherwise has cut most of its rural residential stewardship planning programs. Among other providers, King Conservation District, Stewardship Partners, the EPA-funded Stewardship in Action project (being implemented by King County and Partnership for Rural King County in Raging/Patterson sub-basins), and the Forum's Opportunity Fund grant program provide some resources for landowner stewardship.

Snoqualmie Watershed Forum – General Business

2011 Chair and Vice-Chair: Elizabeth advised that the Forum needed to formally appoint a Chair and Vice-Chair for 2011 and called for nominations. Charles Peterson nominated Elizabeth Walker to continue in the position of Forum Chair. Bill Knutsen nominated Elizabeth Walker and Charles Peterson to continue as Chair and Vice-Chair. Chris Garcia seconded these nominations.

Decision: The Forum approved the appointment of Elizabeth Walker and Charles Peterson as Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively.

Forum Member Policies: Yvette presented the newly drafted Forum *Member Policies*. The policies include a description of the Forum's mission and purpose, staff support, attendance requirements, and decision-making process. The policies were developed to provide an overview of the Forum's purpose, procedures and participation requirements for new representatives. They also strengthen some of the attendance guidelines. Councilmember Lambert suggested two text edits.

Decision: The Forum approved the Member Policies with the text edits.

Public Comment

Bill Knutsen, KCD Board member, announced that the KCD is holding an election for an open Board of Supervisor seat. There are four candidates and the election will be conducted electronically through March 15. For information, see the KCD website (<http://www.kingcd.org/>)

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be March 16, 2011, 7:00-9:00 pm at the Meadowbrook Interpretive Center.

Attachment A: Agenda Item 5 - Salmon Plan Five-Year Status Report: Follow-up Discussion Topics

As a follow up to the Forum’s November 2010 presentation on the draft Snoqualmie Watershed Salmon Plan Five-Year Status Report, staff have identified a list of potential topics for future Forum meetings in 2011. The suggested topics are the product of discussions with Forum jurisdiction staff and the feedback received during the November meeting. At the February 9 meeting we will prioritize the suggested topics for subsequent follow up, refine the scope and purpose of future discussions, and identify any additional topics that should be placed on the Forum’s 2011 work plan.

Topic & rationale	Forum Follow Up		
	Further Study	Develop Response Alternatives	None - Updates only
<p>1. Addressing insufficient progress toward restoration goals</p> <p>The report showed that progress toward the 10-year habitat restoration milestones in the plan has fallen short of expectations in many geographic areas and for several project types. This is the result of many factors, most of all the lack of adequate state and federal funding for restoration. However, progress is also the product of other factors that can be influenced by the Snoqualmie Watershed Forum, such as ranking criteria within the KCD grant programs; adjacent landowner concerns; where and how we’re investing our time and resources to support project development with basin partners; and local permitting hurdles. These factors might be handled as a single large discussion topic, or multiple sub-topics.</p>			
<p>2. Evaluating effectiveness of local regulations and their enforcement</p> <p>The draft status report presentation included a brief summary of a King County DDES study to assess compliance with regulations to protect the environment during the course of single-family home construction. A Forum member suggested that perhaps a similar analysis of city regulations and/or other state and county regulations would be a useful complement to this effort. Subsequent discussions with valley jurisdiction staff produced potential avenues for pursuing what is inherently a sensitive topic. Regulations and their enforcement differ substantially between jurisdictions. Initial ideas include: self-auditing by jurisdictions to assess compliance/enforcement; survey of responsible officials in each jurisdiction to understand similarities and differences in regulatory approach; and/or a possible workshop where responsible officials could share and possibly strategize on different approaches and best practices.</p>			
<p>3. Evaluating the quality and effectiveness of protection of rural and resource lands</p> <p>The presentation outlined the different levels of land protection achieved throughout the rural portions of the watershed through ownership, regulations, and incentives. We saw that most forest lands in the upper watershed are protected from development through transfer of development rights, conservation easements and through regulatory requirements guiding forestry practices. Rural residential areas are primarily targeted with tools such as forest stewardship plans and current use taxation programs. And farmers are required to abide by regulations like the Livestock Ordinance and other requirements that often include developing and implementing farm plans. The report did not attempt to ascertain the level of compliance with the requirements associated with each of these tools and the quality of land protection that resulted from them. This might present an interesting topic for Forum discussion with the groups that deliver these various programs.</p>			

Topic & rationale	Forum Follow Up		
	Further Study	Develop Response Alternatives	None - Updates only
<p>4. Habitat restoration and protection in Snoqualmie Valley cities</p> <p>The draft status report focused primarily on County programs for habitat protection (e.g., policies, regulations, incentives) but did not provide similar discussion of the status, progress and challenges within cities. Cities may benefit from learning about different approaches that could be utilized within the context of incorporated areas. Topics might include the integration of restoration objectives into public works projects; environmental incentive programs for cities.</p>			
<p>5. Restoration and agriculture</p> <p>The vast majority of the Snoqualmie River floodplain below the falls is within the Agricultural Production District, and a subset of properties within the APD are also enrolled in the Farmland Protection Program. As explained in the report, the APD is a land-use overlay that emphasizes agricultural use, but includes both private and public lands. For example, the Chinook Bend restoration site and the WDFW Stillwater Wildlife Area are within the APD. FPP is a property-specific designation that requires the vast majority of a property to remain in active agriculture in perpetuity and all non-farm development rights have been extinguished. The FPP is a voluntary program administered by King County. Many of the highest-priority restoration sites in the watershed are in agricultural areas. In recent years, tension between restoration needs and agricultural land use has risen in many Puget Sound watersheds. In some cases restoration projects have been strongly opposed by broader agricultural interests, despite the presence of a willing agricultural land owner. King County has established formal procedures to evaluate and minimize the effects of restoration projects on agricultural lands. The ability to implement large restoration efforts in the highest priority areas will hinge on our ability to develop collaborative solutions that recognize the needs of agriculture and salmon recovery in the Snoqualmie Watershed.</p>			
<p>6. Effectiveness of riparian planting and invasive weed removal projects</p> <p>Riparian planting and invasive plant removal projects represent a substantial fraction of the projects that are funded by the Forum through the KCD grant program [by number of projects if not by total dollar amount due to the size and cost of larger-scale restoration projects]. Are these projects effective in achieving their stated objectives? How can the Forum ensure that funded projects are applying best practices for the type of site and project in question? Are the current requirements for maintenance sufficient to ensure success?</p>			