

Snoqualmie Watershed Forum
MEETING SUMMARY
July 18, 2012
Project Tour 5:00-7:00 pm / Meeting 7:00-9:00 pm
Preston Community Center, Preston, WA

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Elizabeth Walker	City of Duvall Councilmember, Forum Chair
Charles Peterson	City of Snoqualmie Councilmember, Forum Vice-Chair
Erin Chamberlain	City of Carnation Councilmember
Jason Walker	City of Duvall Councilmember (Alternate)
Ryan Kolodejchuk	City of North Bend Councilmember
Cindy Spiry	Snoqualmie Tribe (Alternate)
David Burger	Stewardship Partners, Non-profit Representative
Jessica Saavedra	King Conservation District (Alternate)
Kent Renno	Citizen Representative
Isaac Cunningham	Citizen Representative

PROJECT TOUR

The Forum held the annual Snoqualmie Watershed project tour in the Fall City area. Twenty-six participants took part in the tour which featured the following projects:

Sol to Seed Farm Riparian Restoration Project: David Burger and Deborah Oaks (Stewardship Partners) led a tour of a riparian restoration project at the Sol to Seed Farm along the lower Snoqualmie River. The 300 foot long buffer planting is linked to four other properties (including Jubilee and Changing Seasons Farms) connecting over a 2 mile buffer planting project along the river. Installed in 2009, the Sol to Seed project is a successful example of riparian restoration that did not experience significant implementation challenges - such as beaver damage and weed fabric getting covered in flood-borne sediment - that were found at other sites in the reach. This project showcases a successful non-profit/private landowner partnership where the needs of fish habitat restoration and working farms were met.

Upper Carlson Floodplain Reconnection Project: Todd Hurley, Rick Reinlasoder, and Kollin Higgins (King County DNRP) presented the proposed Upper Carlson Floodplain Reconnection Project. This project will restore floodplain habitat along the mainstem Snoqualmie River by setting back a levee/revetment that limits the river's connection with the floodplain. The project would remove approximately 1,600 feet of the Upper Carlson Levee and a place a setback revetment of approximately 1,475 feet along Neal Rd SE. The site is located on King County's Fall City Natural Area at rivermile 33 of the Snoqualmie River downstream of Fall City and within the Agriculture Production District. The team described the project design, initial outreach to adjacent landowners and the potential for a broader "corridor" project throughout this reach of the river. The project is currently in the design phase and could move to construction as early as 2014.

MEETING PROCEEDINGS

Introductions and Minutes

- The Forum approved the May 16, 2012 meeting summary without changes.

Updates and Announcements

Janne Kaje, acting Watershed Coordinator, gave the following updates:

- *Changes in Staffing:* Yvette Lizee-Smith has accepted an interim position as the Regional Partnerships Unit Supervisor. The unit includes the three WRIA teams, the groundwater program and the basin stewards. Yvette will still be involved in our watershed at a different level. To fill Yvette's vacancy, Janne has been appointed to serve as the acting Snoqualmie Watershed Coordinator until at least November and likely until May 2013. Perry Falcone and Janne will be developing a backfill plan to ensure that Forum priorities keep moving forward without interruption.
- *Restoration Project Construction Season:* Beginning on August 13, King County crews will mobilize at three restoration projects sites in the Snoqualmie Valley near Carnation. The McElhoe Pearson project will reconnect the Snoqualmie River to a high quality wetland to provide off-channel rearing and flood refuge habitat for juvenile salmon. Crews will also return to the Chinook Bend and Lower Tolt projects to remove remnants of levees that have been unearthed by river flows in the past few years. Rock material from both projects will be utilized at the McElhoe site to construct a setback road-protection levee. More about McElhoe Pearson: <http://edit.kingcounty.gov/environment/wlr/sections-programs/river-floodplain-section/capital-projects/mcelhoe-pearson.aspx>
- *Salmon Recovery Funding Board:* King County is on track to receive approximately \$275,000 toward habitat acquisitions in the high-priority San Souci reach of the Tolt River. Final approval will come at the end of 2012, but the project ranked highest in the Snohomish basin ranking process. Other projects likely to be funded are in the mainstem Skykomish and the nearshore area between Everett and Mukilteo.
- *Sound Salmon Solutions grant:* Congratulations to Sound Salmon Solutions for an Ecology grant award of roughly \$109,000 for riparian projects in the lower Snoqualmie!
- *2012 Flood District Cooperative Watershed Management Grants:* The list of approved projects from all three WRIAs will be presented to the Flood Control District Executive Committee on Monday, July 23. Final approval of the grants will be made by the Flood District Executive Committee as early as August but potentially later.

Jessica Saavedra, King Conservation District (KCD), provided an update on the KCD activities:

- On July 6th, the Hammond lawsuit against King County and the KCD was settled and 2012 KCD funding was released to the district to use for programs and activities including the opening of the 2012 KCD member jurisdictional grant program.
- KCD is on track to present a proposed system of rates and charges to the King County Council by August 1. The district has also been developing a proposal regarding the

disposition of unspent jurisdiction grant and WRIA grant funds. KCD will hold a public meeting on the KCD proposal on July 23rd at 6 pm at their offices in Renton.

Forum Business – Part 1

- Janne provided an overview of the 2013 Forum Budget and ILA cost share. There were no changes from the budget discussed at the Forum's May meeting. The Forum may have savings in 2012 and 2013 due to staffing changes but the extent of the savings is not yet known.
- The budget assumes that all four cities are committed to contributing 10% of their respective cost shares to supplement the Forum's staffing grant.

Decision: The Forum approved the 2013 budget.

2012 Flood District Cooperative Watershed Management (CWM) Grant Allocation

Perry Falcone provided an overview of the 2012 CWM grant process and recommended grants.

CWM Funding Allocation: In May 2012, the King County Flood Control District approved \$600,000 in Cooperative Watershed Management Grant (CWMG) funding intended for the Snoqualmie Watershed Forum's annual grant program. The CWMG funding was allocated to the Forum due to the loss of 2012 King Conservation District assessment funding that had funded the Forum's grant program from 1998 to 2011. The Flood District requested a streamlined grant review process in order to move projects forward to implementation quickly and to secure the Forum's grant recommendations at Flood District July 23rd Executive Committee meeting. In order to meet the Flood District deadline, the Forum has forwarded the preliminary grant recommendation to the Flood District. Any changes to the project list by the Forum will be forwarded to the Flood District after tonight's Forum meeting.

2012 CWM Grant Review Process: Twenty (20) applications were submitted on June 14th for CWM funding. The Snoqualmie Watershed Forum's Project Review Committee met on June 25th to review the grants and develop a grant recommendation for the Forum. The Project Review Committee includes one representative from each Forum member jurisdiction and one ILA staff representative. The committee used project ranking criteria based on the Forum's Funding Priorities (approved by the Forum in January 2012). The committee process included a detailed review of applications, project ranking and scoring based on adopted criteria, and development of a funding recommendation. Even though the grant schedule and review process was streamlined, the committee performed detailed grant review and developed a thoroughly vetted grant recommendation. The Forum typically uses this recommendation as guidance along with the other application materials provided to make a final grant allocation decision

Perry Falcone provided a presentation on the 2012 CWM grants and committee recommendation. The Project Review Committee ranked the projects into five (5) tiers from low to high. The committee recommended full funding for the two (2) high priority projects, full funding for six of the medium high priority projects and partial funding for one of the medium priority projects. See Attachment A (below) for the final list of projects that were recommended for funding.

Grant Ranking Tiers:

1. High priority – Projects address the highest priority salmon recovery or watershed goals.
2. Medium High priority – Projects address an important salmon recovery or watershed goal.
3. Medium priority – Projects address a salmon recovery or watershed goal but there was insufficient funding to support these projects (e.g., numerous riparian/invasive control projects)
4. Medium Low priority – Projects were too expensive to fund and/or were lower priority projects in relation to project higher on the list. With some project revisions these project could be ready for funding in 2013.
5. Low priority – Projects had significant committee questions or concerns that need to be resolved.

Discussion:

Forum members discussed long term maintenance costs of funded projects. Perry reminded the Forum that under the KCD grant guidelines and in this year's CWM program, grants were expected to include 3-5 years of project maintenance as described in the Forum Funding Principles. Members expressed concern about 'unanticipated' problems at project sites that cannot be adequately addressed without additional funding. This seems to have occurred with various basin projects in the past. Janne noted that the presentation to follow focuses precisely on the issue of improving project planning and budgeting, in part by understanding site context and the types of challenges that are likely to occur. In addition, it is very difficult to require more than 3-5 years of maintenance as part of a grant because funding entities typically require grants to be completed and closed by a specific point in time.

Decision: The Forum approved the Project Review Committee's recommendation (see Attachment A) to be forwarded to the Flood District for final approval.

Riparian Planting Project Performance Improvement Project

Janne Kaje presented a KCD funded effort to evaluate performance of planting projects in the Snoqualmie Valley. The project reviewed over 20 riparian restoration projects out of 90 projects implemented in the last ten years.

The goals the project are to learn from more than a decade of on-the-ground projects; improve project planning, design and budgeting; create tools to assist project sponsors to anticipate project challenges based on site context; and create tools to help the Forum and KCD to better evaluate project proposals. The projects were categorized by sponsor, waterway size, project age, physical context, flow factors and types of invasive weeds to determine if lessons could be learned from these projects. Janne applied an analytical framework called "failure modes and effects analysis", commonly used by engineers to evaluate construction projects. Some of the key findings included:

- Understanding site context including surrounding areas is critical to project planning
- Understanding flow velocity, inundation patterns and influence of flood debris is critical for maximizing plant survival in riparian areas
- Presence of bank armoring can reduce planting success
- Bank-face plantings can be difficult, expensive & dangerous

- Though beavers can decimate planting sites, there are strategies to reduce beaver damage. Beaver activity may also enhance stream habitat.
- Culverts and backwater effects can be a challenge in smaller stream systems and should be addressed in project planning and design.
- There are different types of challenges to project success associated with public vs private ownership of project sites
- Develop robust project budgets based on clear understanding of potential project failure modes
- Beware temptation of using extra money to initiate additional work without an adequate budget to perform that work completely with all required maintenance.

The Forum provided positive feedback on the project and asked that it be disseminated widely to partners once complete. Janne also described some new strategies including selecting plant species that beaver avoid and the use of cotton geo-textiles that can be left on site rather than plastic weed fabric. Janne will provide a 30-day review of the document, likely beginning in August, to Forum members and project partners. The report will be finalized in the Fall of 2012 and project planning tools will be developed by early 2013 in time for any potential 2013 grant rounds.

Forum Business – Part 2

Janne provided a brief overview of upcoming Forum meeting topics. Due to the large number of potential topics such as KCD Assessment Proposal, Flood District-WRIA funding discussions and adoption of the King County Flood Plan, Janne asked the Forum if they would either prefer extra meeting or a longer meeting in 2012 to accommodate these topics. The Forum took a quick read of the members and the general consensus was a preference toward extension of existing meetings rather than adding more meetings.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Next Meeting

The September 19 Forum meeting will be held at the Snoqualmie Tribal Offices from 7:00 to 9:00 pm.

2012 CWM Grant Program: Forum Recommendation

PRC RANK	Project Name	Project Sponsor	Match Funds	CWM Request	Forum Recomm.
High	(1) Snoqualmie at Fall City - Upper Carlson Floodplain Reconnection	King County	\$2,068,207	\$200,000	✓
High	(2) 2013 Snoqualmie Restoration and Project Assistance Program	King County-on behalf of the Cities	\$39,690	\$98,000	✓
Med-High	(3) Snoqualmie Riverfront Reach Acquisition	City of Snoqualmie	\$173,000	\$72,000	✓
Med-High	(4) Stillwater Wildlife Area Riparian Restoration	Ducks Unlimited	\$735,110	\$65,889	✓
Med-High	(5) Tolt River Priority Acquisitions	King County	\$250,000	\$50,000	✓
Med-High	(6) Kimball Creek Water Quality Improvement Project Phase 2	Snoqualmie Tribe	\$975	\$8,131	✓
Med-High	(7) McCormick Park Cooperative Maintenance Project	Sound Salmon Solutions	\$31,500	\$29,990	✓
Med-High	(8) Snoqualmie Restoration Initiative	Stewardship Partners	\$60,400	\$44,000	✓
Med.	(9) Tollgate Farm E. Bookend NW Parcel Weed Control Project: Phase 2	City of North Bend	\$12,000	\$40,000	Partial funding-\$31,990

Total \$600,000