

Snoqualmie Watershed Forum
MEETING SUMMARY
November 19, 2014
6:30-9:00 pm
Snoqualmie City Hall, Snoqualmie, WA

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jason Walker	City of Duvall Councilmember, City of Duvall, Chair
Charles Peterson	City of Snoqualmie Councilmember
Lee Grumman	City of Carnation Councilmember
Becky Chaney	Citizen Representative
Kent Renno	Citizen Representative
Micah Wait	Wild Fish Conservancy, Non-profit Representative
Bill Knutsen	King Conservation District

MEETING PROCEEDINGS

Prior to the beginning of the meeting, Forum members, staff and guests expressed their gratitude to Bill Knutsen, Kent Renno and Micah Wait for their years of service to the Snoqualmie Valley community as members of the Forum.

I. Updates and Announcements

- Jason Walker, Forum Chair called the meeting to order and welcomed members as well as invited guests.
- Perry Falcone, Project Coordinator, introduced Denise DiSanto, the new Lead Entity Coordinator at Snohomish County, who fills the position vacated in early 2013 by Tim Walls. Denise is in charge of coordinating the activities of the Snohomish Forum, including the WRIA grant rounds funded through the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) and the Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) fund.
- Perry introduced Polly Freeman, Communications Specialist, as a new member of the Snoqualmie Watershed Forum staff team. Polly will be working on outreach materials to support the interlocal agreement (ILA) renewal process, as well as other project and program-related outreach. Polly announced plans to launch a new watershed photography poster contest in 2015, much like the one held in 2005 to produce the current watershed poster featuring Mount Si.
- King County received a BRAVO Award from the State Salmon Recovery Funding Board for its strategic property acquisition efforts along the Tolt River. The Forum has supported these acquisitions as well, which are focused on the acquisition of flood-prone properties and open space.
- The Forum approved the September 17th meeting summary without changes.

- Cindy Spiry announced the groundbreaking for the new tribal administrative offices, located at the former site of the Snoqualmie Valley Hospital. Future Forum meetings will be held at that location when hosted by the tribe.
- The City of Snoqualmie’s proposal to the Department of Ecology’s Floodplains by Design grant program successfully made it on to the list of projects to be proposed for funding to the State Legislature. The Snoqualmie Riverfront Project (presented to the Forum in September) builds on prior investments by the Forum to support buyouts of flood prone properties along the mainstem Snoqualmie and to restore ecological functions to the floodplain. The Snoqualmie proposal is the only city-led proposal in the entire state to make the projected \$50M program funding level, a great testament to the quality of the city’s proposal, which was developed with support from Forum staff.
- 2014 Forum Highlights: Perry summarized Forum accomplishments for 2014 (see handout). Key highlights:
 - With this year’s Cooperative Management Grant round, the Forum has directed funding for nearly 200 projects totaling \$8.7M since 1998. The 2014 round featured fourteen projects that included acquisition, restoration, project design, assessments and education efforts. The vast majority of funding was awarded to on-the-ground restoration efforts.

II. Snoqualmie Watershed Forum Inter-local Agreement (ILA)

Polly Freeman shared draft information sheets, customized for each Forum member jurisdiction, to support ILA renewal discussions with elected officials and staff. The sheets summarize grants received by each jurisdiction, as well as the many services provided by Forum staff to its members, such as technical and policy support, grant writing and representation in regional forums.

Cindy Spiry (Snoqualmie Tribe) appreciated the content and organization of the information sheets and felt they would be helpful in communications with the Tribal Council.

Jason Walker noted that through Forum participation, the cities and tribe receive many benefits that may not be obvious to other officials but that have significant value. Examples include: Forum staff arranging to have King County river and floodplain experts assist in the evaluation of options for the City of Duvall’s eroding riverbank; similar support for the eroding bank at the City of Snoqualmie’s Sandy Cove Park; recent assistance with the City of Snoqualmie’s Floodplains by Design proposal; and others. Jason felt that the information sheets will serve as an effective executive summary of what Forum participation brings to its member jurisdictions.

Perry highlighted the fact that Forum participation also represents the commitment of its members to support the 2005 Snohomish Salmon Plan, developed pursuant to the federal Endangered Species Act. Each city provided letters of commitment to the salmon plan at its signing in 2005, and pledged to participate in the Snoqualmie and Snohomish Forums as a demonstration of that commitment.

III. Forum Business

NGO Alternate: Pursuant to the 2010 amendments to the ILA, the Forum created a non-governmental organization (NGO) seat on the Forum that serves for a period of two years. Moreover, it is the intention of the Forum to have different NGOs serve in that capacity and to have a designated alternate from a different organization. Micah Wait has completed his two-year term as a representative of Wild Fish Conservancy. At its September meeting, the Forum named Jennifer McKeown (Mountains to Sound Greenway) as the

NGO representative for the 2015-2016 period. Jennifer had previously served as the alternate, necessitating the selection of a new alternate.

Chris LaPointe (Stewardship Partners) introduced himself as a candidate for the seat of NGO alternate. Chris summarized the 15-year involvement of Stewardship Partners in the Snoqualmie, particularly its extensive engagement with private landowners in stewardship activities. Chris has attended many Forum meetings in the past few years and is very engaged in a variety of initiatives in the basin, including on-the-ground projects and the Snoqualmie Strategy effort led by Stewardship Partners and the Mountains to Sound Greenway.

Jason Walker moved to name Chris LaPointe the new NGO alternate for 2015-2016.

DECISION: Chris LaPointe was named the NGO alternate for the two-year term beginning in January 2015.

King County citizen seat: King County designates two citizens to the Forum, representing unincorporated parts of the basin. Kent Renno has completed his four-year term and a solicitation for new applicants was issued by the county in October. The decision regarding the citizen appointment is made by the county executive, rather than the Forum.

Three applicants for the seat introduced themselves to the Forum: Eileen Carrel, a resident of the valley near Fall City; John Velimesis, a resident of the Tolt Hill Rd. area near Carnation; and Deloa Dalby, a resident of the Lake Margaret area near Duvall. Two other applicants were unable to attend the meeting. Each applicant summarized her/his background and interest in the position. Jason Walker thanked each applicant for attending the meeting and for their interest in serving their fellow county residents on the Forum. A decision is expected from King County at the end of December or early January.

Forum Chair and vice-Chair Selection: Jason Walker explained that it was time to elect a Chair and vice-Chair for the Forum. Bryan Holloway was willing to continue but also encouraged other to volunteer for vice-Chair. Lee Grumman expressed interest in taking on the vice-Chair role of the Forum.

DECISION: The Forum elected Jason Walker to continue to serve as Chair for 2015. Lee Grumman (Councilmember Carnation) was elected to serve as vice-Chair. Jason Walker thanked Bryan Holloway (Councilmember Snoqualmie) for his service as vice-Chair during the past two years.

Local Integrating Organization (LIO): Ross Loudenback (Councilmember North Bend and former Forum member) has represented Snoqualmie valley cities on the Puget Sound Partnership's Stilly-Snohomish LIO Executive Committee, but intends to step down. Jason Walker volunteered to attend on behalf of valley cities and will follow up with CM Loudenback and CM Ockerlander (Duvall) to ensure a smooth transition.

IV. Draft Snohomish Basin Protection Plan

Beth leDoux provided an update on the Snohomish Basin Protection Plan (SBPP) project, which was most recently presented to the Forum in March 2014. The project focuses on protecting the hydrology of the watershed to ensure that we will have water in the places and times when it is needed to sustain salmon habitat. The project has potential to be very valuable not just for hydrology in the context of salmon recovery, but also for protecting groundwater supplies, managing flooding, etc. A draft report has been completed by the project team (Snohomish County, Tulalip Tribes, King County) and will be available for review in the near future.

The analysis has been performed at several different scales and the draft protection ‘toolbox’ focuses on different land uses across the basin. Different types of tools – such as parcel-scale tax incentives, regulatory tools, and acquisitions – are applicable to different land uses and the report describes a broad suite of tools that should be considered in the development of a protection strategy. The draft report has been discussed with the Snoqualmie Valley Planning Committee and other knowledgeable stakeholder groups, such as the Rural Forest Commission.

Bill Knutsen cautioned that plans like this with ambitious recommendations can scare people and that the roll out needs to be very thoughtful and open to continued input.

Jamie Glasgow (Wild Fish Conservancy) serves on the project’s Steering Committee and concurred that it is not ready for roll-out, though he feels it is a very important piece of work. The Steering Committee includes organizations like the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), US Forest Service, conservation districts, cities and the counties. In Jamie’s view, what sets this effort apart is the fact that it is not confined to political boundaries. For example, the Cherry Creek basin alone comprises federal and state forest lands, unincorporated, rural residential King County, an agricultural valley floor, as well as contributing tributaries from the City of Duvall. As a next step the tools need to be turned into meaningful strategies. Ultimately, the plan should become an addendum to the 2005 Salmon Plan through the Snohomish Forum. Jamie feels that the Forum should support this effort, recognizing that a lot of effort has gone into it. It is very valuable to have all of the tools described in one place.

Beth also noted that the City of Duvall is currently working on its own watershed planning effort utilizing some of the same technical tools as the SBPP and have found it to be very valuable. The Forum could recommend to the State to provide additional funding to support these types of efforts more broadly.

Bill Knutsen reiterated that he finds the current product a very good starting point but that the project partners need to be very open with stakeholders and the community in the way they talk about its implications.

John Velimesis suggested that the effort should lead to a formal publication. He noted several similar efforts in other parts of the country (Charlotte, Atlanta, Louisville) that have experienced a lot of pushback at the outset, but are roughly 10-years ahead of this effort.

Charles Peterson noted that some of the proposed tools can be very expensive for cities to implement.

Jason inquired if it is possible to generate a “live” GIS-based map of protection tools that are currently being applied.

Regarding easements as a protection tool, Eileen Carrel noted that it would have cost her \$40,000 to set up an easement through the Cascade Land Conservancy (now Forterra) on her property, so some of the tools are expensive for private landowners as well.

Perry noted that the Snohomish is the first large watershed in the state to take a major step toward a protection plan and that in some areas the main thrust of potential recommendations may be to redirect current resources to strategically advantageous areas, rather than necessarily requiring new resources.

Micah inquired if any efforts are under way to track the conversion of previously undeveloped lands in the basin. Beth noted that the WDFW has been conducting high resolution land cover change analysis throughout Puget Sound for just that purpose and that data are available. Jason Walker noted that in the city of Duvall alone, 40% of tree canopy has been lost in just the last nine years.

Jamie Glasgow strongly recommended that monitoring and analysis efforts continue to evaluate the effectiveness of regulations in protecting hydrology and other environmental assets. We need to know if current tools are working even as we consider new strategies that could be applied.

Beth will inform Forum members as the SBPP report and other products become available for review in the coming months.

V. Public Comment

Becky Chaney serves on the King County Noxious Weed Board and reported that some changes are being considered in the county's noxious weed list. Moreover, an increase in the noxious weed fee has been recommended following five years of fixed-rate funding.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be January 21 (7:00 – 9:00 pm) at the Carnation City Hall.