

Snoqualmie Watershed Forum
MEETING SUMMARY
March 18, 2009
Meeting 7:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m.
Carnation City Hall

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Elizabeth Walker	City of Duvall Councilmember, Forum Vice-Chair
Ross Loudenback	City of North Bend Councilmember
Kathy Lambert	King County Councilmember
Gary Roberts	Citizen Representative
Ray Mullen	Snoqualmie Tribe Councilmember
Cindy Spiry	Snoqualmie Tribe Alternate
Bill Knutsen	Citizen Representative

MEETING PROCEEDINGS

Introductions and Minutes

- The Forum approved the Meeting Summary from the January 21, 2009 meeting.

Announcements

- Charles Peterson is doing well after hip surgery. He is likely to return as Chair of the Forum in May. We will revisit the selection of Chair and Vice-Chair at that time.
- The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is seeking proposals for coastal habitat restoration projects under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 in an effort to jumpstart the economy, create and save several thousand jobs, and restore valuable coastal and marine habitat for fish, birds and other animals. Proposals are due by April 6, 2009. The Puget Sound Partnership is interested in coordinating salmon restoration projects and will likely provide a recommended list of projects totaling \$20-\$30M. The state's role in the process and influence over selection of projects is not yet established. Potential WRIA 7 projects include Qwuloolt Estuary Restoration (approx. \$7M), Lower Skykomish Flood Fencing and Large Woody Debris Placement (approx. \$700K), Lower Tolt River Levee Setback (approx. \$1.1M), and multiple watershed riparian restoration projects (approx. \$2M).
- On March 4th, David Irons was appointed to the KCD Board of Supervisors to fill the unexpired term of the position vacated by Matt Livengood. The term will end in May 2010. The Board is comprised of three elected supervisors and two appointed supervisors. KCD will hold an election for another open Board of Supervisors position on March 19, 2009 (see attached handout for voting locations). Bobbi Lindemulder who currently occupies the

position is not seeking reelection. Registered voters who reside within the district boundaries are eligible to vote in the election.

- The US Army Corps of Engineers held a Levee Vegetation Symposium on February 26 that was attended by nearly 300 people. The symposium was intended to begin a discussion to resolve the conflicting federal mandates related to vegetation management on Corps certified levees. Currently the Corps requires local partners to remove all mature trees along levees in order to receive federal funds for repairs. Many local partners contend that the trees actually reinforce the levee structures and that removal of trees is also contrary to other federal mandates such as protecting threatened Chinook salmon habitat. The Corps plans to update and clarify technical guidance and policies related to levee vegetation maintenance.

Update of 2010 KCD Assessment Reauthorization

Bill Knutsen, KCD Board Supervisor, provided the Forum an update on the 2010 KCD Assessment Reauthorization process. The KCD will hold six public meetings in May and June across King County to provide the public with an understanding of the KCD priorities. KCD will then provide King County Council a work plan and assessment proposal by July 31st. KCD staff will also be meeting with various groups including the watershed forums. Bill provided some of his thoughts about how the 2010 assessment will differ from previous years:

- The Snoqualmie and White Rivers receive much less funding from the KCD assessment than do WRIA 8 and 9.
- With the release of the Puget Sound Partnership (PSP) Action Agenda, the KCD is interested in broadening the scope of the watershed forum grant programs.
- The KCD recognizes that salmon recovery needs broad public support and capacity building in order to be successful. Due to a lack of funding in the rural areas, there is still a strong need for funding to transfer from the urban areas to the rural areas.
- The period of the new assessment will likely be 3 years and KCD is not likely to suggest major changes to how the funds are distributed across watersheds and jurisdictions.

Questions and Comments:

- Forum members asked Bill whether the King County Council and the Suburban Cities Association are supportive of the 2010 assessment. Bill responded that they are supportive of the reauthorization but not likely to be supportive of any major changes to the assessment.
- Elizabeth Walker commented that the PSP should not dictate how the Forum selects grants and allocates funding. She felt that PSP will have their own funding to allocate and should not try to drive local funding for PSP purposes.

2009 King Conservation District (KCD) Grant Update

Monica Walker, Forum Project Coordinator, provided an update on past KCD grant projects and an update on the upcoming Opportunity Fund grant process. Most KCD grants were on track to

be completed within the grant timelines. There would be approximately \$20,000 returned from past Forum staffing grants that would be added to the 2009 KCD Regular Round.

There were 13 grants submitted to the 2009 KCD Regular Round. These grants total approximately \$820,000 when the 2010 Forum staffing grant is added to the list. There is only \$545,000 available to allocate to these grants. The Project Review Committee has been reviewing these grants and will provide the Forum with a recommendation at the May Forum meeting.

The 2009 Opportunity Fund applications are due on March 27th. The Opportunity Fund will allocate \$200,000 to projects on private and public land to improve aquatic habitat. The Project Review Committee will review the projects and provide the Forum with a recommendation at the July Forum meeting.

Snoqualmie Targeted Stewardship Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Grant

Perry Falcone, Acting Watershed Coordinator, gave an update on a recent EPA grant awarded to King County. EPA has awarded King County \$580,000, matching \$220,000 in local funds, to implement a targeted stewardship effort in the Snoqualmie Watershed. The project will create a highly focused, community driven stewardship program in two Snoqualmie sub basins (the Raging River and Patterson Creek) at risk from development-related impacts and already showing signs of ecosystem degradation. Project goals include:

- Conduct highly focused outreach and education to private landowners about existing and new stewardship tools.
- Fund Best Management Practices (BMPs) and habitat restoration projects on private land leveraging additional grant dollars.
- Create long-term communication networks hosted by local community groups.
- Compare and evaluate results between target sub basins (the Raging River and Patterson Creek) and a control basin (Harris Creek) without the focused effort.

Questions and Comments:

- Forum members asked how long-term maintenance will be paid for if the term of the grant is only 3 to 4 years. The grant will need support from the landowners, jurisdictions and other grant funding sources to cover long-term maintenance.
- King County Councilmember Lambert would like to secure a grant like this for the Kimball Creek sub basin that has many of the same water quality problems and community needs.

Middle Fork Road Expansion Project

Janne Kaje, Forum staff, provided a briefing on the Middle Fork Snoqualmie Road project which has been discussed off and on for many years. The road is also known as Forest Rd. 29, King County Road 9899 and commonly referred to as Lake Dorothy Road. At one time (a few decades ago), the original plan was to someday provide a link between the Snoqualmie and Skykomish watersheds. That plan was abandoned long ago, but the current project plan calls for paving an approximately 11-mile section of the road from just east of North Bend to the Taylor River

junction, site of the recently completed Middle Fork Campground (Mount Baker – Snoqualmie National Forest). The key partners in the project are the U.S. Forest Service, King County (Roads Division), and the Federal Highway Administration.

The Forum has not been directly engaged in the project to date. The project would likely have both environmental costs and benefits. A more stable road prism could reduce the frequency and extent of washouts, while also offering the opportunity to significantly improve stream crossing bridges and culverts. However, road widening in close proximity to the river would likely mean additional riverbank modification and armoring, as well as a loss of riparian tree cover. As the water quality report indicated, high summer temperature is a serious issue in the Middle Fork. Potentially, mitigation activities could be linked with additional restoration actions, such as improving instream habitat, removing invasive plants, and replanting riparian areas. The project may also have other indirect effects. Improving the road would improve recreational access and promote the local recreational economy. However, the project could also promote residential development in the few remaining privately-owned areas, primarily within roughly 70 acres near Granite Creek. Since there was potential for positive and negative impacts on the watershed from the project, Janne asked what level of involvement the Forum would like staff pursue.

Questions and Comments:

- Forum members asked if the plan identified impacts to habitat from the road construction. At this time staff does not know if the habitat impacts are yet determined but could research this question. Janne mentioned that temperature is on current problem that might be exacerbated by the project.
- The Forum inquired what amount of staff time would come with various levels of staff involvement. The Forum asked how strong the support was for paving the road and which organizations were supporting this project. The Forum also asked for a presentation from someone involved in the project. The Forum also expressed interest in hearing a presentation on the potential federal Wild and Scenic designation of the Middle Fork Snoqualmie River.

Snoqualmie Watershed Forum Budget

Perry Falcone presented information regarding 2010 Interlocal Agreement cost share recalculation. Since the current Snoqualmie Interlocal Agreement (ILA) was adopted in 2005, the cost share calculation has not been updated to reflect changing population, assessed value and land area figures. This year King County will be recalculating the ILA cost share for the Forum's 2010 budget. Due to increases in population and annexations since 2005, the recalculation has shifted the cost share burden. The City of Snoqualmie showed the only increase. Under the current funding scenario in which cities utilize grant funds to cover the cost share obligation, the KCD Forum staffing grant would need to increase. The grant would need to increase \$8,077 due to the recalculation and approximately \$5,000 due to staff cost increases. The 2010 KCD Forum staffing grant would increase from \$86,500 in 2009 to approximately \$99,000 in 2010 (see agenda item 6b for details). In response to this change, the Forum could consider various internal and external funding sources to supplement the existing sources. The Forum did not have any substantive comments on this topic but did support exploring options.

Public Comments

- No public comment.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be July 15, 2009 from 5-7 PM for the project tour and 7-9 PM for the meeting in Carnation.