

Snoqualmie Watershed Forum
MEETING SUMMARY
September 16, 2009
Meeting 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.
Duvall Library – Rose Room, Duvall, WA

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Charles Peterson	City of Snoqualmie, Councilmember
Elizabeth Walker	City of Duvall Councilmember
Kathy Lambert	King County Councilmember
Ross Loudenback	City of North Bend Councilmember

PRE-MEETING PROJECT TOUR

- Prior to the meeting Dianne Brudnicki and Lara Thomas hosted a tour of the city of Duvall's Main Street Art Project. The project includes watershed-themed artwork from leading artists in the Snoqualmie Watershed – including a mural and a series of wood-carvings encasing downtown light posts. The project was coordinated by Councilmember Dianne Brudnicki. We encourage those who missed the tour to stop and see the artwork next time you are in Duvall.

MEETING PROCEEDINGS

Introductions and Minutes

- The Forum approved the July 15, 2009 meeting summary.

Announcements

Yvette provided the following announcements:

- *2009 KCD Regular Round:* KCD is requesting that applicants be up to date on past grant reporting before they're considered for new grants. Two 2009 applications are on hold due to missing reports for past grants. KCD and Forum staff are working with applicants to get the reporting in and do not expect the award delays to affect 2009 implementation.
- *2009 Opportunity Fund:* Forum staff and KCD staff have determined a process to allocate the remaining \$20,000 in the 2009 Opportunity Fund. The final allocation process is currently being considered by the Project Review Committee and the KCD Grant Subcommittee. The Forum will receive email confirmation of the committee's decision by the end of September.
- *WRIA7 Salmon Funding:* On August 9th, the Snohomish Forum approved 7 grants for a total of \$2.25 million in SRFB/PSAR funding. The list includes two projects in the Snoqualmie Watershed – the City of Seattle's Tolt River Riparian Area Restoration project (\$40,000) and King County's Snoqualmie Fall City Reach Restoration Feasibility project (\$100,000). The

SRF Board will make final grant award decisions in December 2009. If Seattle's Tolt River Riparian project is approved for SRFB funding, we will reallocate the \$36K in KCD funds awarded to it earlier this year to King County's Snoqualmie project effectiveness monitoring project (per the Forum's July 15th decision).

- *Project Work Group:* The WRIA7 Project Working Group (co-chaired by Perry) will hold a workshop for salmon habitat project implementers on October 22. Participants will help devise action strategies to address top implementation challenges identified by the group.
- *Harvest Celebration Farm Tour:* WSU Extension will be holding its 11th Annual Harvest Celebration Farm Tour on September 26th. Seven Snoqualmie Valley farms are participating in this year's tour. Farm Guides are available for those interested.
- *PSE Snoqualmie Falls Hydroelectric Project:* At its July 15 meeting, the Forum received comment from local residents who were concerned about potential flooding impacts from proposed changes to PSE's Snoqualmie Falls Hydroelectric Project. Since that meeting, concerned landowners have established a non-profit organization called Neighbors Against Flooding (NAF) and set up a website at www.neighborsagainstflooding.com. NAF also organized 3 meetings with PSE and other agencies to discuss their concerns. Yvette attended the last meeting held on Sunday September 13 in Carnation. Among points from that meeting:
 - There continues to be wide debate on the level of impact the Snoqualmie 205 project and the proposed PSE Snoqualmie Falls Project could have on downstream flooding.
 - PSE is willing to provide some level of mitigation funding (commensurate with the project impact) ideally to support downstream home elevations. PSE did not specify an amount.
 - There was discussion of creating a block fund to support home elevations in the lower valley under next year's Flood Control District budget.
 - Some participants also raised issue with the inconsistent application of "zero-rise" standards in the basin and encouraged the adoption of common standards across the watershed. Some also asked PSE to delay, reconsider or modify its Snoqualmie Falls project until impact studies could be done using more recent flow data.

King County Open Space Charter Amendment

Terry Lavender gave an overview of the King County Open Space Charter Amendment. Terry serves on the Oversight Committee for the King County Conservation Futures Tax program. She is also a citizen representative on the WRIA8 Recovery Council.

- The Open Space Charter Amendment (OSA) will be on the November ballot. It seeks to strengthen protection on selected high conservation value properties that are currently owned or held in a conservation easement by King County. Chinook Bend Natural Area is one example of a property that would receive extra protections under the OSA.
- The amendment involves no new land purchases or direct costs. Rather it would require that King County Council go through a public process and a supra-majority vote (7 of 9) before a designated property could be sold or transferred.

- Ross Loudenback asked if properties around North Bend were included on the OSA list. It was speculated that Three Forks Natural Area was on the list and possibly Meadowbrook Farm – though the latter was not definite. [*Post-meeting clarification – We have checked the list of properties under the Open Space Charter Amendment. Meadowbrook Farm is NOT on the list, as it is not a King County property. A portion of Tollgate Farm belonging to King County is on the list. Other examples include the Snoqualmie Forest, Middle Fork Snoqualmie Natural Area, Upper Raging River Forest, Chinook Bend Natural Area, Griffin Creek Natural Area, Carnation Marsh Natural Area, and Tolt River Natural Area.*]
- The full list of OSA properties is available on the Open Space Charter information site at www.openspaceamendment.org.
- Charles Peterson remarked that public access to private forest lands has been significantly reduced in recent years. Many roads are now gated or timber companies demand high access fees. If public funds have been used to protect these properties from future development, the public should also have access to them for recreation.

King Conservation District (KCD) Assessment Reauthorization

Jason Chambers (KCD Public Information Officer) gave an update on the 2010 KCD Assessment Reauthorization process and timeline.

- KCD is meeting with selected cities to discuss the 2010-2014 Assessment Plan – particularly jurisdictions that have raised strong concerns with the new proposal.
- The KCD will release its Draft 2010 Annual Work Plan and Budget in early October. They will hold four public hearings to get comment on it. Hearing dates are October 12, October 26, November 9, and November 23. The Forum is encouraged to provide comment in writing or at one of these public hearings. KCD will adopt its final 2010 plan on November 23.
- Jason was asked to confirm the breakdown of the Partnership Grants allocation. He advised that the KCD Board recently passed a resolution stating that the Partnership Grant funding would be allocated across WRIAs and jurisdictions using the same proportions as the 2006-2009 assessment.
- Jason was also asked whether the Snoqualmie Watershed grant allocation would decrease in 2010. He confirmed that all WRIA and jurisdiction grant allocations would be reduced by about 17 percent to accommodate an increase to KCD's own allocation. Under the draft 2010-2014 proposal, KCD is seeking to increase its portion of the assessment from \$3 to \$4 (of the total \$10 per parcel) to maintain current staffing levels. The increase is intended to offset a drop in revenues from the State Conservation Commission. Also the District is now fully staffed – which was not the case when the assessment was renewed in 2006.
- Charles Peterson noted that it was unfortunate that the Snoqualmie Watershed allocation would be decreasing – particularly given the high need, cost-effectiveness, and restoration potential in our watershed.

Targeted Stewardship on Raging and Patterson

Kristi McClelland, King County Forester gave an overview of King County's Targeted Stewardship Assistance Project in the Raging and Patterson Sub-basins.

- The idea for the targeted stewardship project started at the 2007 Snoqualmie Summit. Summit participants discussed the potential benefits of targeting stewardship services in selected sub-basins combined with a proactive approach to outreach, as opposed to the current model that is more opportunistic and spreads limited services thinly across the county. This idea inspired King County staff to submit an application to EPA to pilot such an approach.
- The current project is a 2-year initiative being undertaken by King County with grant funding from EPA. It is co-managed by Kristi McClelland (King County Forester) and Greg Rabourn (King County Watershed Steward). The project seeks to spread the word about stewardship practices in the Raging/Patterson sub-basins and to link interested landowners to appropriate stewardship tools, technical services, and incentive programs – depending on their needs and interests. The project will also document and share success-stories, track progress, and measure effectiveness of this geographically targeted approach to stewardship extension.
- The Raging and Patterson sub-basins were selected based on a number of considerations including their high likelihood of development, current low impervious surface, documented water quality problems and important habitat attributes. In short, they offered opportunity for preventing habitat loss and enhancing watershed conditions. Forum staff participated in the basin selection.
- This is a partnership-based initiative that will involve support (in the form of outreach, funding, project technical support, materials etc.) and extension services from a number of partners including King County, Snoqualmie Watershed Forum, King Conservation District, Partnership for Rural King County, Stewardship Partners, Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust, and Wild Fish Conservancy.
- Partnership for Rural King County (PRKC) has been hired to do outreach to local landowners and to create a “stewardship network”. PRKC members are all residents of the Snoqualmie Watershed, and many reside in the two targeted sub-basins. They are therefore well positioned to do outreach to local landowners. PRKC is currently hosting informational meetings and workshops. They're also going door-to-door to inform residents about the project and potential services available to them. As part of their preliminary efforts, PRKC is identifying Neighborhood Volunteer Leads – local residents who are currently doing stewardship on their lands (or are interested in doing so) and who would be willing to share their experience with neighbors and possibly offer demonstration sites for others to visit and learn from.
- Through the targeted stewardship project, landowners can get information, support and technical assistance for farm plans, forest plans, restoration plans, livestock fencing, natural yard care, noxious weed control, and current use taxation programs. The project also has a small amount of funding and crew days to allocate to on-the-ground projects – including \$87,000 from EPA for general projects and a \$50,000 KCD grant (awarded under the Snoqualmie Forum's 2009 Regular KCD Grant Round) for small riparian restoration projects.

- As a closing comment, Yvette added that Perry Falcone (Forum Staff) assisted with the original EPA grant application that received funding for this pilot project. Forum staff see many opportunities to work with the targeted stewardship team and to support this initiative through the opportunity fund grants, joint stewardship events, and shared research and development of web-based resources on landowners services.

Large Wood and River Safety

Janne gave an update on large wood, river recreation and current County initiatives on this issue.

- Logs and wood jams are important to river ecology and salmon recovery, but can also be hazardous to inner-tube floaters, boaters and other river users. As a result some citizen groups are advocating for modification of wood placement projects and removal of natural wood from rivers.
- Boater safety has been explicitly considered in project design since the late 1990s. In 2007-2008 King County undertook a multi-stakeholder process that fed into development of protocols for wood placement (including stakeholder input, design considerations, and monitoring requirements) and natural wood hazard response. King County also hosts an annual stakeholder meeting to review upcoming projects involving large wood and to address recreation safety concerns. No other jurisdiction in the western U.S. provides similar level of consideration for recreational safety.
- Although the existing protocols for wood placement have been in place for just over a year and seem to be working well, the County Council passed an ordinance in June 2009 that directs DNRP to develop a public rule regarding the consideration of recreational safety in projects that involve large wood. County staff, with the support of a stakeholder committee, are now undergoing a process to review and improve policies and practices related around large wood used in bank stabilization, mitigation and restoration projects.
- The ecological value and function of wood in rivers varies by location within the river channel and floodplain, and by the orientation of the wood relative to flow and sediment. Requirements to modify projects to address safety concerns have raised concerns that the ecological value of projects may become diluted.
- While the Council ordinance does not address natural wood, the County is receiving more and more requests to remove or reposition natural wood that poses a risk to recreational users, especially people floating on inner tubes who thus have very little ability to steer. This summer, the County dispatched a helicopter at a cost of roughly \$25,000 to remove and reposition logs in the Middle fork Snoqualmie near Blue Hole. Janne also pointed out that the current policy review as well as the responses to natural wood hazards are being paid for primarily through Flood District dollars.

Forum members offered the following comments.

- The forum may consider submitting a letter to King County on the issue of large wood placement and river recreation once the public rule is drafted. Members discussed the importance and lack of river safety education and encouraged that this message be incorporated

into any future comment letter. Ross Loudenback and Charles Peterson spoke highly of the River Safe program that is offered to students in the Snoqualmie/North Bend area to teach school children about river safety.

Snoqualmie Watershed Forum – 2010 Work Program

Yvette reviewed the proposed Snoqualmie Watershed Forum work program for 2010 giving particular attention to items that differ from 2009. Examples included:

- Negotiating a new Snoqualmie Watershed Forum inter-local agreement (ILA). The current ILA ends on December 31, 2010.
- Briefing and meeting with local government councils and relevant sub-committees to discuss local priorities and the types of support/services they would like included under the next ILA.
- Producing a Snoqualmie Watershed Report Card showing mid-term progress against the watershed's 10-year habitat targets.
- Conducting technical analysis and/or field surveys around steelhead usage, fish barrier priorities, and SF Skykomish projects to help coordinate identification and prioritization of the next series of capital projects in the Snoqualmie Watershed.
- Increasing KCD and Forum dialogue on shared vision and collaboration, including possibly hosting joint meetings and a watershed tour for KCD board members.
- Providing technical assistance to local governments to help develop projects in their boundaries.
- Coordinating Shoreline Master Program (SMP) local government meetings/workshops with King County and DOE to assist cities in preparing their own SMP updates. Supporting other local government outreach and planning priorities to meet water-resource requirements.
- Supporting implementation of 1-2 water quality action strategies in Ames, Cherry, Kimball and/or Patterson Sub-basins.
- Helping to develop the Snohomish Basin monitoring plan with an aim of ensuring Snoqualmie-based monitoring priorities are included.

Decision: The Forum approved the 2010 Work Program.

Public Comment

- No public comment.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be Wednesday, November 18 from 7:00-9:00 pm in Snoqualmie. We have tentatively booked the Snoqualmie Police Station since the City Hall will not be ready. We are investigating larger venues and will confirm the final location when the meeting package goes out.