

Snoqualmie Watershed Forum
MEETING SUMMARY
May 18, 2011
Meeting 6:30-9:00 pm
Preston Community Center, Preston

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Elizabeth Walker	City of Duvall Councilmember, Forum Chair
Charles Peterson	City of Snoqualmie Councilmember, Forum Vice-Chair
Jim Berger	City of Carnation Councilmember
Chris Garcia	City of North Bend Councilmember
Kathy Lambert	King County Councilmember
David Burger	Stewardship Partners, Non-profit Representative
Kent Renno	Citizen Representative - Unincorporated King County
Allyson Schrier	Citizen Representative - Unincorporated King County

MEETING PROCEEDINGS

Introductions and Minutes

Councilmember Elizabeth Walker asked if there were changes to the March 16 meeting summary. Jessica Saavedra (King Conservation District) requested a correction to the minutes to clarify the amount of funds returned to KCD from the 2009 Snoqualmie Outreach and Capacity Building Program. While there is an unused balance of \$15,066.23, the District withheld 10% of the grant award until project completion, so the amount being returned to KCD is \$6,416.23 (vs \$15,066.23). The Forum approved the meeting summary with Jessica's requested change incorporated.

Updates and Announcements

Flood Control District funding: Yvette reminded the Forum about the King County Flood Control District's (FCD) recent efforts to buy out the levy capacity of other taxing districts (including several small fire districts) to cope with the aggregate property tax limit rules defined under state law. Absent the buy down, the FCD, as the most junior taxing district, would have had to forego its entire tax collections this year. On May 5, Gov. Gregoire signed into law EHB 1969 that creates an exemption from the aggregate property tax cap for flood control districts that are coextensive with counties. The new law provides greater funding certainty to the FCD, which is critically important to Snoqualmie Valley residents.

Puget Sound Partnership (PSP) Local Integrating Organization: Yvette summarized recent developments regarding the structure of a proposed Local Integrating Organization (LIO) for the Snohomish Basin. Morgan Schneider of PSP briefed the Forum on this topic at its February 2011 meeting. At that meeting, the Forum authorized staff to work with a small task group to brainstorm optional structures for the Snohomish Basin LIO. Since then, Snohomish County Councilmember Dave Somers has elevated the LIO discussion from the staff level to a higher level discussion involving senior county management and elected officials. Snohomish County has proposed combining the Stillaguamish and Snohomish basins under a single LIO. Discussions are on-going, and have included participation by Christie True (Director, King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks), Elizabeth Walker (Snoqualmie Watershed Forum Chair), managers from King County's

Water and Land Resources Division along with Snohomish County counterparts and leadership from Tulalip and Stillaguamish Tribes. More information will be available in July.

Snoqualmie Temperature TMDL (Ralph Svrjcek, Ecology): Ralph Svrjcek provided a brief summary of the principal findings in the recently completed Snoqualmie River Temperature Total Maximum Daily Load report. The report calls for increasing shade along the river and its many tributaries through extensive tree plantings to address high summer temperatures that exceed state standards and can be harmful to fish. The report also addresses permitted point sources (such as wastewater treatment plants), but these are considered minor sources of impairment. The report is out for public comment with a deadline of June 17. Councilmember Lambert expressed concern that agricultural landowners would be required to plant large buffers to help shade streams and the mainstem river, and that this would harm farm productivity. Ralph explained that tributary streams can be shaded by much smaller buffers than what is needed along the mainstem, and also noted that the report's recommendations regarding planting are voluntary and not regulatory. Councilmember Lambert requested a follow up briefing on the TMDL from Forum staff and/or Mr. Svrjcek [*Mr. Svrjcek subsequently held a briefing with Councilmember Lambert and her staff*].

Fall City River Float Task Force (Allyson Schrier): Allyson Schrier described the unsuccessful efforts of the Fall City Taskforce to secure a grant from the Puget Sound Partnership EcoNet grant program, which is focused on funding media oriented outreach and communication efforts. The taskforce is a partnership of several organizations, including the Fall City Park District, Partnership for Rural King County, Boy Scouts, Friends of the Trail, Washington Dept of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), King County Solid Waste and Water & Land Resources Divisions, and the Snoqualmie Indian Tribe. The taskforce goal is to address the problems of trash and human waste associated with the massive crowds that float the river near Fall City on hot summer days. Currently there are very few resources to address the problem which has grown exponentially in recent years, largely through social networking. The project includes outreach and education efforts, as well as on-the-ground improvements, such as trash cans and potentially a public restroom. Councilmember Lambert's office has helped to produce a video about river stewardship and safety to support the effort. The County Executive has reportedly allocated \$10,000 to fund a design charrette for a new public restroom at Fall City (as a potential future addition to the Park). Councilmember Garcia asked the taskforce to provide materials that the cities could distribute via websites, TV or utility bills. Allyson explained that the project is moving forward even without EcoNet support, but that some project elements are currently unfunded, including critical outreach elements.

Snoqualmie Restoration Strategy – Subcommittee Report

Janne briefed the Forum on the results of the first subcommittee meeting to address shortfalls in restoration progress. The subcommittee was formed as a result of discussions at the March 2011 meeting. Subcommittee members include Elizabeth Walker, Jim Berger, Derek Young and David Burger. The subcommittee discussed in detail many of the challenges to meeting restoration goals in various parts of the watershed. The group discussed three items in some depth:

- *Raising funds through local businesses:* Most restoration work is currently funded via grants. Companies based in or near the Snoqualmie Valley may represent a largely untapped resource. David Burger described successful efforts to engage larger regional employers (such as Boeing, Starbucks and Microsoft) in restoration activities. The group discussed the challenges and tradeoffs between targeting smaller local firms vs. large regional employers. Companies are most likely to support projects (through in-kind volunteer labor or cash donations) that are

highly visible to the public. Thus, these sources are likely suitable for certain types of projects and not others.

- *Coordinated initiatives among non-profit organizations:* Many non-profit organizations are active in the watershed. One motivation for creating a non-profit seat on the Forum was to encourage greater interaction and collaboration among non-profit groups. The subcommittee agreed that this is a fruitful area for future discussion. David Burger will lead this effort with staff support.
- *Cherry Creek Restoration:* One of the most important tributaries in the basin for salmon recovery is Cherry Creek, but very little has been accomplished in terms of on-the-ground restoration. Several years of studies, planning and collaboration have led to project designs by Wild Fish Conservancy that address high restoration priorities, but the projects have been stymied by Diking District opposition due to concerns about potential drainage impacts. The subcommittee agreed to explore opportunities for facilitating progress in the sub-basin, but requested that staff provide thorough background materials to the subcommittee so that Forum members better understand the history of Cherry Creek efforts and issues that concern the Diking District.

KCD Grant Regular Round

A key annual decision for the Forum is the approval of the grant ranking committee's recommendation for funding under the KCD Regular Round. Perry Falcone described the grant application and evaluation process and reviewed the allocation of KCD assessment funds among watershed grant programs, jurisdiction grants and KCD's internal programs. Unlike most previous years, the total amount requested this year is just below the amount available. Thus, projects do not need to be rejected due to shortage of funds, but must still meet all relevant grant criteria. Perry reminded the Forum that following the Forum's recommendation, the grants must still be approved by the KCD Board. Money will likely be available to grantees by late 2011 or early 2012.

The grant ranking is based on two categories of criteria: "Benefit to Salmon and Watershed Health" and "Certainty of Success". The Benefits category focuses primarily on the ecological merits of the project as well as its consistency with salmon plan priorities. The Certainty category focuses on the selected approach, sequencing of projects, stewardship, landowner support, cost and other factors. The evaluation process includes a detailed review of applications, suggestion of grant revisions, project presentations by applicants, individual scoring of the projects based on adopted criteria, analysis of scoring results and development of a funding recommendation.

Nine projects were evaluated as part of the 2011 Regular Round. They are summarized here in rank-order from highest to lowest scoring project:

- 1) Raging River Knotweed Control Phase 3. Continue on-going effort by Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust to control knotweed along the Raging River. Phase 3 will likely control 15 acres of knotweed and replant native plants downstream of I-90. MTSGT reports that there are only a small number of private property "hold outs" who are not interested in weed eradication on their property.
- 2) Upper Waterwheel Creek Restoration Design. Multifaceted project proposal from Wild Fish Conservancy to design a comprehensive solution for upper Waterwheel Creek's fish passage barriers, degraded stream habitat and alluvial fan sedimentation issues.
- 3) Lower Tolt River Riparian Restoration at Girl Scout Camp River Ranch. Stilly-Snohomish Fishery Enhancement Task Force project to control invasive weeds along the lower Tolt River.

Replanting of 2 acres of riparian area and under planting 3 acres under existing deciduous forest. The Task Force has been working in the Tolt basin with other partners and landowners, including the City of Seattle.

- 4) Snoqualmie Watershed Priority Fish Passage Project Design. King County project to develop designs for at least two priority fish passage barriers, targeted for lower Canyon and Harris Creeks, based on a recent fish passage assessment conducted for the County by Wild Fish Conservancy. Mary Maier (King County) explained that the assessment is almost complete and that the grant will not be submitted to KCD until the specific project sites have been identified.
- 5) Snoqualmie Mainstem and Cherry Creek Bank Restoration. Stilly-Snohomish Fisheries Enhancement Task Force effort to control invasive weeds along lower Snoqualmie River adjacent to the mouth of Cherry Creek. Plantings will be approx. 35 feet wide and total of 3 acres. WDFW is a partner in this project. The project is a component of a larger feasibility study that has been submitted to the Salmon Recovery Funding Board.
- 6) Maintenance of Snoqualmie Restoration Sites. Stewardship Partners proposal to perform maintenance of existing projects that are more than 3 years old and that experienced unforeseen site damage. The goal is to work on at least five private landowner sites.
- 7) 2011-13 Snoqualmie Valley Watershed Education and Stewardship Project. Nature Vision seeks funding to conduct a 2 year educational program for school children including 40 classroom programs and 4 “blue team” stewardship projects. The Forum has funded this effort in the past and has urged the organization to seek other sources of funding. Nature Vision (with help from Forum staff) have secured a few small grants (e.g., REI), but these alone are insufficient to maintain the program. The goal of the request is to secure base funding that can be used to seek matching funds from other sources.
- 8) Three Forks Natural Area Meadowbrook Slough Restoration Phase 3. The City of Snoqualmie proposes to continue on-going effort to restore Meadowbrook Slough. Phase 3 will control invasive plants and replant approximately 3 more acres.
- 9) Tollgate Farm E. Bookend NW Parcel Weed Control Project. North Bend, working with the MTSGT proposes to continue work to restore Tollgate Farm Bookend property including removal of a minimum of 8 acres of invasive weeds. Future planting phase will follow.

Details regarding request amounts, sponsors and project locations can be found in Attachment A.

Questions from the Forum:

Charles Peterson noted that it appeared Nature Vision (Grant #7) had sought external funding as recommended by the Forum, but that not much had turned up. Yvette clarified that this is the case, and that it is very difficult to find funding for outreach and education. One possible future solution would be to bundle the education program with one or more on-ground restoration projects being implemented by other partners. This would require pairing Nature Vision with other delivery groups or building in the school education and blue team program as an element of their restoration projects and applications.

Kathy Lambert asked if culverts were going to be cleaned of sediment as part of any of the grants, and if so, how many. Perry replied that the Waterwheel Creek (Grant #2) project includes assessment and design for some culverts that are passage barriers to fish and that often such culverts also lack capacity

to pass sediment. He also noted that the King County project may include culverts that experience sediment accumulation, but that rectifying impaired fish passage is the priority in the grant.

In reference to the Stewardship Partners maintenance grant (Grant #6), Elizabeth Walker noted that the Forum has funded these efforts in the past and has requested more direct inclusion of adaptive management to reduce the need for unanticipated maintenance after grant funds have already been expended. David Burger noted that the reason a project requires additional maintenance varies greatly on a site-by-site basis, whether due to flood damage, beavers or other factors. Perry added that as part of the Forum's 2011 grant from KCD, staff will be assessing the success of past planting projects to identify sites needing corrective actions and key lessons that can be shared with all project sponsors.

Regarding the King County fish passage grant (Grant #4), Kent Renno urged the project sponsor to utilize the proposed Canyon Creek culvert site as an opportunity to engage the Alderra Golf Club and its members in the restoration effort. Kent also asked Perry to confirm that the amount earmarked for professional services in the North Bend Tollgate Farm project (Grant #9) is intended to fund participation by MTSGT [*Perry confirmed this was correct*]. He also expressed his strong support as an educator for the Nature Vision project (Grant #7).

Jim Berger noted that the design costs for the King County culvert project seemed vastly different from the waterwheel project. Perry noted that the King County project may include sites with multiple fish passage barriers at a single location, such as the Canyon Creek site, and also noted that the Waterwheel Creek project is more focused on identifying potential suites of solutions rather than producing construction-ready designs.

Decision: The Forum unanimously supported the project review committee's recommendation to fund all nine projects under the KCD Regular Round. See Attachment A for final grant recommendations.

In a separate decision, the Forum discussed the option of providing leftover funds from the grant round to the Fall City Taskforce project to help this important initiative. The estimated amount available is \$5,870, though additional funds may be available once the Forum's 2009 grant balance (discussed under opening announcements) is returned. Perry explained that funds may not be available until late fall, but that sponsors can charge against a grant as soon as it has been formally approved by the KCD Board. Jessica Saavedra (KCD) explained that money could potentially be made available sooner if the project were funded through "returned" dollars from prior grant years.

Action: Staff were asked to explore the possible proposal and to report back to the Forum. Staff suggested that a decision could be made via e-mail or conference call if it was time-sensitive and needed to happen before the summer recreation season. Charles Peterson expressed concern about approving a project via email and recommended the project receive Forum's in-person consideration and decision like any other project.

Watershed Investment District

Yvette reminded the Forum of the constant struggle to secure adequate funding for salmon plan implementation and that King County's three watershed groups (WRIA 7, 8 and 9) have been working together on the concept of a Watershed Investment District (WID). Yvette reviewed a handout outlining proposed legislation enabling the formation of WIDs and the list of potential funding mechanisms that might be included as revenue options. The WID could include one or more contiguous watersheds. The current draft legislation would require voters to approve the district's watershed investment plan (including any proposed funding mechanism). It defines governance structure and also sets conditions for continuing or eliminating the district in the future.

Charles Peterson noted that Tribes should be included in any steering committee, assuming that Tribal members are paying into the district just like everyone else.

Kathy Lambert suggested that non-governmental organizations might best be included as ex-officio members of any steering committees or boards that oversee district operations.

Yvette explained that the draft legislation is designed to allow different watersheds flexibility in how the district is structured and funded based on local priorities, contexts and preferred funding methods.

Chris Garcia expressed his concern with the Sales & Use Tax being included as a potential funding source, due to possible business impacts. Yvette explained that list of revenue sources is still being refined. It is likely that Sales and Use Tax would be among those included as the legislation is intended to offer various revenue options to pick from to suit local preferences and circumstances. Even under a sales and use tax, there is the option of restricting the tax to selected products that have environmental impacts. Yvette added that WRIA 9 has hired consultants to help finalize the proposal for potential submission to the State Legislature in the 2012 or future legislative session.

2012 Budget

Yvette summarized the proposed 2012 Forum budget as a status quo budget, adjusted for cost of living as required by the County which acts as the service provider to the Forum.

Forum members briefly discussed the current effort to secure a 10% direct contribution from each city toward their respective cost-shares under the interlocal agreement. While no formal decisions have been made, all council members in attendance were hopeful that the effort would be successful based on discussions to date.

Action: Yvette will arrange a meeting of city representatives and Mayors on the 10% contribution.

Public Comment

There were no comments from members of the public.

Next Meeting & Project Tour

The July meeting will include a project tour, beginning at 5:00. Please aim to arrive no later than 4:45 at the old Vincent School House (located in the Ames Creek basin on West Snoqualmie Valley Rd.). This year's tour will feature the Chinook Bend and Lower Tolt projects, which have undergone substantial physical changes as a result of winter flooding.

The Forum meeting will follow from 7:00-9:00 pm., and will include light refreshments.

DIRECTIONS:

From Carnation (approx. 5.2 miles)

1. Head northeast on Tolt Ave. Continue on WA-203 N/Carnation Duvall Rd NE
2. Turn left onto NE Carnation Farm Rd
3. Continue onto Ames Lake-Carnation Rd NE
4. Slight right onto NE 80th St
5. Turn SHARP LEFT onto W Snoqualmie Valley Rd NE and pull into Vincent Center on right.

From Novelty Hill Rd. & W Snoqualmie Valley Rd. (approx 2.5 miles)

1. Head south on W Snoqualmie Valley Rd. for approximately 2.4 mi.
2. Immediately following intersection with NE 80th St, pull into Vincent Center driveway on right.

ATTACHMENT A - 2011 Snoqualmie Watershed-KCD Grant Applications

PRC Rank	Project Name	Applicant	Sub-basin	Project Habitat Improvements	Leveraged Funds	Recommended KCD Grant
1	Raging River Knotweed Control Phase 3	Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust	Raging River	Continue on-going effort to control knotweed along the Raging River. Phase 3 will likely control 15 acres of knotweed and replant native plants downstream of I-90.	\$10,000	\$50,000
2	Upper Waterwheel Creek Restoration Design	Wild Fish Conservancy	Cherry Creek	Design a comprehensive solution for upper Waterwheel Creek's fish passage barriers, degraded stream habitat and alluvial fan sedimentation issues.	\$2,850	\$28,730
3	Lower Tolt River Riparian Restoration at Girl Scout Camp River Ranch	Stilly-Sno Task Force	Tolt River	Control invasive weeds along the lower Tolt River. Replanting of 2 acres of riparian area and under planting 3 acres under existing deciduous forest.	\$29,090	\$50,000
4	Snoqualmie Watershed Priority Fish Passage Project Design	King County	Various	Develop designs for at least two priority fish passage barriers, targeted for lower Canyon and Harris Creeks, based on a recent fish passage assessment.	\$40,000	\$95,000
5	Snoqualmie Mainstem and Cherry Creek Bank Restoration	Stilly-Sno Task Force	Lower Snoq. River	Control invasive weeds along lower Snoqualmie River adjacent to the mouth of Cherry Creek. Plantings will be approx. 35 feet wide and totaling 3 acres.	\$40,000	\$40,000
6	Maintenance of Snoqualmie Restoration Sites	Stewardship Partners	Various	Maintenance of existing project that are more than 3 years old and that experienced unforeseen site damage will occur on five private landowner sites.	\$1,800	\$23,400
7	2011-13 Snoqualmie Valley Watershed Education and Stewardship Project	Nature Vision	Various	Conduct a 2 year educational program for school children including 40 classroom programs and 4 "blue team" stewardship projects.	\$23,650	\$10,000
8	Three Forks Natural Area Meadowbrook Slough Restoration Phase 3	City of Snoqualmie	Upper Snoq. River	Continue on-going effort to restore Meadowbrook Slough. Phase 3 will control invasive plants and replant approx. 3 more areas.	\$25,718	\$45,000
9	Tollgate Farm E. Bookend NW Parcel Weed Control Project	City of North Bend	SF Snoq. River	Continue work to restore Tollgate Farm Bookend property including removal of a minimum of 8 acres of invasive weeds. Future planting phase will follow.	\$9,320	\$40,000

2012 Snoqualmie Project Implementation Assistance Program (Placeholder to be discussed at future Forum meeting)

	\$115,000
Total KCD Requests	\$497,130
Difference	\$5,870
Total Available	\$503,000