

DRAFT

**Snoqualmie Watershed Forum
MEETING SUMMARY**

July 17, 2013

Project Tour 5:00-7:00 pm

Meeting 7:00-9:00 pm

Duvall Visitor and Centennial Center, Duvall, WA

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jason Walker	City of Duvall Councilmember, Forum Chair
Erin Chamberlain	City of Carnation Councilmember
Bryan Holloway	City of Snoqualmie Councilmember
Kathy Lambert	King County Council
Isaac Cunningham	Citizen Representative
Matt Gray	Citizen Representative
Kent Renno	Citizen Representative
Micah Wait	Wild Fish Conservancy, Non-profit Representative

MEETING PROCEEDINGS

Introductions and Minutes

- Jason Walker called the meeting to order and welcomed members as well as invited guests from the King County Agriculture Commission.
- The Forum approved the May 15th meeting summary without changes.

Forum Updates and Announcements

New Snoqualmie Technical Coordinator – Beth leDoux: Beth will play a key role in the implementation of the Snohomish Basin Salmon Conservation Plan in coordination with Snohomish County, Snoqualmie Valley cities, tribes, stewardship groups, other King County sections and partner agencies. She brings to the position her education in watershed management, extensive background in aquatic science, experience in managing complex, multi-jurisdictional projects, success in writing and securing grants, and proficiency with policy and legislative work.

New Regional Partnerships Unit Supervisor – Jean White: Jean White has accepted the position of the RPU Supervisor, which entails supervising the WRIA teams. Jean brings extensive knowledge of the workings of WRIA teams to the position as she has been the WRIA 8 Watershed Coordinator for six years.

State Capital Budget – PSAR and Coordinated Floodplain Initiative:

- PSAR is being funded at the \$70M level, the amount originally called for in the House budget. This funding provides \$4.1M to the Smith Island Restoration project, Snohomish County’s high priority project in the Snohomish estuary. This technically leaves our Upper Carlson project below the funding line (which would have required a total PSAR budget of \$80M). Upper Carlson is also expected to receive funding from the annual WRIA 7 Salmon Recovery Funding Board grant round.
- The Coordinated Floodplains package was funded at the full \$33M level with specific line-item projects on the list, including \$3.3M for our Snoqualmie at Fall City Corridor project. These projects

DRAFT

are multi-objective addressing habitat, flood hazard reduction as well as surrounding land uses (such as agriculture).

Cooperative Watershed Management Grant: On July 15, staff from the Snoqualmie Forum and WRIAs 8, 9, and 10 presented the 2013 Cooperative Watershed Management grants to the Flood District Executive Committee. The committee was very pleased with the projects submitted and very complimentary of the WRIA project selection process. The committee is expected to make a final decision on the grants on August 19. The committee also asked for more information regarding our project funding need. Based on our Salmon Plan and recent river reach assessments, the King County portion of WRIA 7 needs approximately \$10M per year to implement the Salmon Plan but on average we receive approximately \$2M per year from outside sources (only 20% of the need).

Snohomish-Stillaguamish Local Integrating Organization (LIO): The Puget Sound Partnership's Snohomish-Stillaguamish LIO Implementation Committee hosted an all day workshop on June 27th. The workshop began the process of updating the LIO's Local Profile that describes local strategies and actions (also called Near Term Actions or NTAs) to address the Action Agenda. Perry Falcone represented Forum interests at the meeting, Beth leDoux and Joan Lee represented King County, and Matt Baerwalde represented the Snoqualmie Tribe. A second round of proposed NTAs was submitted to the Partnership. A half-day Implementation Committee meeting will be held on July 29th to continue the development of NTAs. There will be future opportunities to provide for input on the NTAs and LIO Local Profile.

Forum Business

Budget

Janne Kaje, Watershed Coordinator, asked for approval from the Forum for the 2014 budget. There have been no changes since the May presentation. The budget assumes consistent operating costs and staffing levels (2.6 FTEs), with cost of living adjustments. The total estimated 2014 Forum budget based on preliminary projections is \$466,150. This is 0.5% increase over the 2013 budget.

DECISION: Bryan Holloway made a motion to approve and it was seconded by Erin Chamberlin. The budget was passed unanimously by the Forum.

Farm, Fish and Flood Coordination Update

King County Council tasked King County Water and Land Resources Division (WLRD) to address how best to restore habitat for salmon, decrease flood risk and keep agriculture viable. Janne Kaje is the project manager for this effort. In the Snoqualmie Watershed, there are 14,000 acres in the Agriculture Production District (APD) the majority of which is located in the floodplains. The three work programs involved in this process often have policy limitations and competing goals and directives. The purpose of this process is to figure out how we can improve salmon habitat without harming agricultural productivity and keeping residents safe from flooding; all while moving forward together. The core team from WLRD working on this issue is tasked with developing a work plan and establishing a stakeholder group to help guide policy. Janne asked the core team members to speak a little to the work program they represent.

Kollin Higgins (King County Science and Technical Support)

In the world of fish, our technical understanding of the Snoqualmie Rivers system shows that the Lower Tolt River, the Lower Raging River and the Snoqualmie Mainstem provide the best opportunities for salmon habitat restoration. When focusing on recovering fish populations and restoring high quality habitat, high priority actions include the removal and set back of levees as well as planting large buffers along the shorelines. Many of the high priority restoration areas are located in the APD. Some levee setbacks and

DRAFT

removals may allow the river to migrate into agricultural land and planted buffers may impact agricultural activities. Kollin spoke to the competing interests in these areas and the fact that win/win/win scenarios that benefit flooding, fish and farms are not always possible. He added that it is difficult to rectify how to implement the competing policies on the same land.

Sally King (King County Rivers and Floodplain Management)

Sally spoke to the large floodplain in the Snoqualmie, saying that in the 35 mile long and 2 mile wide river valley there are approximately 15,000 acres of floodplain with the majority of that area in the APD. Sally talked about how even relatively small flooding events can cause valley wall-to-wall flooding and that the constructed, discontinuous levees and revetments are not built to contain the water but more to keep the river from migrating. The River and Floodplain Management section at King County has the goal to setback or remove levees that are at risk of erosion (such as areas along the Tolt and Raging Rivers) and where possible keep the flood facilities intact to protect homes and farms. There are also efforts in the valley to help residents in the floodplain by elevating homes and barns and helping to build farm pads to help farmers protect their assets during flooding events.

Claire Dyckman (King County Agriculture)

Thirty years ago King County implemented the Farmland Preservation Program to improve and preserve agriculture. It is important to create a positive partnership between the King County Agriculture Commission and Snoqualmie Watershed Forum to find creative solutions that will allow both agriculture and salmon habitat to thrive. Claire pointed out that the Agriculture Commission is a volunteer group and during this process will need to use their time wisely.

Janne Kaje followed these presentations with a summary of the next steps including meeting with farmers and continuing to talk with stakeholders. He invited the Agriculture Commissioners and Forum members to share their thoughts on the process.

Nancy Hutto (Chair of the Agriculture Commission)

The Farm, Fish, Flood effort is very encouraging and it is starting to feel like agriculture is being listened to. She spoke about how farming is just as important as fish – that farming is also a resource not just “multi-purpose land”. Working with willing farmers is fine but it is imperative to see how a project on one person's land fits into the whole picture of agriculture in the valley. Otherwise, it will seem like small grabs of land if not all the agencies involved in the area have a clear picture of what's going on. It is also important to remember that farmers have been caring for fish longer than the local governmental agencies.

Larry Pickering (Agriculture Commission)

Larry is excited by the Smith Island Estuary Restoration Project in Snohomish County. In addition to these major projects it is important to make sure the water coming downstream is cool so we don't have to exert a lot of effort in cooling the lower rivers. He is concerned about the lost tax money for city annexations and how they keep their money from assessments. He wants cities to pay for the valley resources they use and help fund the King Conservation District (KCD).

Ward Roney (Agriculture Commission)

Restoration projects need to be done well. He has lived on Tuck Creek for decades and King County has moved the creek twice with little success. As a result of these projects, even a small rainstorm can cause flooding in the backyards of residents along the creek. He expressed his desire to work with the County to

DRAFT

fix this issue and improve the nature of Tuck Creek and reduce the undercutting of the banks and flooding issues.

Kathy Lambert (King County Council)

Councilmember Lambert expressed great concern about this effort. She remembers how long it took to get farm pads to be acceptable practices in agricultural areas and is concerned this effort will take just as long at the risk of harming the viability of agriculture. She worries that the voice of the farmer is not taken into account and that fish are sexy and farming is not. Until farmers are sexier, they are at risk. Councilmember Lambert also mentioned how the recreational users on the river are not well respected. In closing she mentioned that there needs to be a large education process for those outside of the Snoqualmie Valley to educate them on the importance the valley plays both for fish survival and providing the cities with food through agriculture production.

Jason Walker followed up on the next steps of the process which asked about public involvement meetings. The core team will be talking with farmers and stakeholders in the future. There are also plans to form a stakeholder group and caucus groups as well as public meetings.

Effects of Levee Removal on Fish Habitat in the Tolt and Snoqualmie Rivers

Josh Latterell, King County Fish Ecologist, provided an overview of project effectiveness monitoring efforts in the Carnation reach of the Tolt and Snoqualmie Rivers. These efforts were funded by two Forum recommended KCD grants. Since 2007, there have been four major habitat restoration projects in the Carnation area including the Chinook Bend, Camp Gilead, Lower Tolt and McElhoe-Pearson projects. In order to measure habitat improvements and river geomorphology changes, King County embarked on a multi-year monitoring effort of various physical and biological parameters.

Josh explained that habitat conditions are improving in the reach where the projects occurred. At the Lower Tolt Floodplain Reconnection project site, the river width had doubled in the first two years after construction. There was also significant large wood complexity in the channel and juvenile fish had been observed utilizing the wood as cover. The monitoring data would be valuable to measure habitat improvements but was also useful to track river channel changes that might affect adjacent landowners. Monitoring data such as channel migration and sediment movement would be very valuable to assessing flood hazard conditions. Josh thanked the Forum for their support of this important monitoring work.

Public Comment

Janne encouraged members of the Snoqualmie Forum to attend the next Snohomish Basin Forum meeting when Salmon Recovery Funding Board grants will be discussed. Perry will send the Snoqualmie Forum the Snohomish Forum meeting information.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be September 18 (7-9 pm) at Snoqualmie City Hall.