

Snoqualmie Watershed Forum
MEETING SUMMARY
September 16, 2015
7:00-9:00 pm
Carnation City Hall, Carnation, WA

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jason Walker	City of Duvall Councilmember, Chair
Lee Grumman	City of Carnation Councilmember, Vice Chair
Cindy Spiry	Snoqualmie Tribe (Alternate)
Bryan Holloway	City of Snoqualmie Councilmember
Eileen Carrel	Citizen Representative
Becky Chaney	Citizen Representative
Jenn McKeown	Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust, Non-profit Representative
Kathy Lambert	King County Councilmember, Forum Member

MEETING PROCEEDINGS

I. Updates and Announcements

- Jason Walker, Chair, asked Forum members to review the meeting summary from the July 15th meeting. The Forum approved the meeting summary without changes.
- Janne Kaje, Watershed Coordinator, provided an update on the status of the ILA approval process. Four cities and two tribes have already signed the ILA and we were only waiting for the Town of Skykomish and King County. When King County signs the ILA (anticipated in October), the ILA will be in force for 2016.
- Janne provided an update on Forum outreach regarding the recent drought. Jason Walker and the chairs of WRIs 8 and 9 wrote an opinion editorial for the Seattle Times and other newspapers. Jason mentioned that he had received positive feedback from citizens that had read the editorial. Jason asked staff to help draft a list of water conservation activities that local citizens could implement to help the situation both locally and nationally. Janne added that Forum staff sent out a special e-newsletter in September focusing on the drought.
- Perry Falcone, Forum Project Coordinator, provided project updates and videos for three important watershed projects completed in 2015.
 - King County's Harris Creek Fish Passage Improvement Project was a significant salmon barrier removal on Harris Creek. The \$220,000 project replaced an aging fish way with a 95-foot roughened channel which restored access to 4 miles of habitat for steelhead and coho.
 - Washington Department of Transportation replaced the Coe Clemmons Creek Culvert under SR 203 in the City of Duvall. The \$2.8M project replaced a culvert that was a fish

passage barrier for coho and connected more than a ½ mile of upstream habitat. The culvert was also prone to being clogged with sediment which threatened the integrity of SR 203. The City of Duvall provided significant assistance on this project.

- Tulalip Tribes' Qwuloolt Estuary Restoration Project, located in the City of Marysville, was completed in September. The \$20M project restored tidal exchange and fish access to 350 acres of Snohomish estuary habitat for various species of salmon including out-migrating salmon from the Snoqualmie River.

II. 2016 Forum Work Program

Janne provided an overview of the 2016 Forum Work Program. This plan contains ongoing Forum initiatives including Forum meetings, Valley Planning Committee meetings and the annual watershed tour. The plan also includes some new and adjusted tasks including:

- Briefings for new Forum members (Town of Sykomish and Tulalip Tribes)
- Tours for new Forum members to familiarize them with the watershed and issues
- Participation in the Snohomish-Stillaguamish Local Integrating Organization 5-year planning process
- Collaboration with project partners to support implementation of Snohomish Basin Protection Plan recommendations
- Development of a 10-year salmon plan status report and a 10-year salmon habitat capital project list
- Continue monitoring of temperature in the Snoqualmie and synthesis of data from 2015
- Participation in the ongoing Fish Farm Flood Advisory Committee

Eileen Carrel offered to help organize a spring landowner-focused watershed tour to educate landowners on what the Forum is trying to accomplish.

Action: The Forum approved the 2016 Work Program.

III. 2015 Snoqualmie Summer Temperature Study

Beth leDoux, Forum Technical Coordinator, presented preliminary data and results from the 2015 Snoqualmie Summer Temperature Study. King County, in collaboration with Forum staff, monitored 27 sites starting in June 2015. The temperature loggers will monitor continuously until September 30 and 8 sampling sites will continue monitoring throughout the winter. Five of the sampling sites were on private property in cooperation with local farmers. Beth showed how temperatures in the Snoqualmie River exceeded the state temperature standards all summer long. There were also some interesting initial observations, such as how cloud cover may have reduced water temperatures, how some water temperature samples related to daily air temperatures and how some rivers had much greater daily temperature fluctuations than others. One bright spot was the fact that many tributaries still contributed cooler water to the Snoqualmie River mainstem in the summer months. Beth noted that staff will produce a study summary in early 2016.

Forum members and staff provided comments and questions on the temperature study:

- Matt Baerwalde explained that the Snoqualmie Tribe has collected data on groundwater inputs and believes there are cold water inputs somewhere between Griffin and Patterson Creeks.
- Forum members asked how these high temperature trends compare with other rivers. Beth responded that many other rivers in the Puget Sound Basin were experiencing high temperatures this summer and the study will do some data comparisons where possible.
- Ralph Svrjcek, Department of Ecology, mentioned that Forum staff should look at a recent cold water refugia study on the Stillaguamish River and compare the temperature data to the Snoqualmie Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) studies. Beth answered that staff planned to look at both of these studies.
- Becky Chaney asked if the significant smoke from forest fires could have played a role in affecting temperatures. Beth explained that it was possible fire haze affected water temperatures.

IV. Black Canyon Hydroelectric Project Proposal

Janne provided a briefing on the 25 megawatt Black Canyon Hydroelectric project which is proposed on the North Fork Snoqualmie River. Black Canyon LLC is currently trying to secure license from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to build and operate the project. The project would involve diverting up to 90% of the flow of the North Fork Snoqualmie River underground and bypassing 2.5 miles of the river before water is returned to the river. The company already operates one much smaller project on Black Creek, a tributary to the North Fork. The project would degrade fish habitat within the unique gorge environment by fundamentally changing the flow regime. Some studies have indicated the gorge reach has a high percentage of large rainbow trout. There would also be impacts to river kayaking in the reach and the aesthetics of the adjacent Mount Si Natural Resource Conservation Area. The City of Snoqualmie's Canyon Springs drinking water supply source is located in the project reach and the city is concerned about impacts to the city's most reliable source of drinking water due to the construction and operation of the project, which would involve tunneling directly through the source aquifer of Canyon Springs. The Snoqualmie Tribe has also expressed cultural concerns with the project and neighboring landowners are concerned about the construction and operation impacts to their neighborhood. The project also faces some regulatory hurdles from King County's Critical Areas, Zoning and Shoreline Management codes and potentially with obtaining Clean Water Act Section 401 certification from the state Departments of Ecology. The project is also required to obtain a Coastal Zone Management Act Consistency Determination from Ecology.

Forum members provided feedback and questions on the proposal:

- Bryan Holloway asked if the project would obtain a senior water right. Janne responded that since the project returned the water to the river they don't need a consumptive water right but they do need to consider if they impact other water rights, such as the right held by the City.
- Bryan added that Canyon Springs accounts for 55% of the city's water and provides its highest quality water source.
- Eileen asked if the drought has affected Black Canyon Hydro's decision to apply for a permit. Janne responded that one drought year would not likely change the company's long-term view of the benefits of the project.

Janne asked the Forum members if they would like to provide a letter of comment when the company submits its application to FERC.

- Bryan asked if the river reach is important enough ecologically to warrant protection. Janne explained that it was ecologically important and unique.
- Councilmember Lambert asked if the company could be redirected to another location away from the important springs. Janne added that this site is in some ways ideal for hydro power with a fairly steep and confined canyon reach, but the environmental effects are significant. Previous projects have been proposed at this location but have failed to secure licenses and there are no similar locations like it on the North Fork Snoqualmie River. Janne also noted that smaller projects on tributaries that have much lesser environmental impacts have been proposed and successfully licenses as recently as 2015.
- Jason suggested that the Forum should formally intervene in the FERC process and write a comment letter in the future. Bryan would like to include the city's water supply concerns in the letter. Lambert would like to include all concerns in the Forum's letter.
- Eileen asked if opposition to the project would be seen as a "not in my backyard" attitude ignoring the regional renewable energy needs. Janne responded that King County has more FERC-licensed hydro projects than any other Washington county, and all are in the Snoqualmie basin. Perry added that the voter approved Washington Initiative 937 called for more renewable energy projects, but excluded new hydroelectric projects from receiving renewable energy credits due to their tremendous environmental impact, and also due to the fact that Washington State is already 70% dependent on hydro power.
- Jason asked Forum staff to draft up a letter with key points when the FERC application is submitted. He would also like to know the impact to the Forum's work program. Janne explained that the work program allowed time for research to be conducted and a comment letter to be submitted.

IV. Public Comment

Ralph Svrjcek mentioned that Ecology appreciates the water quality study the Forum paid for and he noted that other watersheds are doing similar types of studies.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be November 18 at Snoqualmie City Hall from 6:30pm to 9:00pm.