

Snoqualmie Watershed Forum
MEETING SUMMARY
November 14, 2018, 7:00-9:00 p.m.
Snoqualmie City Hall, Snoqualmie

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Cindy Spiry, Chair	Snoqualmie Tribe Representative
Henry Sladek, Vice Chair	Town of Skykomish Councilmember
Brian Bodenbach	SVGA Citizen Representative
Becky Chaney	Citizen Representative
Charles Kellogg	Citizen Representative
Trevor Kostanich	City of North Bend Councilmember
Chris LaPointe	Non-profit Representative
Ryan Miller	Tulalip Tribes Representative
Peggy Shepard	City of Snoqualmie Councilmember
Jason Walker	City of Duvall Councilmember

Other Attendees: Morgan Ruff, Tulalip Tribes; Jessica Lange, Sound Salmon Solutions; Matt Distler, Oxbow Farm and Conservation Center; Julie Lewis, Snoqualmie Tribe; John Velimesis; Jamie Burrell, City of North Bend; Gretchen Glaub, Snohomish County; Shirley Doolittle-Egerdahl, Tadpole Haven Native Plants; Annika Browne, Duvall Resident; Ingria Jones, Washington Department of Ecology; Kevin Lee, Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife; Josh Baldi, Evan Lewis, and Janne Kaje, King County; Perry Falcone, Elissa Ostergaard, Beth leDoux, Wadji Boughdir, and Laura West, Forum staff

MEETING PROCEEDINGS

I. Introductions, Updates and Announcements

Cindy Spiry, Forum Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and led introductions.

ACTION: The Forum unanimously approved the meeting minutes from the September 19, 2018 Forum meeting.

Elissa Ostergaard, Salmon Recovery Manager, announced that it is Chris LaPointe's last meeting as the Non-profit Representative. Elissa recognized Stewardship Partners and Chris LaPointe's contributions to the Forum. Chris LaPointe thanked the Forum and expressed gratitude for the work the Forum has accomplished.

Snoqualmie Forum staff highlighted the following updates:

- **Streamflow Restoration Committee-** Ingria Jones, Streamflow Restoration Implementation Lead at Department of Ecology, provided a summary of the streamflow restoration law and corresponding WRIA 7 Watershed Restoration and Enhancement Committee (WREC). The committee first met on October 25, 2018. Ecology will announce the results of the first grant round, which closed on October 31, in January. Ecology received a total of \$70 million in asks and six requests were habitat enhancement projects in the Snohomish Basin. Elissa sent an email with instructions on how to sign up for the WRIA 7 WREC list serve.
- **Lee Grumman Trail Naming-** Elissa has been working with Lee's partner, Jules Hughes, to develop a proposal to rename a short trail in the City of Carnation after Lee, who was instrumental in the trail's creation. Elissa and Jules are proposing to name it the Tigerlily Trail, in honor of Lee's father's nickname for her. The trail is on King County and City of Carnation land.

- **Snohomish County Budget-** Snohomish County Surface Water Management (SWM) is facing program cuts that will limit their ability to implement salmon recovery projects and monitoring efforts. Pending the final Council budget approval, it is unclear whether Snohomish County will be able to pay their WRIA 8 ILA cost share. Elissa has asked for Forum members to reach out to Snohomish County Councilmembers and express support for salmon recovery work.
- **Communications Survey-** Snoqualmie Forum staff received 13 responses in a recent communications survey. This information will help determine agenda items and communication efforts for 2019.
- **Floodplains by Design-** The Department of Ecology recently released their 2019-2021 Floodplains by Design project list. The project list includes \$70 million in state capital budget funding, with \$3.4 million for the North Bend South Fork Snoqualmie River Levee Setback project. The City of Snoqualmie also submitted a project, but it didn't make the list this round. The Forum will send letters of support for the program in early 2019.
- **Comment letters**
 - A letter of support was submitted on behalf of the Tulalip Tribes for a Department of Ecology Centennial Clean Water Fund Grant to support a thermal imaging flight (also called a FLIR flight) of the Snoqualmie and Skykomish River.
 - The Forum recently submitted two sets of comments to the Southern Resident Orca Task Force on their draft recovery recommendations report to the governor.
 - Forum staff are drafting another comment letter in collaboration with the Snohomish Basin Salmon Recovery Forum to the Department of Ecology regarding their Streamflow Restoration Act grant funding guidelines.

II. Public Comment

No public comment.

III. Forum Business

Elissa Ostergaard walked through the 2019 Forum schedule and asked Forum members to notify her of any conflicts in advance of the January 2019 meeting. Elissa conducted a straw poll for volunteers for the Forum Chair and Vice Chair positions. Cindy Spiry and Henry Sladek expressed interest in continuing to serve in their current roles.

ACTION: The Forum unanimously agreed to have Cindy Spiry continue as Forum Chair and Henry Sladek continue as Forum Vice Chair.

Elissa announced the Forum received one application for the new alternate Non-profit Representative. This is a two year position that generally feeds into the primary Non-profit Representative position. Jessica Lange has been the alternate and will become the primary representative beginning in 2019 with Chris LaPointe's departure. Matt Distler, Ecologist at Oxbow Farm & Conservation Center, has applied for the alternate position. Oxbow is a small non-profit with a dual focus on sustainable agriculture and land stewardship. Matt has a background in plant and wetland ecology and currently works on biodiversity and ecosystem functions. Matt noted that this opportunity is in line with Oxbow's mission and direction.

ACTION: The Forum unanimously approved Matt as the new alternate Non-profit Representative. Elissa thanked Jessica for becoming the primary Non-profit Representative starting in January 2019.

IV. Snohomish Estuary Restoration: Estuaries as nursery habitat, restoration progress, and future goals

Morgan Ruff, Snohomish Basin Capital Project Coordinator with Tulalip Tribes, told a story about looking for funding for the Qwuloolt estuary project. Morgan explained the importance of restoring the estuary and

emphasized the time and patience required to complete these types of projects. 80% of the functioning Snohomish Estuary has been lost over the years and the extensive dike system is also failing as many dikes aren't maintained. Tidal wetlands have been lost in varying degrees. Morgan noted that the estuary is lacking rearing habitat for juvenile Chinook to eat and grow so they can have a better chance of survival when they enter Puget Sound. Chinook populations are at less than 10% of their historic numbers. Morgan walked through the projects along the I-5 corridor, noting that many estuary projects have been completed in the last twenty years, creating connection in the lower delta where there is higher salinity. Morgan summarized the targets from the 2005 Snohomish Basin plan and the progress made towards them. The Basin is close to meeting its target for estuary restoration, however it is hard to characterize and identify simultaneous estuary losses. However, it is likely that we are making gains and degradation isn't continuing at the same rate as before some of the restoration projects. Morgan expressed hope for continued momentum and opportunity to keep this work moving forward, in part driven by Snohomish County's Sustainable Lands Strategy, public land ownership in the historic river delta, and a robust monitoring program. The cuts in the Snohomish County Surface Water Management budget constrain new project development. Next steps in the estuary restoration work include queuing up new large projects in the delta, identifying next targets for restoration, and focusing on the upper estuary. In the upper estuary, Morgan and her team are looking at opportunities that enhance estuary with lower salinities for fish that split off and travel through the estuary in different channels. The Tulalip Tribes are partnering with Snohomish County to evaluate the effects of future sea level rise on salinity, fish, and agriculture.

Brian Bodenbach asked if it's known where the freshwater/saltwater meeting point will be with various sea level rise projections. Morgan replied that the exact location isn't known, but it will be necessary to create the ability for the landscape to move and retreat, which is the goal for the upper estuary. Brian commented that fish hang out in certain areas to acclimate to salt water and asked if it's known where that position will shift to. Morgan replied that the current locations will see an increase in salinity and it will be important to provide diversity upstream for fish. The exact location depends on a lot of factors that we can't predict right now. Morgan thanked the Forum for support of estuary restoration work despite the fact that the Snoqualmie basin sits at the top of the watershed. Charlie Kellogg acknowledged the bottleneck slide was helpful in showing where there is the most need. Elissa Ostergaard emphasized the connectedness of the upper and lower watershed. Henry Sladek asked about the impact on the work from the Snohomish County SWM budget cuts. Gretchen Glaub replied that grant funds aren't going away, but the County will have to slow down in their sponsor role and might not be able to provide the 15-20% local match funding often required by grants. The SWM department has also lost some staff capacity in critical areas like engineering, but there are lots of partners and other funding opportunities. Gretchen encouraged partners to express to the County Council that this is the time where we need to ramp up restoration work. Trevor Kostanich asked about the driving factor behind the Council's hesitancy to increase the SWM fee. Morgan replied that Council has established a pattern of not increasing taxes and hasn't increased SWM fees since 2009. Brian Bodenbach suggested reaching out to farmers to put pressure on the Council if our projects help reduce flooding for farmers. Gretchen replied that she didn't think the work in the estuary was closely tied enough to farmers.

V. King County Surface Water Management Fee Increase, 2019-20 Budget, and Fish Passage Program

Josh Baldi, King County Water and Land Resources Division Director, announced that the King County Council recently approved a 20% increase in the Surface Water Management (SWM) fee for 2019. Josh highlighted that with increased development and density, infiltration and evapotranspiration decrease and stormwater runoff increases. Unmanaged stormwater results in flooding, public safety issues, and pollution running off into Puget Sound. Josh explained that the 20% rate increase would 1) eliminate the backlog of at-risk facilities in 10 years; 2) provide funding for roads and facility maintenance; 3) eliminate fish-passage

barriers; 4) support salmon habitat restoration; 5) expand support for farmers/rural residents through the Agricultural Drainage Assistance Program (ADAP); and 6) provide an additional discount for low-income property owners.

Trevor Kostanich commented that the region will likely continue to see additional development and climate change-related flooding. Trevor asked if the 20% rate increase maintains current levels of services or helps the region get ahead of some of these approaching issues. Josh Baldi compared it to where we'd like to be with salmon recovery 10 year targets and acknowledged that the County could similarly use more funding if it was available. Josh relayed that the County feels confident in asset management, but will need more funding for fish passage projects. Josh noted that as areas are annexed, the County loses that SWM income through their rate base. The SWM model isn't sustainable over the long term and the County will need to find more funding sources for the fish passage program. Charlie Kellogg asked if it is possible to get some funding back from cities as they annex. Josh replied that the cities themselves are now managing those assets and problems, so they wouldn't be funding King County to provide those services anymore. Charlie added that it seems like the current SWM model is unsustainable in that there is an ever decreasing population in a large area that requires a lot of work and maintenance. Josh agreed with Charlie's concern and added that the King County Roads department is currently grappling with this even more immediately. The County plans to increase the use of green infrastructure to alleviate some of the work, but green infrastructure still requires maintenance.

Evan Lewis, King County's Fish Passage Restoration Program Manager, gave an overview of where he sees the program headed over the next two to three years. Evan's job is to create procedures to implement across County programs and services to tackle restoration of barriers that the County is responsible for, either via direct ownership or an operations and maintenance agreement with a third party. The King County Council approved funding 36 early action fish passage projects in next biennium, which are at various phases of design and construction. When completed, those projects would open up 150 miles of habitat. Six of these projects are in WRIA 7. These initial projects will help serve as a pilot program to see what works and learn from any mistakes. In addition to those 36 projects, Evan's team will also be working to identify the scope of barriers that the County is responsible for. The state's fish passage database has identified 4500 barriers, of which 476 are owned by King County, and of which 186 are identified as barriers and 60 are identified as unknown status. In WRIA 7, 82 barriers were identified. Evan believes the state's count is just the tip of iceberg though, as many areas haven't been surveyed. Evan estimates that there are several thousand barriers and his team will be doing an inventory effort to document the condition of assets and water typing of fish use. Where possible, Evan's team will also try to survey nearby barriers that aren't under King County's responsibility. They won't be walking every single drainage in the County due to time and land ownership constraints, but will do the best they can. His team is currently developing a survey protocol and will be recruiting temporary positions to carry out the surveying. Evan hopes to share the data with partners in order to create a comprehensive data set. Another work item is to create a prioritization methodology to prioritize all the information they collect. The worst barriers will be prioritized first, and Evan hopes to streamline permitting procedures, and create best practices for planning, design, and construction of projects. Evan's team will also look to integrate fish passage restoration into County programs like Fish, Farm, Flood (FFF). Evan emphasized the need for collaboration and coordination with partners and addressed the need to find alternative funding strategies to fill the gap between necessary and existing funding.

Brian Bodenbach asked if Evan will take into account land use patterns and future land development in the prioritization work. Evan replied that site conditions and basin conditions would be considered in the prioritization discussion and noted that looking at future trajectories would be helpful. Brian encouraged not prioritizing where development will continue to harm fish habitat. Ryan Miller thanked Evan, Dow Constantine, and King County for taking on this important effort and for coordinating with the Tulalip Tribes. Ryan commented that the Forum partners and others have invested a lot of money into restoring habitat and it

is important to remove the barriers blocking that habitat. Josh Baldi thanked the Executive for his support and commitment. The Executive launched this work before the 9th circuit appeal and Supreme Court case. Henry Sladek asked about the historical background on this process. Evan replied that most existing survey data has been done by others. Jason Walker asked about implementation, integration with the King County Roads division, and the funding of capital projects. Evan replied that his team is currently working through this and suggested that as the Capital Improvement Programs (CIPs) develop their six year plans, fish passage could be a key factor or possibly a new program.

VI. 2018 Forum Highlights

Perry Falcone, Project Coordinator, walked through some of the Forum's 2018 highlights:

- Successfully coordinated the 2018 Cooperative Watershed Management grant round
- Project partners implemented significant restoration projects, including:
 - **Griffin Creek Restoration Project with Adopt A Stream:** For this project, King County purchased land and gave Adopt A Stream the opportunity to implement the large wood installation. The Forum is looking to streamline this process in the future as we try to facilitate increasing the capacity of non-profits in our basin.
 - **Tolt San Souci Levee Removal with King County:** As part of a 10+ year project involving acquisitions and home removals, the County removed a 450-foot illegal revetment facility on the San Souci Property. Phase Two of the project will continue in 2019.
 - **Lower Tolt Rock Removal with King County:** The Tolt River migrated and exposed more rock at a 2009 project site. The County used SWM funding to remove the rock to restore a natural edge and add wood.
 - **Carnation Elementary Rain Garden with Stewardship Partners and Snoqualmie Tribe**
 - **Oxbow Farm Planting with Stewardship Partners**
- Developed a 10-Year Project List to chart the course of project implementation through 2025
- Served on Project Selection subcommittee for WRIA 7's Salmon Recovery Funding Board grant round
- Co-chaired the Snohomish Basin Project Working Group meetings
- Provided grant writing, fundraising services, project assistance, and project site visits to partners
- Advanced and produced technical and policy studies
- Secured funding and led the formation of the Buffer Task Force and supported the Fish, Farm, Flood 2.0 effort
- Hosted the annual Forum project tour
- Produced three Forum E-newsletters
- Sponsored three new salmon viewing sites in the Snoqualmie Valley with Salmon SEEson
- Developed and shared legislative priorities to support state and federal funding for watershed health
- Created a Status of Salmon in the Snohomish/Snoqualmie Basin fact sheet
- Conducted a communications survey as part of an ongoing communications strategy development

Peggy Shepard asked about real time updates on salmon viewings during Salmon SEEson. Laura West replied that there isn't anyone on the ground at the Snoqualmie Salmon SEEson sites. Perry added that there is a higher chance of seeing salmon in the odd years when the pinks come back.

VII. Closing

Cindy Spiry thanked everyone for coming.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, January 16, 2019, Carnation Library, 6:30-8:30p.m.