

**Snoqualmie Watershed Forum
MEETING SUMMARY
January 16, 2019, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Carnation Library, Carnation**

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
Jessica Lange	Non-profit Representative
Peggy Shepard	City of Snoqualmie Councilmember
Jason Walker	City of Duvall Councilmember
Dustin Green	City of Carnation Deputy Mayor

Other Attendees: Matt Distler, Oxbow Farm and Conservation Center; Julie Lewis, Matt Baerwalde, and Councilmember Bob De Los Angeles, Snoqualmie Tribe; Matt Pouley, Tulalip Tribes; John Velimesis; Jamie Burrell, City of North Bend; Dawn Hess and Matt Distler, Oxbow Farm & Conservation Center; Renee Harris; Gretchen Glaub, Snohomish County; Shirley Doolittle, Tadpole Haven Native Plants; Kevin Lee, Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife; Janne Kaje and Jay Smith, King County; Perry Falcone, Elissa Ostergaard, Beth leDoux, and Laura West, Forum staff

MEETING PROCEEDINGS

I. Introductions, Updates and Announcements

Cindy Spiry, Forum Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and led introductions.

ACTION: The Forum unanimously approved the meeting minutes from the November 14, 2018 Forum meeting.

Snoqualmie Forum staff highlighted the following updates:

- **Steelhead Recovery Plan Review-** The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) released their draft Puget Sound Steelhead Recovery Plan in December 2018, and is accepting comments until February 11, 2019. Forum staff are reviewing the draft and will be working with the Snohomish Basin Salmon Recovery Technical Committee to compile comments and draft a letter on behalf of the Snohomish Basin Salmon Recovery Forum. Since there are both winter and summer steelhead in the Snoqualmie portion of the watershed, we plan to draft a comment letter on behalf of the Snoqualmie Watershed Forum as well. The comments will be sent around via email for Forum review.
- **State Budget Update from WRIA 7 Lead Entity -** Gretchen Glaub announced that the Governor's budget didn't include full funding levels for many salmon recovery grant programs. Gretchen urged the Forum to communicate the importance of the funding to legislators. The Snohomish Basin Forum will be outlining a letter with their priorities, which Gretchen will share with Elissa. Snoqualmie Forum staff will also be drafting a letter of support for these funding sources.

- **Cherry Creek Restoration Funding Request-** Sound Salmon Solutions and Wild Fish Conservancy are leading the restoration of lower Cherry Creek to improve Chinook habitat at the confluence with the Snoqualmie River. The project has experienced several project delays and cost increases due in part to the complex challenge of floodplain construction, cost of fill disposal and meeting the landowner's farming needs. In order to address a funding gap, the project sponsor plans to request an additional \$50,000 from the state Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration fund. The project sponsor is also working with Drainage District #7 to provide fill material to repair damaged levees which in turn reduces the cost of the habitat project.
- **Conservation Futures Program-** The 2019 King County Conservation Futures Tax (CFT) grant program anticipates having more than \$40 million in funding. Conservation Futures dollars can fund fee simple acquisitions or easements on open space lands such as natural areas, urban green spaces, passive parks, regional trails, farms, and forests. Applications are due on March 6th, 2019. Brian Bodenbach asked about the status of the Land Conservation Initiative (LCI), which seems to have fallen off the radar recently. Perry Falcone, Forum Project Coordinator, replied that the King County team implemented the initial plan of identifying parcels that should be conserved. Janne Kaje added that the work is still moving forward. Janne emphasized the opportunity to waive the 50% match requirement in underserved areas and noted that the match requirement doesn't have to be money in hand. Janne suggested Forum members contact Ingrid Lundin for more information.
- **Snoqualmie Swag-** Elissa Ostergaard, Salmon Recovery Manager, announced that the Forum is purchasing some items with the Forum logo on them to distribute around the valley. Notepads are available for distribution now.

II. Public Comment

Jason Walker announced that Duvall Councilmember Mike Remington will be taking Jason's place as Duvall's delegate on the Forum starting at tonight's meeting. Jason will still attend meetings, but not as a delegate. Elissa thanked Jason for his many years of service. Gretchen Glaub announced that on February 7 from 9am-12pm, the Snohomish/Stillaguamish Local Integration Organization (LIO) and the Snohomish Salmon Recovery Forum will host a joint meeting on water quality. The meeting will include presentations on emerging threats from Sandy O'Neil with WDFW and hopefully a NOAA researcher. Anyone is invited to attend and Gretchen will send around the agenda once it is finalized. Peggy Shepard mentioned that a few of the Snoqualmie councilmembers don't understand the City's impact on the Snoqualmie River and salmon due to the City's location above the falls. Peggy asked for someone to present this information to the Council. Elissa Ostergaard will connect with Peggy to set that up.

III. Stories from the Field – Matt Pouley, Tulalip Tribes and the Snoqualmie Smolt Trap

Beth leDoux, Forum Technical Coordinator, introduced Matt Pouley, field biologist with the Tulalip Tribes. Matt gave a presentation on the Tulalip Tribes' smolt trap, which the Forum helps fund through a Cooperative Watershed Management (CWM) grant and is used to count outmigrating salmon. Matt thanked the Forum for their support in funding the trap. The trap has been operating since 2001 on private property near Duvall, at river mile 12.2 on the Snoqualmie River. Matt walked through the specifics of the design and noted that the trap is most efficient when it is in the deepest part of the river. Between February and June, Matt's team is fishing 24 hours/day, 5 days/week. They catch many fry and some yearlings, especially yearling coho. The project has three goals: to collect baseline fish data; to monitor the status and trends of outmigrating salmon populations; and to estimate production of coho and Chinook by combining with redd counts. The latter are important for fisheries management and tribal treaty rights. They are just starting to get a good picture of the trends after collecting this data for almost 20 years. Running the smolt trap gives the Tulalips opportunities to partner with other groups to accomplish shared objectives. As a requirement of a Hatchery and Genetic Management Plan (HGMP), the Tulalips partner with Washington Department of Fish And Wildlife (WDFW)

to perform steelhead genetic monitoring to check for introgression between wild and hatchery stocks. Another project with WDFW involves taking fin clips from juvenile Chinook for DNA analysis to assign parentage, although it doesn't work well in this basin. The Tulalips also partner with Seattle City Light to install pit tag markers in wild steelhead to track migrations over time. Past partnerships have included Long Live the Kings, US Geologic Survey, NOAA, and University of Washington's Salish Sea Survival Project.

Matt walked through the 2018 trap numbers, totaling 11,200 total salmonids. 2018 was an out-migrating year for pinks and they counted 7,000. 2018 saw the highest catch of Chinook fry at 1,508, following the 2nd highest year in 2017, which Matt noted is a good sign. They caught 28 unmarked steelhead and 18 marked (meaning they are from a hatchery). They caught 187 chum fry, 800 lamprey, and lots of other species. With 672 hours at night and 445 daylight hours of active fishing time on the smolt trap, Matt's team performs 120 sampling events in a given season. They don't have funding or staffing to fish all hours of the day and Matt explained that the fish have a clear diurnal pattern of resting during the day and moving at night. Increased velocity and flow are exceptions to this pattern, as fry aren't able to overcome that increase in velocity. Coho very consistently peak from early April for about six weeks, even with environmental differences such as river temperature. This is because the out-migrating coho are smolts who have been living in the river for a year already. Chum migrate out at different times because they are fry that just head straight out to the ocean. Chinook have a few peaks throughout the duration of the season. Matt explained the environmental factors that have contributed to out-migrating numbers, such as the drought in 2015-2016 and high snow pack in 2017-2018.

Mike Remington asked how seasonal floods affect trapping and fish trends. Matt replied that it depends on the timing of the flood. If flooding occurs early during the spawning season, the adults will be fine. If flooding occurs right when redds are made in the gravel, there will be some scouring of eggs. If flooding occurs during fry season, fry will get flushed out, some getting pushed into fields with nowhere to go. Trevor Kostanich speculated about the difference in temperature between the Snoqualmie and Skykomish Rivers being related to depth, flow, or vegetation. Trevor also asked about the impact of bass on fry populations. Matt replied that they don't have enough data on adult invasive predators, but he doesn't think there are a lot in the rivers. Invasive predators like bass would more likely be in area ponds and lakes, which occasionally flood and join with the Snoqualmie River. It's unclear if the predators survive in the river after being introduced. Henry Sladek asked how the trap keeps bigger fish out. Matt replied that bigger fish are able to swim away and keep themselves out for the most part. Brian Bodenbach asked if there are fish traveling along the banks in shallow water that the trap misses. Matt explained that fish usually hang out near the banks during the day to rest, and then use the flow of the river to navigate at night. Matt's team performs efficiency trials to compare how their sampling measures up against all the fish in the river. The trap only catches about 1% of the fish. Jessica Lange asked about the accuracy of their production estimates. Matt replied that it varies, but generally, the higher the efficiency of the trap, the more accurate the production numbers are. The Snoqualmie smolt trap has low efficiency.

IV. Forum Business

2019 Cooperative Watershed Management Grant Round Launch

Beth leDoux informed the Forum that she was seeking their approval for the 2019 Cooperative Watershed Management (CWM) grant round schedule and funding priorities. CWM funds are passed through the Forum from the King County Flood Control District (FCD). The process goes as follows: project sponsors submit pre-applications and applications, the Project Review Committee rank and bring back a ranked list of projects to the Forum for approval in May of each year, the FCD approves them in the summer, and funds are available in the fall. The 2019 grant round is set to start tomorrow (January 17) pending the Forum's approval. Beth outlined the funding priorities, noting that they follow the recommendations in Snohomish River Basin Salmon Conservation Plan, with the majority of money spent on habitat actions. The percentage of funds

going towards the monitoring category has increased in the last few years, funding projects such as the Chinook yearling study from Josh Kubo and King County. This marks the third year of three where the Tulalip Tribes receive funds off the top of the CWM pot for their monitoring work. That decision will be re-evaluated in the fall.

Beth leDoux introduced a new, one-time funding source of \$175,000 for the King County One Million Trees effort. Beth explained that these funds have to be applied towards the cost of trees and tree planting only; shrubs and site preparation are not eligible expenses. All grants from this funding source need to be spent by the end of 2020. While CWM funds are very Chinook focused in riparian areas, Million Trees funds can be used in areas other than Chinook mainstem or tributary areas. This grant round will be run in tandem with the CWM grant round and the Million Trees pre-application will simply require pulling the tree costs out of the CWM pre-application. Beth hopes the Forum can find ways to have CWM funds support the administrative portion of tree planting projects that aren't eligible for Million Trees funding. Including return funds, the Forum has over \$1,000,000 in CWM funding, which Perry Falcone noted is a tripling of what the Forum started with. Beth encourages partners to apply for large projects this year, lumping together phases. Peggy Shepard asked if the Million Trees funds could be used to plant trees on the ridge in Snoqualmie. Beth replied that these funds aren't for city tree plantings, but encouraged Peggy and others to think about wide open spaces within cities.

Brian Bodenbach asked who oversees the quality of the plantings. Beth replied that every project sponsor is supposed to spend three years doing maintenance after a project and partners can apply for maintenance grants after that. The Forum's Project Review Committee usually trusts the project sponsors to perform needed maintenance. Brian expressed concern around the trend of planting trees close together, creating dark conditions under the trees that eliminates the ability to put in a quality understory. Brian was told by tree planting crews that they were under instruction to pack the trees in tight to meet the Million Tree goal. Trevor Kostanich asked if it would be appropriate for the Forum to request a protocol for the Forum's Million Tree grant program involving tree spacing. Forum staff agreed to inquire if King County has any planting requirements of their own beyond general guidelines and let the Forum know. Jessica Lange asked if the three year maintenance program is required with the Million Tree grant funds. Beth replied that it isn't required for Million Trees, but is required for CWM.

ACTION: The Forum unanimously approved the 2019 CWM grant schedule and funding priorities.

2019 Legislative Priorities

Elissa Ostergaard walked through the draft legislative priorities for 2019. Elissa announced that there is an opportunity to meet with legislators in Olympia about salmon priorities on February 6 for Washington Salmon Day, organized by the Washington Salmon Coalition. There is a second opportunity on February 12, organized by the Nature Conservancy to support the Floodplains by Design program. Perry Falcone and Elissa will coordinate the logistics for these trips and finalize the priority fact sheets with the King County graphics team. Elissa asked for Forum members to let Perry know if they are interested in attending either of the Olympia trips.

Trevor Kostanich was interested by the low cost of the Pilchuck Dam removal and asked if anyone knew how much of an impact it would have on salmon and if there were salmon populations near the dam. Gretchen Glaub replied that the removal would open up 37 miles of habitat upstream. Matt Pouley added that it is unclear whether Chinook would utilize the upstream habitat, but it would provide good habitat for coho and steelhead. Perry Falcone confirmed that the amount listed is the full project cost, making it pretty cost effective. Brian Bodenbach asked how the full impact on Chinook could be calculated. Matt replied that we would need habitat surveys on the upstream habitat. Gretchen added that Southern Residents do rely on coho during certain times of year. Elissa Ostergaard commented that having fish further upstream in rivers creates a

healthier and more productive watershed. Brian questioned whether this item should fall under the orca sub-section of the fact sheet given it is unclear if it will really benefit orcas. Other Forum members concluded that as there are documented Chinook up to the dam, it is likely they would go upstream at least a little further if the dam was removed.

Elissa Ostergaard will make a few edits suggested by Becky Chaney, such as changing “prevent climate change” to “mitigate/lessen climate change.”

2019 Forum Meeting Topics

Elissa Ostergaard overviewed the 2019 Forum meeting topics, which depend on speaker availability. Elissa asked for Forum members to let her know of any conflicts or suggested additions.

Watershed Restoration and Enhancement Committee – Forum Ex Officio membership

Perry Falcone reminded the Forum of the Ecology-led streamflow restoration effort, which Ingria Jones presented on at the November 2018 Forum meeting. The WRIA 7 Watershed Restoration and Enhancement Committee (WREC) has met twice so far, with good representation from most of the cities, counties, both tribes, and other partners. Perry announced that the Forum would invite Ingria to give an update on the effort at a later meeting. Perry explained that legislation prescribed who was allowed to join the committee, which didn't include the Forum, but the Forum can request an ex officio position. Perry volunteered to be the delegate with Elissa Ostergaard as an alternate and offered to report back to the Forum on those monthly committee meetings. Brian Bodenbach commented that the law could have a big impact on the watershed. Cindy Spiry and Henry Sladek expressed support for the idea. Perry will send around the website for the committee.

ACTION: The Forum unanimously approved Forum staff Perry Falcone and Elissa Ostergaard to represent the Forum as an ex-officio member on the WRIA 7 Watershed Restoration and Enhancement Committee.

CWM Allocations for WRIA Habitat Work

Elissa Ostergaard announced that the Forum staff have been discussing ways to accelerate the pace of project implementation in the watershed. One idea is to ask the King County Flood Control District (FCD) for an increase in the Cooperative Watershed Management (CWM) allocation for the Snoqualmie Watershed. Elissa commented that while it's encouraging to see high out-migrant Chinook numbers, as Matt Pouley described earlier, it is imperative that we do everything we can for orcas who are still struggling. CWM funds are available to all WRIAs in King County and Snoqualmie gets around 19.85% of the total allocation. During the CWM approval process in 2018, FCD Supervisor Gossett commented that there seemed to be a lot of need and asked what the Board of Supervisors could do to help. Elissa requested Forum approval to explore some of those ideas further. Elissa thinks the Snoqualmie Forum can make a good case for the increase based on our track record, return on investment, and leveraged dollars over the years. Elissa stated that this would be a political conversation and the Forum staff would likely be asking for opinions and support from elected officials and FCD supervisors.

Trevor Kostanich asked if there was a down side to this request, besides the staff time burden. Elissa Ostergaard replied that increasing the CWM allocation for all the WRIAs would take money away from capital project implementation and the goal isn't to have the FCD Board of Supervisors increase the rate. Elissa acknowledged the tension at the FCD in spending money for habitat vs. flood safety and instead, Elissa advocates for partnering on multi-benefit projects that provide habitat and flood safety at the same time. Henry Sladek acknowledged the political pressure and wondered if there would be pushback from County staff working on capital projects. Elissa noted that the FCD brings in between \$55-60 million per year and is sitting

on large fund balance that they worry about balancing. This could be an opportunity to help with spending down some of the reserves. Henry asked why the Supervisors wouldn't have reached this conclusion on their own. Perry Falcone replied that the FCD has been very flood focused, but there are actually quite a few projects on our project list and the FCD's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) list that overlap. Perry suggested that expanding the CWM allocation might leverage more money for both fish and flood benefits, following in the State's Floodplains by Design program paradigm.

Trevor Kostanich asked if anyone has sought the opinion of the Fish Farm Flood (FFF) Committee. Elissa replied that she hasn't. Cindy Spiry commented that she sits on the FFF Committee and she supports an increase to the CWM allocation. FFF has been looking at how every group can work together to better focus on multi-benefit projects. Cindy believes the CWM allocation has been unfair for a long time; Snoqualmie is a bigger watershed and we should pursue any opportunity to increase funding sources. Matt Baerwalde commented that the flood participation at FFF has been limited and there is an attempt to bring the FCD back into FFF 2.0. Matt thinks participants of FFF 2.0 would be supportive. Jason Walker agreed and doesn't see a downside to requesting more funding to accomplish more. Matt suggested identifying existing funding limitations, such as King County's Hafner-Barfuse project. Elissa clarified that FFF is a County-led effort and while King County staff can't lead this request, Snoqualmie Forum staff have a different role. Forum staff could bring this topic to FFF and seek input.

John Velimesis commented that the work being done in Washington State with Floodplains by Design is being used as a model nationally and regionally for floodplain management. The US Army Corps of Engineers now has a committee looking at non-structural flood control, including habitat-friendly green infrastructure. King County is a powerhouse within Washington State, but if you look beyond King County, there is a lot going on with non-structural approaches to flood control. John suggested pointing out that increasing the CWM allocation isn't anti-flood, but rather it supports non-structural flood control and simultaneously benefits habitat. John can provide more information to help support that argument. Peggy Shepard clarified whether berm removal projects are multi-benefit.

Elissa Ostergaard added that the approval she is seeking from the Forum tonight is to let the Forum staff explore the idea and they would bring back more information to a future Forum meeting. Trevor Kostanich is comfortable with pursuing the idea but would like more information at the next Forum meeting and cautioned against a premature approach. Perry Falcone replied that Forum staff can commit as part of the research to be sensitive and cautious in the process and be conscious of all the players. Cindy Spiry asked about the time frame for the decision. Elissa replied that the FCD usually makes their budget decisions in November for the following year.

ACTION: The Forum gave a general consensus for Forum staff to pursue the idea further.

V. Closing

Cindy Spiry thanked everyone for coming.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, March 20, 2019, Snoqualmie Tribal Admin Building, 6:30-8:30 p.m.