

**Snoqualmie Watershed Forum**  
**MEETING SUMMARY**  
**November 17, 2010**  
**Meeting 6:45-9:00 pm**  
**Snoqualmie City Hall**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Elizabeth Walker	City of Duvall Councilmember, Forum Chair
Charles Peterson	City of Snoqualmie Councilmember, Forum Vice-Chair
Chris Garcia	City of North Bend Councilmember
Kathy Lambert	King County Councilmember
Mike Flowers	City of Carnation Councilmember, Alternate
Cindy Spiry	Snoqualmie Tribe, Alternate

**MEETING PROCEEDINGS**

**Introductions and Minutes**

- The Forum approved the September 15, 2010 meeting summary.

**Updates and Announcements**

Yvette Lizée-Smith (Watershed Coordinator) gave the following announcements:

- *King County Flood Control District (FCD) Funding* – As a result of falling property values across western Washington, local taxing authorities are bumping up against the aggregate allowance for local tax levies imposed by counties, cities and most special districts of \$5.90 per \$1,000 assessed value. The limit is established by State law. As a junior taxing district, the FCD risks losing its entire assessment if any communities within its assessment area exceed the \$5.90 limit. As a solution, the FCD has arranged to ‘buy out’ the taxing authority of several small fire districts in 2011 to keep levies in said districts below the limit –thereby allowing FCD to continue to collect its county-wide levy. FCD’s budget for the year will be reduced by roughly \$5 million (to \$30 million) to compensate these fire districts for their shortfall. FCD may need to adjust its 2011 project list to align with the new funding level.
- *Stillwater Project Funding Update* – The Wild Fish Conservancy was awarded \$481,000 for the Stillwater project by the Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) fund. Earlier this year, the project received \$50,000 from the Snoqualmie KCD Regular Grant Round, an amount that was critical to meet PSAR match requirements. The project will remove approximately 1000 ft of river bank revetment from the mainstem Snoqualmie River at the WDFW Stillwater Wildlife Area.
- *WSU Landowner Cost Share Workshop* - On November 10, WSU Extension hosted a Landowner Cost-share Workshop at Snoqualmie Library. Forty-two (42) landowners participated. This event was sponsored by the Forum through our 2010 agreement with WSU extension. Perry Falcone, Snoqualmie Project Coordinator, was also among the presenters.

- *Cross-watershed Funding Mechanisms Discussion* – At the July 21 Forum meeting WRIA 9 representatives gave a presentation on alternative funding mechanisms for salmon recovery. As a follow up to that presentation, Elizabeth Walker and Perry Falcone participated in a joint meeting with representatives from WRIA8, WRIA9 and Snohomish County to further discuss this topic. The group agreed to set up 3 work groups to develop criteria for potential funding mechanisms and to explore the potential for enabling legislation. The Snoqualmie Forum team will be participating in some of the work groups and will keep the Forum informed of developments on this front.

Councilmember Lambert noted that the Snoqualmie Forum funding met some debate during the 2011 County budget process. Representatives from other watersheds pointed to the fact that the Snoqualmie Forum is not a “lead entity”, despite carrying on many of the functions that lead entities do. Councilmember Lambert suggested investigating a basin co-lead arrangement with Snohomish County – to better reflect the Snoqualmie Forum’s role in the basin and to amplify our funding stability.

- *Puget Sound Partnership Local Integration* - Under the Puget Sound Partnership (PSP) geographic structure, the Snoqualmie Watershed and Snohomish Basin fall within the Whidbey Basin Action Area. The area spans portions of 5 counties (King, Snohomish, Island, Skagit and Whatcom) and 4 watersheds. PSP and others across the Whidbey Basin have been trying to determine the appropriate scale to organize in our region. Under the current proposal, Local Integrating Organizations (LIO) would be established in each of the 4 watersheds. The LIOs would facilitate communication among the watersheds and between local groups and PSP. Read more about the details in the meeting hand out.

### Nature Vision

Clay Heilman of Nature Vision gave a brief presentation on the organization’s history, mission and educational programs. Since 2007, the KCD and Snoqualmie Forum have provided funding support to Nature Vision for field and classroom education of students in Snoqualmie Valley schools. The program has been very well received, but long-term funding is not consistent with the KCD grant program objectives. Nature Vision is seeking funding from new sources to replace the KCD funding that it was unable to secure for 2011. Without replacement funds the Nature Vision’s Snoqualmie conservation education program risks being cancelled for 2011. The total cost for the project is approximately \$15,000 for one school year. The project reaches about 3,500 student participants annually, and includes:

- 75 water education classroom or field presentations for Elementary and Secondary students in the Snoqualmie Valley
- 10 Blue Teams that provide student stewardship projects in the watershed
- A bus transportation scholarship of \$1,000 so students can get to field sites.

Ms. Heilman asked Forum members for suggestions and references for potential funding entities in the watershed, such as major employers. Suggestions from the Forum included Puget Sound Energy, Nintendo and Hancock. Cindy Spiry (Snoqualmie Tribe) asked whether “traditional tribal knowledge” could be integrated into the Nature Vision program. Ms. Heilman answered affirmatively.

## KCD Award for Mr. Art Groeneveg

Sara Hemphill, interim director of the King Conservation District (KCD), presented an annual KCD award to Mr. Art Groeneveg for his many conservation activities as a long-term dairy farmer in the Snoqualmie Valley. Mr. Groeneveg's Hollandia Farm is just north of the county line along the mainstem Snoqualmie, but he also manages other farm properties in the Snoqualmie, including Vincent Ranch in the Ames Creek basin. Art has secured Salmon Safe certification through Stewardship Partners for each of his farm properties and has also planted riparian vegetation along farm streams through the Conservation Reserves Enhancement Program (CREP).

## **Selection of New Forum Representatives**

Yvette gave an update on the process to fill ex-officio seats on the Snoqualmie Watershed Forum.

- *KCD representative:* King Conservation District is expected to appoint Bill Knutsen as the KCD representative. Bill has served on the Forum for many years and was originally appointed by the Snoqualmie Valley Governments Association.
- *Unincorporated King County Citizen Representatives:* King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks is currently reviewing applications for the two citizen seats for unincorporated King County and will forward their recommendation to the County executive. Two of the applicants were in attendance and were given a brief opportunity to introduce themselves (Mr. Doug McClelland and Mr. Isaac Cunningham).
- *SVGA Citizen Representative:* The Snoqualmie Valley Governments Association (SVGA) is also in the process of reviewing applications and contacting applicants for 1 citizen representative from a Snoqualmie Valley city. The SVGA has agreed to keep the Forum posted on the appointment process. One of the SVGA applicants (Derek Young) was in attendance and provided a brief description of his interests and qualifications.
- *Non-Profit Representative:* The choice of non-profit organization representative will be made by the Forum itself. The two candidates – David Burger (Stewardship Partners) and Micah Wait (Wild Fish Conservancy) introduced themselves and their respective organizations. After these introductory statements and follow-up questions, the Forum agreed to make the decision via e-mail, and may schedule a conference call if necessary.

Forum Chair Elizabeth Walker thanked all of the candidates for attending the meeting and for their interest in serving on the Snoqualmie Watershed Forum.

## **KCD Opportunity Fund – Criteria Revisions**

Perry Falcone described the KCD Opportunity Grant program and the proposed criteria for the 2011 grant round.

- The criteria have undergone only minor changes since 2010. The criteria identify High Priority Geographic Areas and High Priority Actions, which are used to align the KCD and Forum project review and ranking processes (see meeting handout for details). The proposed changes

include the addition of Lower Patterson Creek as a high priority area, and new language regarding the need to target riparian restoration projects to sites where canopy conditions are substantially degraded.

- The total Opportunity Fund pool is \$200,000. It includes \$100,000 allocated by the Forum from its larger KCD Regular Round, matched by \$100,000 from KCD's own operating funds.
- **Decision:** The Forum approved the revised criteria and the \$100,000 Forum allocation for the 2011 Opportunity Fund round.

#### *Forum Comments and Discussion*

- In follow-up discussion, Councilmember Lambert (King County) suggested that public safety (specifically flooding issues) be added to the criteria for eligible Opportunity Fund grants in future years. She also suggested that alluvial fan projects should be elevated in importance.
- Councilmember Garcia (North Bend) requested that in future presentations staff include maps of the named creeks or sub-basins to better inform the Forum about the geographic areas of interest.
- Perry described some of the differences between the Forum's stated priorities for the Opportunity Fund and the priorities of the KCD Board. The two entities jointly select projects for funding meaning projects must be approved on both sides to receive a grant. Perry emphasized that from the program's outset, the goal was to provide funding to smaller tributary and stewardship projects that might not necessarily be in the highest-priority areas for habitat restoration according to the salmon plan. The Forum's Regular KCD Grant Round (another grant program we administer) tends to direct most funds to large habitat projects in priority river reaches. The Opportunity Fund program, in turn, provides a way to get projects done in tributaries. Also, private property owners are eligible under the Opportunity Fund but not under the Regular Round. Public entities and non-profits can apply under either program.
- Sara Hemphill of KCD described the KCD perspective that private property owners should have priority under the Opportunity Fund and that the Board has misgivings about funding cities and other public entities from this source.
- Perry explained that the 2011 Opportunity Fund Round will include a face-to-face meeting between the Forum and KCD project ranking committees so we can jointly walk through the projects rankings and resolve any misalignment in our project recommendations before they go forward for decision.

#### **Snoqualmie Watershed Five-Year Salmon Plan Status Report – Presentation**

Janne Kaje gave a presentation on the Draft Snoqualmie Watershed Five-Year Salmon Plan Status Report. In November 2009, the Forum provided feedback to staff about the proposed report content and format. The recently completed draft is the first full compilation of the report. Janne described the report's purpose and provided a summary of data and findings from each of the core chapters.

- The primary purpose of the report is to provide a status update on habitat restoration, habitat protection and other initiatives five years after the launch of the ten-year Snohomish Basin Salmon Conservation Plan. The report will be used to highlight successes, identify areas where greater progress is needed, and to identify key priorities for the next five years.
- Regarding restoration, Janne described progress to date toward 10-year goals that were identified in the Plan. He noted that the Plan's emphasis on 'process-based restoration' presents some distinct challenges for monitoring and reporting on progress. Process-based restoration emphasizes actions that will allow natural river and watershed processes to shape habitat conditions, rather than the construction of specific habitat components. For example, levee removal is a top-priority action because it will allow the reconnection of the river to its floodplain and will produce more complex channel features over time. However, this approach makes it difficult to enumerate specific habitat gains immediately or in a simple way.
- The report shows that for most categories of restoration actions, basin partners are well off pace from meeting the 10-year goals in another five years. The available funding is the primary limiting factor. The available grant funds are nowhere near the levels needed to keep pace with the planned trajectory of habitat restoration.
- Janne also described efforts at habitat protection, such as protective land use policies, tax incentives, purchase of development rights, and regulations. The salmon Plan does not have quantitative goals for habitat protection, but highlights priority watershed processes that should be protected through a variety of mechanisms. A very high percentage of the watershed is in public ownership and the report includes maps that show the geographic distribution of public vs private ownership, designated land uses, tax incentive programs and other measures that contribute to habitat protection.
- The effectiveness of regulations (e.g., forestry, agriculture, local land use, etc.) has not been evaluated in any comprehensive way and represents a substantial information gap. However, Janne summarized results from a King County DDES study that evaluated compliance with permit conditions for single-family construction projects in unincorporated King County, specifically within the Snoqualmie watershed. The study found substantial problems with permit compliance in areas such as erosion control, critical area buffers, construction stormwater drainage, and others.
- Councilmember Garcia asked whether anyone had looked at the effectiveness of city regulations, such as environmental protection requirements for home construction. Staff suggested that the Forum could return to this topic at a future meeting and recommend potential areas for Forum action.
- Following the report summary, Janne explained that the Forum will have a chance to delve more deeply into specific issues raised by the report (e.g., funding shortfall, regulatory effectiveness, etc.) at future meetings in 2011.
- **Action:** Janne distributed copies of the report to those in attendance and agreed to send a link to an electronic version to all Forum members and staff. Forum members were asked to review the report and to send Janne their comments by Friday, December 3.

## **Snoqualmie Forum Budget Update**

Yvette provided a brief update on the Forum's 2011 budget. The King County Council passed its budget for the year. The budget includes the County's cost share portion of the Snoqualmie Watershed Forum Inter-local Agreement (ILA). Also, the Council approved a 22 cent increase in the County's Surface Water Management (SWM) Fee which is a major source of funds for the County's ILA cost-share and for capital projects in the Snoqualmie watershed. As a result, the County's annual SWM fee will increase from \$110 to \$133 per residential parcel. The county's new fee remains below the average stormwater management rate charged by cities and counties in the region (which is currently \$144 per residential parcel based on data collected by the county).

## **General Discussion**

Councilmember Kathy Lambert brought three issues of concern to the Forum's attention:

1. As part of the ongoing updates to each local jurisdiction's Shoreline Master Program (which applies to land use and development within 200 ft of larger streams, rivers and lakes), there are new requirements emerging that will apply to the entire 100-year floodplain. [The new emphasis is a product of the recent National Marine Fisheries Service Biological Opinion regarding the FEMA Flood Insurance Program.]
2. The Flood Control District has agreed to allocate partial funding over several years to the Seattle seawall replacement project. This will affect the availability of funds for flood control projects in other parts of the County, including the Snoqualmie watershed, and potentially push projects further down the schedule.
3. The recent agreement by King County to acquire a large shoreline property on Maury Island that had long been the subject of a dispute about the expansion of gravel mining on the island will have effects on the Snoqualmie watershed. Councilmember Lambert noted that as a result, more gravel mining will have to take place in other parts of the County, including the Snoqualmie watershed. She remarked that one barge holds as much gravel as 753 trucks.

Councilmember Garcia, as a follow up to discussions about outreach and budgets, noted that each city could easily add outreach materials to utility bills that are mailed to all residents in the service area. He would be supportive of doing so in North Bend. He also remarked that education and outreach activities – like those described by Nature Vision – should be identified as priorities in the grant evaluation criteria.

## **Public Comment**

No comments offered by members of the public.

## **Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be January 19, 2011 from 6:45-9:00 pm at the Snoqualmie Tribal Office. *[Note – the Jan. 19 meeting has since been rescheduled for February 9].*