

**Snoqualmie Watershed Forum
MEETING SUMMARY
November 19, 2008
Meeting 7:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m.
Meadowbrook Farm Interpretive Center, North Bend**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Charles Peterson	City of Snoqualmie Councilmember
Elizabeth Walker	City of Duvall Councilmember
Ross Loudenback	City of North Bend Councilmember
Mike Flowers	City of Carnation, Mayor
Gary Roberts	Citizen Representative
Cindy Spiry	Snoqualmie Tribe, Alternate

MEETING PROCEEDINGS

Introductions and Minutes

- The Forum approved the minutes from the September 17, 2008 meeting.

Announcements

Yvette Lizee-Smith, Watershed Coordinator, provided the following announcements:

- Project updates:
 - Chinook Bend: King County will begin Phase I of the Chinook Bend project in December 2008. Phase 1 activities will include installation of cottonwood boles and some plantings.
 - Interpretive Signs for Lower Tolt Project Site: Snoqualmie Forum staff is coordinating meetings with King County and City of Seattle to plan interpretive signs for the Lower Tolt project site (Tolt MacDonald Park). The signs will be funded by King County and SPU. They will use artwork by Denise Dahn – the artist who did the Snoqualmie Trail signs. The signs will be installed once Lower Tolt Floodplain Reconnection project is complete in 2009
- King County Council’s Committee of the Whole hosted a meeting on Salmon Recovery on October 27th. The meeting included a panel comprised of Forum representatives from WRIAs 8, 9 and the Snoqualmie Watershed Forum. Councilmember Elizabeth Walker presented on behalf of our Forum. Overall, the meeting was very positive and highlighted the importance of salmon recovery during a time of budget challenges.
- King County 2009 budget update – King County is facing substantial budget challenges heading into 2009. The County Council is due to adopt a final budget on Monday,

November 24. Our current information is thus based on the Executive's budget which was submitted October 13.

- There are currently no changes to the King County Interlocal Agreement (ILA) portion of the budget, but the Water and Land Resources Division budget took a substantial hit due to declining surface water management fee revenues. The decline is driven by annexation of unincorporated lands into city jurisdictions. Also, compliance with the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System II stormwater permit requirements is demanding a larger share of the Division's budget.
- Other programs that suffered direct cuts include rural stewardship planning, outreach, yard talk, the Vashon Island steward position, current use taxation, and many others.
- The Division also cut by 1.0 FTE the County's participation in the broader Snohomish Basin Salmon Recovery Forum. This FTE provided partial funding to both Yvette's and Janne's positions. Janne will continue to have 0.5 FTE for the Snoqualmie Watershed Forum, but the remainder of his position has been refocused on rural stormwater issues. Yvette will take over outreach functions previously performed by Saffa Bardaro who has been assigned full-time to the Flood District.
- Please see the meeting handout for further details on the County budget.
- Forum staffing update – Yvette has been asked to backfill for the Regional Partnership Unit supervisor at King County WLRD (Sarah Ogier) who will be on maternity leave. The assignment is expected to last from December 2008 – April 2009. Perry Falcone will absorb many of Yvette's day-to-day watershed coordinator responsibilities, with assistance from Janne and possible with a potential temporary hire. Yvette will continue to attend important meetings and to dedicate approximately 20% of her time to the Forum.
- Nature Vision Snoqualmie Watershed Festival – With support from the Forum's King Conservation District grant round, Nature Vision held a watershed education festival for school children at Camp River Ranch. The festival was attended by 283 students representing 12 classrooms from various schools in the watershed. The 2nd day of the festival targeting Girl Scouts was canceled due to low registration and the effects of flooding.
 - Nature Vision will return the unused portion of the grant (approximately \$850) to KCD. Forum members asked why such a small portion of the grant is being returned if only 50% of the festival was delivered. Perry explained that a substantial amount of the cost goes into preparation of materials, curriculum, etc. and not just the event itself, but he will seek additional clarification from Nature Vision.

Updates – Water quality and emerging issues

- Water Quality Synthesis Report - Janne Kaje, Forum staff, provided an update on the comments received and the revision schedule for the Water Quality Synthesis Report. Comments to date have been received from Forum members, Valley Staff, the Department of Ecology, as well as several King County employees with expertise in the Snoqualmie.
 - Janne is working with the Visual Communications unit to improve the map products.
 - The report is expected to be finalized by the end of the year, with printing to be scheduled in late December or early January.

- King County Flood Control District Subregional Opportunity Fund – Janne described the application process and schedule for the Fund and referred to previous Forum discussions on the topic. The Fund includes 10% of the annual revenues of the district, allocated to jurisdictions proportionally according to the percentage of appraised property values. The first disbursement will be a 2-year sum combining 2008-2009 [see handout for each jurisdiction’s allocation].
 - Janne encouraged Valley staff and Forum members to make sure that each city’s representatives to the Basin Technical Committee are aware of the December 8, 2008 deadline for applications. He described the applications as being very simple, including an option to simply roll over contributions to the following year.
 - King County’s share of the Opportunity Fund allocation is roughly \$1M for the two-year 2008-09 cycle. According to Flood District staff, 50% of that amount has already been earmarked for specific projects in Mill Creek, May Valley and Mullen Slough. None of these projects are in the Snoqualmie watershed. The remaining 50% will be dedicated to projects within Potential Annexation Areas (PAAs) in various parts of the County. After 2009, it is likely that the County portion of the Fund will be managed by the Stormwater Services section via the drainage complaint line. In other words, for projects to be eligible for funding, a drainage complaint would have to be filed with the Stormwater program.
- Steelhead and Tokul Creek Hatchery – Janne provided an update on the status of the steelhead management discussion having to do with WDFW’s proposal to close or modify the operations at the Tokul Creek hatchery. As described in the handout materials, the plan has been revised from the original proposal in response to public comments that were generally against hatchery closure. The current plan focuses on eliminating so-called “outplants”, i.e., fish that are raised in the hatchery but transported to other parts of the watershed for release. Specifically, the current program includes outplants of 40,000 winter steelhead smolts, split between the Tolt River and Raging River release locations.
 - Janne explained that the WDFW believes the revised plan will reduce the adverse effects of hatchery fish on wild fish because interbreeding will be reduced. This assumption is based on the idea that fish released from the hatchery will return to the hatchery, rather than dispersing to the Raging River, Tolt River, or other tributaries where wild fish are also present. The agency has not proposed any monitoring to learn whether this hypothesis is correct.
 - Since the WDFW has not presented any ecological analysis or a basin plan that supports the proposed action, it is difficult to review and comment on the matter in an informed way. The WDFW is currently working on such a plan and staff will keep the Forum informed of progress. Moreover, the Forum supported the idea of having WDFW make a presentation to the Forum regarding the Tokul Creek proposal and steelhead management more generally.
 - Janne also pointed out that the WDFW is currently in discussions with the Tulalip Tribes with whom they share co-management responsibilities. Final decisions about Tokul Creek are likely to arise from those discussions.
 - Chair Peterson asked about the involvement of the Snoqualmie Tribe and referred to statement made by the Tribe in the newspaper regarding this matter. Steve Mullen of the Snoqualmie Tribe (attending the meeting as a member of the audience) confirmed that

the Tribe had requested discussions with WDFW regarding the matter and that the agency and Tribe had a meeting. Mr. Mullen indicated that the tribe continues to be very interested in the future of the hatchery and hopes that the WDFW will continue to consult not only with the Tulalip Tribes but also with the Snoqualmie Tribe.

- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) / NOAA Biological Opinion regarding the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) – Janne summarized the implications of the recent Biological Opinion issued by NOAA regarding the FEMA NFIP program. In short, NOAA found that the NFIP constitutes jeopardy to Chinook salmon, steelhead and Orcas which are listed under the Endangered Species Act. Janne has circulated materials related to this matter to Valley Staff and to Forum members. In addition, each City should have been contacted by FEMA regarding this matter. The Biological Opinion made several recommendations to FEMA about potential modifications to the program to reduce impacts on listed species. Janne invited Valley Staff to provide comments about the matter and share how their jurisdictions are dealing with the issue [a letter written by the City of Snoqualmie to FEMA was included as a meeting hand-out].
 - Lauren Hollenbeck summarized the City’s letter to FEMA, which states that the City will not adopt a voluntary development moratorium as recommended by FEMA. The City also described its participation in the voluntary Community Rating System program that includes stricter floodplain management standards than those required by FEMA under its Minimum Standards for NFIP participation. A key issue for the City of Snoqualmie is the fact that they are located upstream of Snoqualmie Falls and thus the direct effects to salmon habitat described by NOAA are largely not applicable.
 - Mike McCarty (North Bend) described similar arguments for the City of North Bend’s response. A letter to FEMA is forthcoming. Mike noted that only water quality issues and flood storage effects have a nexus to salmon habitat for cities above the falls. North Bend similarly concludes that a moratorium on development is neither necessary nor practical.
 - NOAA is holding a meeting with local jurisdictions in January. King County is also setting up workshops to support other local jurisdictions, likely in February 2009.

KCD Grant Update

- Perry Falcone, Forum staff, provided an update on both the KCD Opportunity Fund grant round as well as the “regular” round.
 - All but one grant in the Opportunity Fund round have been approved by KCD. The remaining project is the Treehouse Point project that is caught up in King County Code enforcement issues. The KCD prefers to have these issues resolved before moving forward with funding. If the matter is not resolved soon, the next project from the list of projects recommended for funding – Changing Seasons Farm – may receive funding from the 2008 round instead of Treehouse Point. Treehouse Point could then potentially be funded in 2009 if the current obstacles are resolved.
 - All projects in the \$590K regular round have now been approved. The Stillwater project had been held up due to concerns about the adequacy of analysis regarding impacts to surrounding landowners. Note that the funding is for a feasibility/design study only and

not for implementation. Project partners have agreed to make a presentation to the KCD Board as project designs are developed in greater detail.

- Supplemental grant request – Nature Vision received \$15,000 this year for watershed education based via classroom-based programs. Demand has been higher than expected with 76 requests for classes compared to the estimated 50. The organization has requested an additional \$2500 to extend the program. Perry clarified that the Forum does not typically entertain requests for additional funding outside of the grant cycle, but it is also not unprecedented. Since the program was advertised as a free program, Nature Vision did not want to ask for fees from schools to participate.
 - Forum members expressed concern that the organization had not gauged the demand accurately, and that the Forum has previously been concerned by the prospect of on-going funding for education programs rather than start-up support. Forum members also asked whether the funds returned by Nature Vision from the Watershed Festival project could be applied here instead. Absent accurate estimates of the amount to be returned, and the administrative difficulty of transferring funds between grants, it was recommended that this request be considered solely on its merits.
 - DECISION: Following discussion, the \$2500 increase was approved.

2008 Accomplishments

- Yvette summarized the Forum accomplishments for 2008 [see handout] in several areas, including Habitat Restoration and Protection; Coordination and Capacity Building, Technical and Policy initiatives; and Education and Outreach.
 - Early next year we hope to produce a new ‘report card’ assessment of progress toward salmon recovery based habitat goals through the use of the soon-to-be-completed Habitat Work Schedule database that is being developed by WDFW and populated for our basin by Snohomish County with support from King County.
 - Compared to prior years, the Opportunity Fund was a major undertaking, particularly for Perry and partners at KCD. The program is certainly a success but it will need to be more streamlined and targeted in the future.
 - Yvette highlighted the fact that Snoqualmie-based projects have gotten the lion’s share of WRIA 7 project funding for the last 2-3 years from the Salmon Recovery Funding Board and other sources.
 - Participation in Puget Sound Partnership-related activities has been an additional area of effort and emphasis in 2008.
 - A new website for the Forum will be launched soon with a new look and a greater emphasis on implementation and project profiles, whereas the current site is still heavily focused on planning.

General Forum Business

- Forum comments on the Puget Sound Partnership Action Agenda – Janne reminded the Forum of prior discussions regarding the short timeline for comments on the Draft Action Agenda. The draft was issued just two weeks ago with comments due tomorrow (November

20, 2008). Staff arranged a meeting with Valley Staff and Linda Lyshall of the Partnership. Chair Peterson also attended the meeting. Since issuance of the draft Agenda, staff has held a conference call to discuss Forum comments and to craft a comment letter.

- Ross Loudenback expressed frustration at being asked to comment on such an extensive document and program that lacks any meaningful discussion of funding or timelines. Whatever comments are provided cannot be interpreted as an endorsement of the Agenda itself since we are unable to evaluate these crucial elements of the plan. He asked that comments to this effect be included in the letter.
- Elizabeth Walker expressed concern that “everything seems to be a high priority” and worried that upland watersheds like the Snoqualmie may end up ignored in terms of priority actions. She encouraged staff to include comments to this effect in the letter.
- Yvette noted that the delivery mechanism for landowner-focused programs in rural areas is unclear in the current draft and that it is a major issue in the Snoqualmie where the County, KCD and partners deliver such programs.
- Janne asked Forum members and staff to submit any major comments or concerns by 11:00 A.M. on Thursday, November 20 so that staff can finalize the letter and submit it to the Partnership before close of business Thursday.
- Forum Chair and co-Chair Discussion – Traditionally the Forum Chair and co-Chair serve a two-year term that ends following the November meeting. In late 2007, Chair Peterson and co-Chair Walker agreed to serve for one year.
 - Forum members agreed that discussions about the positions should be postponed until January since many city councils conduct their committee assignments in January.
 - The Snoqualmie Tribe believed that Ray Mullen would be appointed as the Forum representative in an upcoming meeting. Chair Peterson expressed his hope that the Tribe’s representative(s) would participate actively in the Forum’s activities in the coming year.
 - DECISION: Postpone Chair and co-Chair selection until January.

Public Comment

- No members of the public wished to comment.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be January 21 from 7-9 pm at the Snoqualmie Tribe council chambers in Snoqualmie. Karen Suyama will investigate whether meeting facilities at the new casino may also be available for future Forum meetings.