

Snoqualmie Watershed Forum
MEETING SUMMARY
September 17, 2008
Meeting 7:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m.
Carnation City Hall – Carnation, WA

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
Kathy Lambert	King County Councilmember
Will Harper	Citizen Representative
Bill Knutsen	Citizen Representative
Gary Roberts	Citizen Representative

MEETING PROCEEDINGS

Introductions and Minutes

- The Forum approved the minutes from the July 16, 2008 meeting.

Announcements

Yvette provided the following announcements:

- *Project Updates* – Phase 1 of the Lower Tolt Floodplain Reconnection project in Tolt MacDonald Park was completed on time and on budget. At the other end of the park, the Camp Gilead Off-Channel Reconnection project is also nearing completion. The levee breach and wetland reconnection are done and final touch up work will wrap up this year.
- *Salmon Recovery Funding Board* – The Snohomish Basin Salmon Recovery Forum (WRIA7) has recommended 4 projects totaling \$628,340 for 2008 SRFB funding. Three of the four projects will occur in the Snoqualmie Watershed.
- *2009-11 State Biennial Budget Submission* – Puget Sound watersheds are assembling a list of salmon recovery projects to include in the Puget Sound Partnership 2009-2011 state budget submission. As currently proposed, they would request \$70M for salmon recovery in 2009-2011, split across 14 watersheds. Snohomish Basin (WRIA7) would receive about \$5.2M. WRIA7 will emphasize estuary projects in this round since they are ready for construction. [Post-meeting update – The biennial request has since been reduced from \$70M to \$55M].
- *Multiple Watershed Assembly* – WRIAs 7, 8, 9, 10 are holding a multiple watershed assembly tomorrow afternoon (Sep 18) in Tukwila. The event will include two parts: a

briefing on the PSP planning process for the South Central action area; and a workshop-style session to identify common legislative agenda priorities that we can all advocate for.

- *King County Budget* – King County Executive will transmit its recommended 2009 budget to KC Council on October 13. KC Council will review the budget and hold public hearings through mid-October and November. They are slated to adopt the final budget the week before Thanksgiving.
- *Watershed Tour for PSP Representatives* – On August 18, King County and Snoqualmie Forum co-hosted a watershed tour for Steve Sakuma, Gary Rowe and Linda Lyshall – our PSP Whidbey Action Area representatives. Each stop highlighted a different set of themes.
- *PSP Action Agenda Update* – The Draft PSP Action Agenda is expected to be released in next 2-3 weeks. Linda Lyshall (our PSP liaison) is willing to provide a Snoqualmie-based briefing on the Action Agenda if there is interest. An option might be to hold the briefing on October 23, 1:30-3:30 pm, as part of the Snoqualmie Valley Planning Staff meeting.
- **Decision:** The Forum asked ILA staff to coordinate a Snoqualmie-based briefing on the PSP Action Agenda. Staff should survey members to identify a suitable date.

King County Flood Control District (FCD) Update

Clint Loper (FCD Basin Supervisor for Snoqualmie/SF Skykomish Watershed) gave an update on Snoqualmie-based actions under the Flood Control District.

- FCD is implementing a 10-year work program. Its budget is about a \$30 million per year. The majority of funds are dedicated to capital projects.

2008 Activities

- *Levee Repairs* – About a dozen levee repairs were completed in 2008 to address damage from the November 2006 floods. Repair sites included:
 - South Fork Snoqualmie – Allen, Riverbend and O’bert levees
 - Middle Fork Snoqualmie – Mason Thoson Ells, and Mason Thorson Extension levees
 - Lower Snoqualmie – Aldair and McElhoe Pearson levees
 - Raging River – Arruda, Bryce’s Bump, Waring Levees
- *Levee Improvements* – The FCD is also undertaking a geotechnical assessment to identify structural problems with the existing levees along the SF Snoqualmie in and adjacent to North Bend. They were able to identify and repair 8 sinkholes in the process as an early action related to the assessment work. Many of the sinkholes were caused by decaying tree stumps which were not removed when the levees were first built. The FCD will undertake additional assessment to determine if more sinkholes are present. They will also be implementing implement more comprehensive levee improvements/construction at some sites over the next years.

Recommended 2009 Budget

- FCD's recommended 2009 budget for Snoqualmie/South Fork Skykomish projects is about \$10 million – roughly divided as follows:
 - \$5.5 million for flood buyouts, home elevations and other non-structural solutions
 - \$3.5 million for flood damage repairs and levee/revetment modifications
 - \$600,000 for other structural improvements

Examples of 2009 project priorities:

- Councilmember Loudenback asked if the 2009 budget included buyouts in North Bend's Shamrock Park area. Clint confirmed it would, adding that the budget included a comprehensive suite of actions entitled the North Bend Area Residential Flood Mitigation project, which would include Shamrock buyouts, home elevations, and other assessments and structural improvements aimed at addressing flooding problems in the area.
- The Tolt San Souci Neighborhood is prioritized for buyout during the 2009-11 period. This neighborhood is marked by high flood and channel migration risks coupled with limited first responder access during floods. It is also a priority reach for salmon recovery. FCD would partner with Seattle City Light and King County on this project, which would include a revetment removal and habitat component, once the buyout was complete.
- The Miller Home buyouts (originally budgetted for 2008) did not go through as the landowner was no longer willing to sell. In place, FCD is recommending that the funds be reallocated to the Timberlane Village Home buyouts. While Timberlane was originally proposed as an out-year project, high flows and bank erosion in May 2008 has moved it up the priority list. Three property owners have also expressed interest in selling to FCD.
- Neal Road (off highway 203) has been closed since winter 2003-04 due to erosion on the right river bank. FCD will partner with King County Roads to relocate the road away from the river. They are currently investigating alternatives. Construction is tentatively planned for 2009, although it may be delayed.
- In 2009, FCD will also allocate about \$700,000 to Phase 2 of the Lower Tolt Floodplain Reconnection Project in Tolt MacDonald Park. This \$6.4 million levee setback project has both habitat and flood benefits and is primarily funded with salmon funds.
- FCD also has a number of programmatic activities planned for 2009, including:
 - Implementation of the Flood-Farm taskforce recommendations (e.g. farm pads, flood proofing cost-share assistance to farmers);
 - Operation of the Flood Warning Center and flood patrols;
 - Community Rating System incentive program;
 - Gravel monitoring in certain reaches.

FCD Subregional Opportunity Fund

- Clint explained that the FCD Advisory Committee would be forwarding its recommendations on the FCD Subregional Opportunity Fund (SOF) to the FCD Board. Among its recommendations, the Advisory Committee recommended that the SOF be allocated to jurisdictions based on assessed value. They also recommended adopting the broad eligibility definition as outlined in [RCW 86.15](#). The latter definition includes activities associated with flood control, stormwater control and watershed management.

[Post-Meeting Update – At their Sep 22 meeting, the FCD Board approved a modified definition. Based on the Board’s decision, SOF funds can be used for flood control, stormwater control or watershed management. In the case of watershed management, the FCD Board chose to restrict activities to watershed management projects with a link to stormwater or flood control.]

- Clint closed by reviewing some upcoming FCD decisions and meetings:
 - Sep 22 – FCD Board meeting and decision on the Subregional Opportunity Fund.
 - Oct 2 – Snoqualmie/SF Skykomish Basin Technical Committee meeting in Carnation
 - Oct 8 – Interagency flood preparedness meeting in Fall City
 - Oct 28 – Flood-Farm workshop for farmers in the Snoqualmie Valley

Questions and Comments

- Councilmember Lambert, who serves on the FCD Board, expressed concern that the Subregional Opportunity Fund definition be opened to include non-flood related projects. She felt it important that the FCD funds be used for their originally intended purpose of flood management, and that the definition be more focused than that outlined in RCW 86.15. Some of the other Forum members also supported a narrower definition. Will Harper noted that there were many tributary-based flood problems in the Snoqualmie Valley that were not eligible for funding under the FCD Capital Project List [since they were not regional flood projects] that would be good candidates for the Subregional Opportunity Fund.
- Clint was asked to explain the home buyout and elevation process. He explained that inquiries came from both sides. In some cases FCD approached the property owners. In other situations, the property owners came forward themselves. In either event, FCD used standard prioritization criteria to determine which projects to fund.
 - In the case of buyouts, property owners were offered fair market value. Procedures were similar to any other acquisition.
 - In the case of elevations, homeowners shared on the cost. The landowner portion varied, but generally did not exceed 25 per cent. Also, the landowner was usually responsible for arranging the construction/elevation work.
- Clint was asked to explain the maintenance arrangement for acquired properties. He explained that ownership and maintenance details were currently being worked out in consultation with relevant agencies, including King County Parks and Natural Lands.
- Councilmember Lambert commended the FCD staff for their high level of customer service.

Snoqualmie Water Quality Synthesis Report

Janne gave a preliminary presentation on his *Snoqualmie Water Quality Synthesis Report*. The purpose of today's presentation was to give a high level overview of the study and to discuss next steps and input sought from the Forum to help finalize the report.

- The *Snoqualmie Water Quality Synthesis Report* (Report) is intended to integrate information from existing water quality studies and data in order to fill information gaps in the WRIA7 salmon plan and inform Snoqualmie Watershed Forum priorities. Findings from the report are intended to pinpoint key water quality problems and information gaps on a sub-basin by sub-basin level in our watershed. This information can be used to inform and refine our KCD grant criteria and to guide other restoration projects undertaken by basin partners.
- The Report is divided into two parts. Part 1 gives an introduction to water quality standards and sources of impairment for those new to the topic. Part 2 analyzes and rates water quality conditions in the Snoqualmie Watershed by sub-basin.
- The study focuses on 5 water quality parameters that are most relevant to the Snoqualmie Watershed: 1) temperature, 2) fecal coliform bacteria, 3) dissolved oxygen, 4) pH, and 5) nutrients. Fecal coliform is primarily a concern for human health while the other indicators are a concern for aquatic life.
- Some important limitations to keep in mind when reviewing the study:
 - Uneven data both across and within sub-basins – Some sub-basins had better data availability than others. Even within sub-basins, data was often limited to stream mouths and/or King County road crossings.
 - Unclear Cause and Effect – While we may know a specific site or reach is impaired for certain water quality parameters, the cause of impairment and role of natural conditions is not always clear.
- Water quality standards vary by location depending on designated use. For example, maximum temperature standards vary depending on the types of salmon species and lifestages that it supports, while bacteria standards depend on the level of human exposure via recreation. To determine whether a reach is impaired, one must compare the collected data against the specific standards for the given reach or site.
- Part 2 of the report includes a series of color maps that rate sub-basins against each of the five water quality parameters noted above (temperature, fecal coliform bacteria, dissolved oxygen, pH, and nutrients). Janne reviewed the maps touching on key findings and unique features. As explained, he had to use subjective analysis in determining each sub-basin rating – weighing multiple factors such as how much of the sub-basin was impaired for the indicator in question, how often, and how severely. The color-rated maps are accompanied by individual sub-basin descriptions which describe specific conditions at greater length. **It is important that the color-rated maps not be taken in isolation or out of context.** They are intended to help pinpoint in broad strokes which sub-basins show impairments for given water quality parameters. **One should in turn refer to the relevant sub-basin descriptions for further details.**

- Finally, using Ames Creek and Kimball/Coal Creek sub-basins as examples, Janne illustrated how water quality impairments and causes might differ across sub-basins and how these differences might lead to their own suite of actions.
- Janne together with King Conservation District staff recently presented the Ames Creek findings to a group of local landowners. In follow up, Bill Knutsen advised that the Ames Creek landowners (with KCD help) are undertaking some additional monitoring to determine the cause of dissolved oxygen problems in the creek. He commended this for being a farmer driven response.
- **Action:** As part of next steps, Janne asked Forum members to provide feedback on the report structure and format by Friday, October 17. In addition, Janne will seek more detailed input and edits from the local valley planning staff as well as technical specialists from various agencies. Our objective is to finalize and print the report by end of December 2008.

Snoqualmie Watershed Forum – 2009 Work Program

Yvette reviewed the proposed Snoqualmie Watershed Forum work program for 2009 giving particular attention to unique and new items that vary from 2008. Examples included:

- Coordinating workshops between local cities and Department of Ecology to assist cities in preparing their 2009-2011 Shoreline Master Program updates.
- Meeting with relevant sub-committees of local city and tribal councils to jointly identify local priorities that would most benefit from ILA staff support.
- Presenting results of the Snoqualmie Water Quality report to cities, partners and landowners. Working to identify and implement priority actions in collaboration with interested groups.
- Participating in the consultation process for the next KCD assessment.
- Streamlining the Snoqualmie Watershed Forum-KCD Opportunity Fund.
- Improving landowner referral information and services.
- **Decision:** The Forum approved the 2009 Work Program.

Public comment

- Ralph Svrjcek (Department of Ecology - DOE) commended Janne for developing a user-friendly water quality study that would facilitate outreach and actions. He advised that the DOE TMDL study would soon be completed.
- Jeffrey Possinger (Executive Director of KCD) expressed interest in having Janne present his Water Quality report at a future KCD Board of Supervisors meeting. He also mentioned that KCD planned to contact the Snoqualmie Watershed Forum to discuss the next assessment.
- Councilmember Lambert requested information on the proposed Tokul hatchery closure.

- Action: ILA staff were asked to provide an update on the Tokul steelhead hatchery at the next Forum meeting.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be November 19, 2008 from 7-9pm at the Meadowbrook Farm in North Bend.