

Snoqualmie Watershed Forum
MEETING SUMMARY
November 18, 2015
7:00-9:00 pm
Snoqualmie City Hall, Snoqualmie, WA

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jason Walker	City of Duvall Councilmember, Chair
Cindy Spiry	Snoqualmie Tribe (Alternate)
Bryan Holloway	City of Snoqualmie Councilmember
Eileen Carrel	Citizen Representative
Becky Chaney	Citizen Representative
Jenn McKeown	Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust, Non-profit Representative
Matt Gray	Snoqualmie Valley Government Association, Representative

MEETING PROCEEDINGS

I. Year End Celebration Reception at 6:30

II. Focus on the Snoqualmie - Poster Contest Award Presentation

Jason Walker, Forum Chair, presented the winner of the *Focus on the Snoqualmie* photo contest, Danny Raphael, with a framed copy of the poster that features the winning photograph and the runner-up photos. Mr. Raphael is an amateur photographer from North Bend. Also present at the reception were two additional amateur photographers whose photos are featured on the poster, Mt. Si High School sophomore Claire Meyer and North Bend resident Bill Cottringer. Jason expressed the Forum's gratitude to all of the contest participants.

III. Forum Business

Updates and Announcements

- ***Snoqualmie/SF Skykomish Interlocal Agreement (ILA) Update*** - On November 9th, the King County Council approved the Snoqualmie ILA along with ILAs in WRIs 8 & 9. All parties have now signed the ILA, which will come into force in January 2016. Jason Walker, Chair of the Forum and Christie True, Director of King County DNRP, will now sign the Memorandum of Understanding governing how ILA-funded staff implements the Forum's work program. The new ten-year ILA expires on December 31, 2025.
- ***Snohomish Stillaguamish Local Integrating Organization (LIO)*** - The Snohomish-Stillaguamish LIO has been working this fall to develop near term actions (NTAs) that will inform the state's Puget Sound Action Agenda. NTA's will also help determine which projects receive Environmental Protection Agency National Estuary Program grant funding. There were 49 NTA pre-proposals submitted to the LIO including projects to control knotweed, improve water quality, help resolve fish-farm-flood issues, and provide watershed education.
- ***Salmon Recovery Funding Board Project Update*** - In the broader Snohomish Basin, the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) program provided \$550,000 and the Puget Sound Acquisition and

Restoration (PSAR) program provided \$1.9M for a combined 2015 WRIA 7 grant round. WRIA 7 projects are slated to be approved December 10th, 2015, which includes \$800,000 for King County's Raging River Acquisition project.

- ***Snohomish Basin Protection Plan*** - On November 5th, the Snohomish Basin Salmon Recovery Forum approved the Snohomish Basin Protection Plan. Appendix B of the plan will be an official supplement to the 2005 Snohomish River Basin Salmon Conservation Plan. The new protection plan refines the existing protection strategies in the salmon plan to provide more specific guidance to project partners and jurisdictions on how best to protect habitat and the hydrology of the basin.
- ***King County Comprehensive Plan Public Meeting*** - King County has released the 2016 Public Review Draft of the Comprehensive Plan. The draft includes proposed changes to policies, area zoning and land use studies, and code amendments. For more information on the Comprehensive Plan, please go to King County's website: <http://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/executive/psb/regional-planning/king-county-comprehensive-plan.aspx>

Snoqualmie Watershed Forum Chair and Vice-Chair appointments

Each year, the Snoqualmie Watershed Forum selects a Chair and Vice Chair to serve for a one-year term. Both positions must be filled by elected representatives of member jurisdictions. Anyone interested in filling one of these positions should contact Janne Kaje, Salmon Recovery Manager, or Chair Walker. The current Chair, Jason Walker, and Vice-Chair, Lee Grumman are willing to continue in their positions in 2016. The final decision on these positions will be made at the January 20th Snoqualmie Watershed Forum meeting.

IV. Harvestable Buffers Pilot Project in Snohomish County

Carrie Brausieck from the Snohomish Conservation District (SCD) was invited to present on the SCDs work on harvestable buffers. The presentation discussed how buffers planted for habitat restoration purposes are typically prescriptive, with a set width and "no-touch" areas. This approach to buffer plantings has posed challenges in agricultural areas where large, no-touch buffers reduce the amount of farmable land. Because of this, it has been challenging to get critical buffer work done in the agricultural areas and the SCD is exploring possibilities for more flexible approaches that achieve habitat goals while providing a benefit to the working farm.

Harvestable buffers include unique practices that can be selected based on the goals of the farmer working the land. These practices include:

- **Silvopasture** – This practice integrates trees and livestock operations. The trees can be managed for timber, fruit/nut production, or other forest products. The livestock can use the area for short and low intensity grazing periods.
- **Alley Cropping** – This practice allows farmers to grow an annual or perennial crop in conjunction with a long-term woody crop, both in rows. Trees and shrubs can provide nuts and/or fruit or be harvested for high-value lumber. Agricultural crops between rows of trees can include corn, hay or other cultivated crops.
- **Forest Farming** – This practice allows for the cultivation of specialty crops under a forest canopy such as mushrooms, medicinal plants and nursery cuttings.
- **Short Rotation Biomass** – This practice includes planting fast-growing trees or shrubs that can be harvested frequently for biomass.

The use of these buffer practices could allow for habitat gains by providing buffers along watercourses on agricultural lands, while still allowing farmers to reap some economic benefit from a portion of the planted buffer.

The Forum had many thoughtful questions for Carrie after the presentation. A key question posed to Carrie was about the farmers' reactions to the idea of working buffers. Carrie responded that most of the farmers willing to participate so far have been livestock farmers. It has been a harder sell to large farms but smaller farmers are excited, especially if the market for the diversified products already exists or can be readily developed. The lack of an existing market for relatively small amounts of harvest can limit willingness to participate. With regard to standard "no touch" buffers, based on surveys and interviews, a consistent theme among farmers was a sense of lost agency over their own lands, while a working buffer model feels less intrusive.

Another question was about how a program like this is funded. To date, according to Carrie, this project has been funded through grants, but it is hard to find cost-share dollars to help farmers implement the working buffer principles. There was a robust discussion around this topic and it was met with enthusiasm. The Forum was interested in seeing similar pilot efforts in the Snoqualmie watershed.

V. Middle Fork Road Project Update and Opportunities for Restoration

Mark Boyer and Forum member Jenn McKeown of Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust (MTSGT), gave a presentation on the work that has been accomplished in the Middle Fork Snoqualmie River Valley over the past fifteen years and what work remains to be done in the area.

Historically, the Middle Fork Snoqualmie River area had checkerboard ownership and no active land managers, which allowed the area to become run down and vandalized. MTSGT and concerned citizens worked hard to find committed land managers to help bring back recreation and revitalize the area. Now 98% of the area is in public ownership (up from 75% in the past) and the Middle Fork is experiencing a renaissance with new facilities, trails and improving road access to many recreational opportunities. The long-awaited paving of the Middle Fork Rd. is due to be completed in 2016.

The expanding popularity of the area and improved access have brought into focus the need to figure out how to support and manage this area. There is a need to connect this surge of recreational opportunities to the local economy. How do the local cities like North Bend get involved in a way that makes sense?

Mark Boyer added that securing money for the Middle Fork is tricky in part because it is outside of any sewer rate area, and also due to the high percentage of USFS ownership coupled with severely shrinking budgets for the agency. MTSGT would like to see resources come to the Middle Fork area to keep it a well-managed, well-funded public good.

Janne suggested that the Forum could help by supporting targeted weed control or restoration projects in the basin, helping to leverage resources secured by other parties. Janne noted that the Forum could direct Forum staff to work with partners to develop projects and participate in designing potential projects. The Forum agreed and directed Perry Falcone, Project Manager for the Forum, to participate in Middle Fork project development meetings and to connect with potential project sponsors.

IV. Snoqualmie Watershed Forum Highlights

Perry Falcone presented the 2015 Forum highlights. These highlights included:

- **Grants-** \$839,113 Cooperative Watershed Management Grants awarded this year to 13 different conservation salmon recovery projects.
- **Capital Improvement Projects** – Among others, King County completed the Harris Creek Fish Passage Project and the Snoqualmie Tribe completed the Rasmussen Creek restoration project.
- **Project Assistance and Coordination** - Forum staff participated as reviewers for the Salmon Recovery Funding Board grant round, provided grant writing support and co-organized regional and project support.
- **Technical and policy work** – Included conducting a temperature study during the 2015 drought on the Snoqualmie River and its tributaries as well as participating in the Advisory Group for the Duvall Watershed Planning effort.
- **Outreach accomplishments** – Project tours to restoration sites and hosted the Focus on the Snoqualmie Photo Contest.

IV. Public Comment

No public comments

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be January 20 at Carnation City Hall from 7:00pm to 9:00pm.