

**Snoqualmie Watershed Forum
MEETING SUMMARY
September 21, 2016
6:00-9:00 pm
Duvall Visitors Center, Duvall, WA**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jason Walker	City of Duvall Councilmember, Chair
Lee Grumman	City of Carnation Councilmember, Vice-Chair
Cindy Spiry	Snoqualmie Tribe (Alternate)
Josh Meidav	Tulalip Tribes (Alternate)
Henry Sladek	Town of Skykomish Councilmember
Kathy Lambert	King County Councilmember
Trevor Kostanich	City of North Bend Councilmember
Eileen Carrel	Citizen Representative
Matt Gray	Citizen Representative

MEETING PROCEEDINGS

I. Introductions

Jason Walker, Forum Chair, welcomed everyone to the September Forum meeting. The Forum then approved the minutes from the July 20th meeting.

II. Updates and Announcements

Janne Kaje, Snoqualmie Salmon Recover Manager, introduced Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz, Janne's counterpart in the Lake Washington – Cedar – Sammamish Watershed. Jason is currently the acting supervisor for the Regional Partnerships Unit, the position recently vacated by Jean White. The position supervises the three King County watershed teams as well as the basin stewards. Jean recently took a new position engaged in regional trails planning for the King County Parks Division.

III. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

IV. Forum Business – 2017 Work Plan and Non-Governmental Organization Representative

Janne Kaje, Salmon Recovery Manager, provided an overview of the 2017 Forum Work Plan. The new work plan will continue ongoing Forum work including administrating the Cooperative Watershed Management grant selection process and coordinating implementation of the the Salmon Plan. New work items included supporting the Salmon Plan update process, implementing the recommendations of the Fish Farm Flood Advisory Committee and developing outreach materials for high priority watershed capital projects. Josh Meidav (Tulalip Tribes) asked if climate change priorities can be added to the work plan and Janne responded that it was reflected in several work items. Councilmember Sladek asked if staff could add percentages by work plan category. Jenn McKeown felt the new outreach work plan items reflected important work.

ACTION: The Forum approved the 2017 work plan.

Janne explained the appointment process for the new non-governmental organization (NGO) representative seat on the Forum. Jenn McKeown, Mountains to Sound Greenway, has served her 2 year term and will be stepping down in 2017. Traditionally, the NGO alternate takes on the role of NGO representative if they are willing and participate on the Forum as alternate. Chris LaPointe, Stewardship Partners, is currently the alternate, participates regularly at Forum meetings and has expressed interest in filling the NGO representative seat in 2017.

ACTION: The Forum appointed Chris LaPointe, Stewardship Partners, as the NGO Representative.

Forum staff will now initiate the recruitment process for a new alternate NGO representative with a goal of making that appointment at the November meeting for a two-year term beginning in January.

V. King County Land Conservation and Preservation Work Plan

Bob Burns, Deputy Director of King County's Department of Natural Resources and Parks, presented King County's Land Conservation and Preservation Work Plan, a new initiative directed by Executive Dow Constantine. The initiative aims to protect the last and best remaining priority lands from development in King County over the next 30 years through a combination of purchases in fee as well as conservation easements, with the bulk of proposed acreage in the easement category. Lands to be conserved fall into several categories: natural lands, rivers, forests, farmland, and trail corridors. The Department is seeking input from partners such as cities, tribes and non-profits and hopes to add urban lands within cities into this initiative. Currently the proposal seeks to protect 5,500 parcels totaling 66,000 acres at a cost of \$1.5 to \$1.8B. Roughly 40% of the proposed acreage is within the Snoqualmie and South Fork Skykomish watersheds.

The initiative would be primarily funded by existing conservation funding sources, but there is roughly a \$383M gap in funding over 30 years. The proposal includes several options to fund this gap such as bonds backed by a property tax increase, property tax levy lid lift, Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) or Conservation Futures Tax (CFT) rate increase. The timeline for identifying a funding mechanism and potentially placing an initiative on the ballot for voter approval will likely be 2018. Bob also envisions private philanthropy and new natural capital markets as potential contributors to the effort. An advisory committee will release a report in December 2016.

Josh Meidav asked how parcels were categorized as high value and if the prioritization included consideration of the level of protection already in place via current regulations. Bob responded that past county protection initiatives and expert opinion helped select the parcels, but the work did not include consideration of regulations. Bob also noted that in the long term, regulations can change whereas public ownership and protection via permanent easements can provide more durable protection. Eileen Carrel asked if easements were good enough to conserve the properties' habitat conditions. Bob answered that the initiative included both fee and easement protections depending on the conservation needs. Josh added that tribal access to protected lands for traditional uses will be important to tribal partners. Chair Walker requested detailed mapping of the parcels to understand the protection strategy. He was concerned about the funding package due to the limited taxing capacity in the rural area and the lack of funding dedicated to restoring parcels to natural conditions. Bob responded that the proposal included operations and maintenance over 30 years, but that it was useful to know the importance of fully restoring these areas or, as in the case of trail corridors, having funding included to make the on-the-ground trail improvements.

VI. Snoqualmie Fish, Farm, Flood Advisory Committee

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Janne provided an overview of the draft Fish Farm Flood (FFF) Advisory Committee agreement. The agreement will layout a framework for balancing multi-objective projects and programs in the Snoqualmie Agricultural Production District to improve fish habitat, farming and reduce flood hazard. The committee held more than 25 meetings over 3 years and included diverse representation from citizens, governments and community organizations. Since Jason Walker participated on behalf of the Forum, the Forum needs to authorize Jason to sign the agreement and consider providing a letter of support for the agreement.

Janne described the Forum's involvement in implementing the FFF agreement as focused on a few key areas including:

- Participating on proposed FFF task forces (e.g., buffer task force)
- Recommending revisions to Cooperative Watershed Management grant criteria to support the agreement (e.g., supporting multi-objective projects)
- Providing letters of support for multi-objective projects that are consistent with FFF recommendations.

Jason Walker, Cindy Spiry and Lara Thomas provided their own perspectives on the process as FFF committee members. They all felt the process was very balanced and the agreement was worth supporting to move forward important fish habitat projects, support agriculture and improve flood conditions in the Lower Snoqualmie Valley.

Councilmember Lambert stressed the importance of implementing the recommendations supporting agriculture as they have not received sufficient support in the past.

ACTION: The Forum approved the letter of support and authorized Jason Walker to sign the agreement.

VII. King County Surface Water Management Fee

John Taylor, Deputy Director of King County's Water and Land Resources Division, presented King County's proposed increase to the Surface Water Management (SWM) Fee. John explained the purpose of the SWM fee to manage surface water, prevent localized flooding, and protect water quality. The single family residential rate is \$171.50 per parcel and commercial properties pay a rate based on the amount of impervious surface. The county's current SWM fee is below the average for jurisdictions in the area. King County currently allocates \$24M in SWM funding to the following priorities:

- Maintenance of existing stormwater assets (\$6.2M)
- Programs to support agriculture and rural residents (\$4.3M)
- Habitat restoration (\$7.4M)
- National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit and assistance (\$6.1M)

The new activities proposed in the new SWM rate include: proactive asset management, increased services to farmers and residents, supporting FFF and salmon recovery activities, and addressing drainage along roadways. There are several funding scenarios including different proposed rate levels. The King County Council will make the final decision on the SWM fee in the fall of 2016. If a fee increase is approved, it will go into effect in January 2017.

Eileen Carrel pointed out an ongoing issue regarding how high the Fall City airstrip SWM fees are currently. John responded that the county is aware of this particular case as an unusual outlier and is looking

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at ways to work with the Fall City airstrip to discuss the fee's impact on their business. Councilmember Lambert was concerned about how rural roads that connect cities still fall to rural landowners to pay the majority of the costs. Brian Bodenbach, citizen, suggested using the SWM fee to fund more stream flow gages along rivers and streams to track climate changes effects on the watershed. John appreciated all the comments on the proposal and will utilize this information following a decision by the County Council on the new SWM fee for 2017.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be November 16, 2016 at Snoqualmie City Hall from 6:30pm to 9:00pm. Please note the earlier start time.