

Snoqualmie Watershed Forum
MEETING SUMMARY
May 20, 2020, 3:00-5:30 p.m.
Held virtually via Zoom

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Cindy Spiry, Chair	Snoqualmie Tribe
Henry Sladek, Vice Chair	Town of Skykomish Mayor
Becky Chaney	Citizen Representative
Chris Garcia	City of North Bend Councilmember
Jessica Lange	Non-profit Representative, Sound Salmon Solutions
Jim Ribail	City of Carnation Councilmember
Kathy Lambert	King County Councilmember
Kirstin Haugen	King Conservation District
Mike Remington	City of Duvall Councilmember
Peggy Shepherd	City of Snoqualmie Councilmember
Ryan Miller	Tulalip Tribes

Other Attendees: Jamie Burrell, City of North Bend; Matt Distler, Oxbow Farm and Conservation Center; Jason Rogers, City of Snoqualmie; David Beedle, Seattle City Light; Chris LaPointe, Stewardship Partners; Josh Monaghan, King Conservation District; Jamie Glasgow, Wild Fish Conservancy; Chase Barton, Teresa Lewis and Matt Knox, King County River and Floodplain Management; Matt Baerwalde, Julie Lewis and Michael Bailey, Snoqualmie Tribe; Gretchen Glaub, Snohomish County; Ingria Jones, Department of Ecology; Cynthia Krass and Andy Obst, Snoqualmie Valley Watershed Improvement District; Rodney Pond, Sound Salmon Solutions; Janne Kaje, Denise DiSanto, Jackie White and Andrea Mojzak, King County; and Emily Davis, Carla Nelson, Elissa Ostergaard and Cory Zyla, Snoqualmie Watershed Forum staff.

MEETING PROCEEDINGS

I. Introductions, Updates and Announcements

Cindy Spiry, Chair, called the meeting to order and Elissa Ostergaard reviewed Zoom virtual meeting best practices. Emily Davis, Forum Technical Coordinator, read the names and affiliations of the participants.

ACTION: *The Forum unanimously approved the meeting minutes from the January 15, 2020 Forum meeting.*

Snoqualmie Forum staff highlighted the following updates:

- **COVID-19 effects on Forum staff**– Elissa explained how COVID-19 has impacted Forum staff. King County has mandated telework for all non-essential employees in the Executive Branch through at least May 31 (now September 7), and Forum staff have been working from home since early March. Elissa noted that staff are grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the Forum’s work during this crisis, and that we will continue to do our best to accommodate schedules, adapt meetings for remote access, and support Forum members and project sponsors.
- **Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife** –Many WDFW wildlife areas and boat ramps reopened for day-use only recreation on May 5th, as well as some recreational fishing per 2019-2020 sport fishing rules in place to prevent over-crowding and allow for social distancing. WDFW hatchery staff will continue to stock lakes throughout the closure.

- **Snohomish River Basin Salmon Conservation Plan Update** - Forum staff have been collaborating with Snohomish Basin lead entity staff to complete key sections of the WRIA 7 Plan Update, with a June 2021 target for the final draft. Emily Davis has a key role in summarizing water quality information for the basin. Other ongoing work includes evaluating habitat project effectiveness findings, compiling monitoring and adaptive management needs, creating conceptual diagrams showing how salmon use the basin at different life stages, and updating freshwater habitat targets for the year 2030.
- **Snoqualmie salmon recovery educators go online in response to COVID-19** - Nature Vision and other education groups that the Forum regularly supports with Cooperative Watershed Management (CWM) grants have responded to the crisis by creating online student packets and a remote curriculum.
- **Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference: webinar recordings available** - The Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference is the largest, most comprehensive event of its kind in the region, featuring the latest scientific research and management issues relevant to the health of the Salish Sea ecosystem. While it was unfortunate that the 2020 Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference was cancelled due to the risks of spreading COVID-19, one positive outcome is that much of the content has been made available online for free.
- **Status of Federal Rollbacks to the Clean Water Act** - On April 21, 2020, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency issued a rule changing the definition of “Waters of the United States” (WOTUS) that are subject to federal water quality protections. This means many wetlands and small streams will no longer have federal protection. This new federal rule shifts the burden of permitting onto the Washington State Department of Ecology. The new rule is being challenged in federal court by conservation groups and is slated to take effect on June 22, 2020. Forum staff will prepare an issue paper on the topic and share additional details with Forum members as the situation evolves.
- **Support Letter for Puget Sound and Salmon Recovery** - On April 16, 2020, the Puget Sound Partnership sent a multi-partner letter to Congress supporting continued strong appropriations for Puget Sound and salmon recovery. These appropriations will create and sustain jobs, local economies, and communities, as well as help us restore Puget Sound’s ecological resilience.
- **Fish, Farm, Flood (FFF)** – Both the FFF Implementation Oversight Committee (IOC) and Regulatory Task Force meetings have been on hiatus during the COVID-19 situation. The IOC will meet remotely in June, and all are welcome to attend. The Buffer Task Force sent a letter to the IOC asking to transmit their recommendations to the County Executive Dow Constantine, and a letter is being drafted for IOC review in June. The IOC wrote a letter to the Executive supporting the development of a 2-dimensional hydrologic model to address flood safety for roads and the analysis of a cross-valley, flood-tolerant road.
- **Forum Member Council Briefings** - During discussions with Snoqualmie Valley Planning Committee members about communications efforts, updates for members’ councils were identified as a positive way to provide councils with updates on the work of the Forum. Elissa presented to the Carnation City Council on February 4 and to the Snoqualmie City Council on April 29. Scheduling with other councils will resume this summer.
- **Watershed Restoration Enhancement Committee (WREC)** - Forum staff continue to participate in Ecology’s process to create a plan to offset future water use from new permit-exempt wells in the Snohomish basin. With approval for consumptive use at approximately 797 acre-feet per year, the committee is working to determine what combination of project types can be identified to offset this use and are identifying opportunities for purchase of existing water

rights to put in trust. Since this will not meet the full offset requirement, other options being considered include floodplain restoration projects, beaver dam analogs, surface water storage, managed aquifer recharge, and others.

II. Public Comment – No Public Comment

III. King County River and Floodplain Management Team’s 2020 Snoqualmie Work Program

Elissa introduced Chase Barton, Supervising Engineer with the King County River and Floodplain Management Section. Chase gave an overview and status update of current and upcoming flood risk reduction projects in the Snoqualmie Basin. He began by describing the extreme 2019-2020 flood season, which began early in October 2019 with the biggest October flood seen since 1934. This season, the Snoqualmie Basin experienced seven large floods that warranted opening of the King County flood warning center. In late January and early February, several floods came back-to-back, resulting in saturated soils and longer time for floodwaters to recede. Flooding resulted in traffic disruptions, impacts to agriculture, and landslides. Upcoming and current efforts above the Snoqualmie Falls (the Falls) include:

- The Middle Fork Capital Investment Strategy (CIS) will lead to a prioritized and sequenced list of projects in the Middle Fork Snoqualmie sub-basin. It involves assessing risks and developing solutions. A draft was shared with stakeholders in February 2019. Early-action projects in the CIS included authorizing funding for appraisals of acquisitions of at-risk homes; including the Middle Fork Snoqualmie in a sediment study; and the PL84-99 project (more details below). The draft of the CIS will be finalized this summer.
- Shake Mill right and left bank revetment projects—This project seeks to protect a roadway and bridge at risk near the Three Forks Natural Area. This is a combination of revetment setback and repair meant to give the river more room to move safely, while also protecting existing infrastructure.
- Circle River Ranch flood risk reduction project on South Fork Snoqualmie near North Bend—This project is part of the South Fork Snoqualmie CIS (completed summer 2017). In this neighborhood, 27/35 homes are in a flood hazard area. Rivers is currently developing an alternatives analysis including gravel management, acquisition, and other alternatives. Outreach is coming up in the fall.
- PL84-99—In cooperation with the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), King County is looking into the feasibility of re-enrolling a number of levees on the South and Middle Fork Snoqualmie rivers in the USACE PL84-99 program. This program helps local governments pay for repairs to their enrolled levees if they are damaged during flood events. Rivers is currently assessing levee conditions and needs for re-enrollment in this program and will submit a report to USACE in the near future.
- Reinig Road revetment repair—Reinig Road is currently threatened by a damaged revetment near the confluence of the South Fork Snoqualmie with the Middle Fork. Originally scheduled for summer 2020, this project has been delayed until 2021 summer/fall.

- Record Office Revetment Repair—This project in downtown Snoqualmie has a design process currently underway with construction targeted for 2021. Revetment repair will hopefully be compatible with City of Snoqualmie’s Riverwalk project.

All projects below the Falls are associated with the Tolt River CIS, which was completed during summer 2017. These include:

- Tolt River Level of Service Feasibility Study will evaluate how much flood protection the current levee system on the Tolt River provides, and how much should it provide as the levees are repaired and set back in the coming decades. King County is updating hydraulic models to reflect climate change and ongoing sedimentation and coming up with alternatives to minimize flood risk associated with levee setback projects. Outreach to stakeholders is planned for fall 2020.
- Tolt Sediment Management Feasibility Study—This study evaluates sediment management alternatives (including sediment removal) for reducing flood risk. In consulting with WDFW, they learned that sediment removal is only allowed in association with habitat restoration projects. In addition, it’s highly unlikely that WDFW would permit dredging, and if they did, mitigation would be required in advance, with proof of results. Based on this, the King County Flood Control District (KCFCD) is choosing to pursue continuation of the sediment monitoring program, but not pursue sediment removal as an option at this time.
- Tolt River Road NE Road Elevation—This road near the San Souci neighborhood can be covered by floodwaters during even small, frequent floods, so it needs to be elevated. The issue is currently being studied to see what options for elevating the road in different places are feasible. King County hopes to have design criteria by next year.

Forum Discussion: Jim Ribail asked when will construction begin on the Frew levee setback? Chase replied that construction will not happen for some time. The project has an open development proposal with the City of Carnation and a developer. Currently, King County is reinitiating data collection, which will be followed by survey and geotechnical work. Chase anticipated that construction could begin by 2024. Jim asked for clarification about the sediment removal option. Chase clarified that while sediment removal is unlikely to be pursued as a standalone flood risk reduction action in the mainstem Tolt River, it could be a part of other actions such as side channel construction projects. Chase clarified that all the planned levee setback projects should reduce flood risk throughout the Carnation area, even without sediment removal in the mainstem Tolt River. Cindy asked if there were other interesting findings from the sediment removal study. Chase replied that they have learned a lot about Upper Tolt sediment production over the last few decades. As it turns out, landslides, flood flows and the nature of local geology have a lot more to do with sediment production and delivery in the Tolt than forest practices in the upper basin do. Dave Beedle noted that the City of Seattle and King County should stay well-connected on these issues, and Chase agreed. Chris Garcia added that he liked the project list.

- IV. 2021 Snoqualmie Project Assistance Cooperative Watershed Management (CWM) Grant \$130k.** Cory Zyla went over the grant application to support Forum staff in project assistance in 2021 and offset the cities’ Interlocal Agreement (ILA) cost shares. He noted that the 2020 grant was similar to previous grants. Cory described three overarching sections of the grant:

- (1) work with project partners to advance high quality habitat improvements by supporting four known projects and four nascent projects over the coming year.
- (2) execute Forum-led project coordination activities, including:
 - (a) co-leading the Project Work Group with Snohomish basin partners, which is a basin-wide collaboration where project sponsors collectively work to overcome implementation challenges. Forum staff will also lead the WRIA 7 Knotweed Working Group, which is a multi-stakeholder group working to develop a strategic plan for controlling knotweed across the Snohomish Basin. The resultant plan may become an addendum to the 2005 Salmon Plan;
 - (b) coordinating the creation and distribution of 3 E-newsletters; and
 - (c) coordinating the annual Forum Project Tour.
- (3) regional policy and technical coordination, which involves Forum staff authoring at least 3 policy and briefing papers or comment letters, such as the forthcoming Clean Water Act (WOTUS) ruling issue paper. Forum staff also represent the Forum interests on numerous committees, as well as pursue new and increased funding opportunities to support implementation of projects.

Forum Discussion: Chris Garcia asked if we could push the Project Tour to Fall so that more members could attend given COVID-19 restrictions on having an in-person tour in July? Cory said that currently Forum Staff are considering hosting the July tour as self-guided or virtual tour to overcome the limitations imposed by COVID-19.

Kathy Lambert relayed that she is happy to see the number of committees that Forum staff attend on the behalf of the Forum. Kathy then addressed her concern that water pipes in poor condition need to be fixed and costs to rate payers. Kathy also emphasized that the Forum should support the farm community at this difficult time.

ACTION: *The Forum unanimously approved the 2021 Snoqualmie Project Assistance CWM Grant.*

V. 2020 Cooperative Watershed Management Grant Recommendations

Cory Zyla walked through the list of grant proposals for the Cooperative Watershed Management (CWM) grant round and outlined the recommendations of the Project Review Committee (the Committee). The Committee conducted a detailed review of 22 applications, from 11 project sponsors. Cory noted that this was particularly exciting year as the KCFCD doubled the available CWM grant funds, raising the total funding the Committee had available to allocate (an increase from \$954,819 to \$1.98 M, with some return funds). He emphasized that the increase helped support a wide range of important projects that may not have moved forward otherwise. While the available funding increased, total funding requests were \$2.5m, resulting in a \$500k shortfall. Cory noted that this funding request and shortfall demonstrate that there is significant need for funding across the Snoqualmie Watershed. Cory thanked the Committee and the project sponsors for overcoming the challenges inherent in completing this rigorous process virtually, while under the pressures of the COVID-19 pandemic. He also noted that the FCD will be approving the Committee's recommendation later this summer. Cory reminded the group that the process uses a modified version of the Salmon Review Funding Board (SRFB) criteria, with specific scoring categories balancing benefit to salmon with certainty of success. From there, scored projects are entered into a tiered ranking system that helps the Committee to determine which will receive full, partial, or no funding.

Cory's presentation grouped projects based upon their location in the Salmon Plan's sub-basin strategy groups to illustrate how the 2020 project list helps to achieve the Plan's goals. He noted that this

grouping is also relevant as the Salmon Plan assigns greater importance to projects that implement priority actions in specific sub-basins (e.g. mainstem primary restoration sub-basin strategy group). Cory briefly reviewed the details of each project that the Committee recommended for funding—including where, what, who, how, why it's important, and how much funding was recommended for each project. For projects that did not receive the full amount of funding, Cory explained the Committee's rationale for only providing partial funding. Cory reminded the Forum that the funding guidance refers to four categories: capital projects, watershed coordination, education and outreach, and monitoring, with a recommended percentage of each year's CWM funds allotted to each category. He compared the Forum's funding guidance to what was actually funded this year, noting that we were very close to hitting the recommended percentages. Additional detail on each project, the scoring/ranking process is available in the packet materials and in Cory's presentation.

Forum Discussion: Chris Garcia asked how many projects were submitted that did not pass the initial screening criteria? Cory clarified that there were none turned down this year, although it has happened in the past.

Cindy Spiry praised Cory's grouping of projects by sub-basin strategy group and found it helpful to see where the projects were located in the watershed. She asked if there would be any outreach to the community included in the beaver dam analog project. Jamie Glasgow of the Wild Fish Conservancy (the project sponsor) confirmed that there is an outreach component. Wild Fish Conservancy is now coordinating with the Tulalip Tribes and others, including King County Staff, and the project includes a strong public outreach component to address human/beaver conflicts. Jamie added that there are learning tools available to the public and landowners on living with beavers and leveraging the benefits that can come from learning to live with beavers.

Janne Kaje mentioned that recent fieldwork on the Cedar River had revealed that this winter's floods mobilized knotweed fragments, which is concerning given that this is a way for knotweed infestations to spread. If it happened in the Cedar, then this likely happened in the Snoqualmie, too. He encouraged Forum partners who may be working in the field this summer to look for new infestations due to flood mobilization—especially since project sponsors have worked hard to keep knotweed controlled in the basin. There may need to be some triage. Cory mentioned the Knotweed Working Group in reference to opportunities to leverage multi-partner efforts to collect data and deal with this issue as a group. Kathy Lambert shared a King County web app to locate and identify noxious weeds (e.g. Take a photo, locate and how to treat the noxious weeds. You can download the app via Apple or Google or directly from here: <https://www.kingcounty.gov/services/customer-service/mobile-app.aspx>). The group expressed excitement and approval of this app. Peggy Shepard noted that she hadn't been able to get it to work in the field yet and suggested the possibility of training.

Becky Chaney mentioned she is glad the beaver dam projects will involve monitoring to see if the water is cooled rather than warmed, noting that not all dams cool water down—local kids near her created stone dams that raised the water temperature.

ACTION: The Forum unanimously approved the 2020 CWM grant funding list.

VI. Forum Business

2020 Forum Meetings

The March Forum meeting was cancelled at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic given that we had no major decision items on the agenda for that meeting. The approved Forum staff work program calls for six meetings in 2020, and any changes to the work program require Forum

approval according to the Memorandum of Understanding between the Forum partners. Elissa asked whether the Forum would like to change the work program to five meetings for 2020 or schedule a make-up meeting in June or October. There would probably be enough content for six meetings, so shortage of content would not be an issue. Elissa noted that if we had a short meeting in June, we could end today's meeting early and discuss the budget other items then.

Elissa noted that the staff recommendation would be to change the work program to five meetings for 2020. Emily Davis noted wide agreement coming from members in the Zoom chat for five meetings in 2020.

ACTION: The Forum unanimously approved to change the 2020 work program to have five Forum meetings rather than six.

2019 Final Budget

Elissa presented the first annual 2019 final budget close-out report. She wanted the Forum members to know about available funds in the Forum account so they can decide how to spend them, especially given the economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic and uncertainty going forward. At the beginning of 2019 there was a carry forward balance of \$81,546. due in part to salary savings with the transition in Salmon Recovery Managers. By the end of 2019, the balance in the account was \$135,367. The additional savings were in part because two previous staff left for special duty assignments, gaps in staffing, and new staff hired at lower salaries. The Forum is doing well financially.

Contingency Fund Policy

Elissa presented the proposed Contingency Fund Policy. Under this policy, approximately ten percent of the Forum's annual budget (up to \$60,000) would be maintained in the ILA account in case unexpected expenses arise. Unexpected expenses might include unemployment claims or leave balance payouts.

ACTION: The Forum unanimously approved to adopt the Contingency Fund Policy, which reads:

King County will keep approximately 10 percent of the annual Snoqualmie Watershed Forum budget in reserve in the Forum's ILA account for unexpected expenses.

2021 Draft Forum Budget

Elissa then shared the 2021 Preliminary Draft Forum Budget. This is a preview for expenses for next year for the cost-share paying members to discuss with their councils and get approval. The budget is conservative and assumes that Forum staffers currently on Special Duty Assignment will return to their positions at their previous salaries (which are higher than the current salaries of their replacements). Beth leDoux's assignment ends December 2020, and Perry Falcone's ends mid-2021. We won't know for sure about Beth and Perry's return until November, when the King County Council approves the 2021 budget. Salary savings mean that our 2021 budget went down by 1.5% compared to 2020, which means that cost shares in 2021 will be lower for cost-share paying members. Overhead costs are currently an estimate and may be revised before July. Elissa also reviewed how cost shares are calculated. Elissa reminded the Forum that the decision for this agenda item will be made at the July meeting.

Jim Ribail asked if the \$130,000 CWM staffing grant rollover factored into this? Elissa clarified that the \$130,000 CWM grant is included in the budget and will be spent first for tasks included in the Scope of Work. The rollover shown is applied after the CWM grant has been spent.

Henry Sladek asked if there King County anticipated any problems with being able to pay their ILA cost shares due to the impact of COVID- 19. Janne Kaje replied that King County has not been advised at this time about any cost share reduction as this is paid for through our Surface Water Management fee. Elissa asked the Forum to please email her with any other questions anyone may have on their individual cost shares.

VII. Closing

Cindy Spiry asked about the July Forum tour. Elissa clarified that although we haven't officially cancelled it yet, given the current guidance around telework and reopening, an in-person tour is not likely. Either a virtual or self-guided tour might replace the July tour, and it may be postponed until Fall. Elissa said that this will be a discussion topic before the next meeting to determine what will be decided for the Forum tour.

Cindy thanked everyone for coming. The meeting was adjourned at 5:38 p.m.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, July 15, 2020, *Carnation City Hall, 6:30-8:30 p.m. following the annual Forum tour from 4:00-6:00 p.m. *contingent upon social distancing protocols in place during this time.