

**Snoqualmie Watershed Forum  
MEETING SUMMARY  
September 20, 2017, 6:15-8:15 pm  
Maloney's Store Building, Skykomish**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Lee Grumman	City of Carnation Councilmember, Chair
Henry Sladek	Town of Skykomish Councilmember, Vice-Chair
Jason Walker	City of Duvall Councilmember
Chris LaPointe	Stewardship Partners, Non-profit Organization Representative
Jim Haack	King Conservation District Supervisor
Brian Bodenbach	SVGA Citizen Representative
Ryan Miller	Tulalip Tribes
Trevor Kostanich	City of North Bend Councilmember
Bryan Halloway	City of Snoqualmie Councilmember

**Other Attendees:** Libby Nelson, Tulalip Tribes; Eric Beach, April Sanders, & Connie Blumen, King County; Maureen Dahlstrom, Elissa Ostergaard, Perry Falcone, & Beth leDoux, Forum staff; John Velimesis; Gary West; Tony Grider, Mayor, Town of Skykomish; Sue Holbink & Ed Hazen, Raging River Conservation Group; Joe Neal, US Forest Service; Gretchen Glaub, Snohomish County; Jessica Lange & Mitch Lex, Sound Salmon Solutions

**MEETING PROCEEDINGS**

**I. Introductions, Updates and Announcements**

Lee Grumman, Forum Chair, welcomed everyone to the September Forum meeting and led off introductions for the meeting.

*ACTION: The Forum approved the minutes from the July 19 meeting.*

Update on state capital funding – The state legislature adjourned for the summer without passing a capital budget for the 2017-2018 biennium. The lack of a capital budget has implications for capital projects moving forward throughout the state, including those that are funded through the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB), Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration program (PSAR), Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program (ESRP), and Floodplains by Design. Much is still unknown about the situation; we will forward on details and information as it becomes available. Specific impacts for Snohomish Basin salmon recovery-related projects include:

- **2016 SRFB-approved projects slated to receive 2017-2019 PSAR funding cannot move forward.** Those projects are:
  - **Tolt River Lower Frew Floodplain Reconnection** (King County Water & Land Resources Division)
  - **Cherry Creek Phase II & III Construction** (Sound Salmon Solutions)
  - **South Fork Skykomish Acquisitions** (Forterra)
  - **Woods Creek RR Bridge Removal and Restoration** (Adopt-a-Stream Foundation)

**Delays in the state capital budget may also affect:**

- Projects currently competing for 2017 SRFB and ESRP funding

- Availability of 2017-2019 PSAR capacity funds
- 2018 SRFB/PSAR grant round
- State support for regional contracts; has implications for Puget Sound Partnership
- Staff and technical reviewers supported by capital funds, including RCO staff, some lead entity staff, and SRFB Technical Review Panel members

Salmon Recovery Funding Board Updates: The Snohomish Basin will receive \$199,935 in unused funds from two past projects: Qwuloolt and Snohomish County’s Beach Nourishment projects. The basin can re-allocate these funds to active projects with cost increases, or fund projects that are alternates on the 2016 and 2017 SRFB/PSAR project lists. These funds could be contracted quickly and could kick-start 2016 PSAR projects that have been delayed because of the state capital budget situation. Staff is currently assessing project needs and reviewing possible alternatives. A suggested list will be submitted to the Snohomish Basin Salmon Recovery Forum in early November.

Update on Puget Sound Net Pens: Elissa Ostergaard, Snoqualmie Salmon Recovery Manager, shared that the failure of a Cooke Aquaculture Atlantic salmon net pen is still being closely tracked by the state. Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife play the primary role in capturing escapees. The Department of Fish and Wildlife evaluate the captured Atlantic salmon for disease and currently no disease has been detected. In addition, most of the stomachs of the captured salmon have been empty, suggesting they are not preying on the Pacific salmon fry. 50,000 Atlantic salmon have been recovered, mostly in part to the hard work of Puget Sound tribal fisheries. Escaped salmon have been detected far and wide, including the Fraser River in Canada, North of Vancouver Island near Nanaimo and Tofino, as well as south Puget Sound and near the Elwha.

The state currently has a moratorium on adding or expanding net pens to the Puget Sound until investigation on the failure of this net pen is complete.

Brian Bodenbach asked if there was concern regarding the contaminants released from the net pen – There will likely be a fine issued from the state against Cooke Aquaculture.

Snoqualmie Forum Staff Updates:

- Polly Freeman’s last day was August 22, as her temporary outreach position was over. She accomplished a lot over her three years including, (but not limited to): producing the Snoqualmie Watershed poster; coordinating the celebration at the Upper Carlson restoration site; and creating the needed materials to ensure successful ILA renewals with our cities and tribes.
- The Forum currently gets administrative assistance from Maureen Dahlstrom, approximately four hours per week. Recent staff changes at King County created an opportunity to hire a new administrative assistant for up to eight hours per week at a lower hourly rate. The job posting closed September 17, and we hope to have the new person on by the end of the year.

Farm, Fish, Flood 2.0 is gearing up. King County is responsible for the 34 recommendations generated by the FFF 1.0 stakeholder group. To follow through on these recommendations, the County is creating an implementation committee. The Snoqualmie Forum has been asked to have a representative on this committee. The commitment would include quarterly meetings, and the committee will get reports from those in charge if each of the recommendations. The implementation committee will have five

representatives from each of the three interest groups (farm, fish, and flood). In conjunction with the implementation committee, there will be three task forces - 1) Agriculture Strategy, 2) Buffers, and 3) Regulation alignment. FFF 2.0 will need dedicated volunteers, if you are interested, please let Elissa Ostergaard know at [elissa.ostergaard@kingcounty.gov](mailto:elissa.ostergaard@kingcounty.gov).

## **II. Skykomish Cleanup and Town History**

The Mayor of the Town of Skykomish, Tony Grider, provided historical context of the town and where it is today. Skykomish was a railroad town in the early 1900s, which experienced great booms and busts. When trains were converting from diesel to electric before entering a long tunnel through the mountains, the bunker fuel and diesel were put into a tank underground. For 100 years, the tank leaked arsenic, oil and gas pollution into the Skykomish River and the soil. The clean-up started in 2006 and took about ten years, and entailed moving homes, removing contaminated dirt, and relocating the buildings and homes.

Mayor Grider and local students created a slide show of the cleanup and its impact on the town. The slide show can be view at <http://www.govlink.org/watersheds/7/>

## **III. South Fork Skykomish Watershed Overview and Habitat Priorities**

Perry Falcone, Snoqualmie Forum Staff, and Mark Ruebel, from King County Rivers and Floodplains Management Section, gave an overview of the Skykomish watershed and the habitat priorities for the area. Perry helped conduct a rapid assessment in 2012 to fill data gaps in the Skykomish watershed. They did a geomorphic analysis, counted large wood, and identified project opportunities for salmon recovery. The rapid assessment highlighted 121 potential projects, with many focusing on protection in the form of easements and acquisitions, restoration projects focused on tributary confluences and alluvial fans, infrastructure and armoring removal. The Skykomish report is available at [http://www.govlink.org/watersheds/7/skykomish\\_report/default.aspx](http://www.govlink.org/watersheds/7/skykomish_report/default.aspx)

Mark Ruebel then talked about how the geology of the area sets the template for the watershed. The system is steep, with large rock. The Skykomish River is incised and disconnected from side channels. It has complex hydrology, some landslides but also a lot of bedrock. A trap and haul system has been used to get anadromous salmon over Sunset Falls since 1958. This has greatly supported our basin's salmon populations. Forestry is a big part of the watershed, and timber harvesting continues in the area. This contributes to the lack of mature forests; when large wood does make it into the river systems, it is often harvested for fire wood. Large wood in the river channels is lacking.

Brian Bodenbach suggested that to better understand the flooding and hydrology of the Skykomish system, it would be good to install precipitation and flow gauges.

## **IV. US Forest Service operations in the South Fork Skykomish**

Joe Neal, Skykomish District Ranger, provided information about the Mount Baker–Snoqualmie National Forest, where Skykomish and the surrounding area are located. Joe shared many interesting facts about the forest and the Forest Service, including:

- The Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest includes 1.7 million acres, is 148 miles long from the Canadian border to Mt. Rainier, and 5 million people live within 70 miles.
- In the Skykomish District there are 219 miles of trails, 713 miles of perennial streams, 158 lakes, and 30 glaciers covering 1400 acres.
- Now there are ten permanent staff for the whole forest. Ten years ago there were 65 staff.

- Since 2011, 82 miles of road have been decommissioned
- The Forest Service has provided trees with root wads to projects in Cherry Creek and Beckler River.
- The Forest Service is cleaning up lead from shotgun pellets at the gun club in Index, where lead was entering the river. Clean-up cost \$900,000 and there are still 46,000 tons left to process.

Joe had a lot to share and was incredibly informative about the National Forest.

Brian Bodenbach asked about the health of the forest. Joe replied that there has been a lack of fires, and it's rare to get small fires that keep a forest healthy. Fires historically ran on a 200-300 year cycle, and need dry conditions. Every summer Joe observes drier conditions. The Forest Service is using aerial flights to check health.

Trevor Kostanich asked if the year-round recreation at Stevens has been beneficial to take the burden off of public lands. Joe said that the fee at Stevens keeps a certain percentage of people from participating at the private areas, so there are always people in the public lands.

## **V. Sound Salmon Solutions**

Mitch Lex, a habitat steward with the non-profit Sound Salmon Solutions, gave a history of the organization and a glimpse into the project work the non-profit is working on in our basin. Currently, they are working on two large restoration projects: Cherry Creek, and Blue Heron Golf Course, which includes noxious weed management as well as buffer planting.

## **VI. Forum Business - 2018 Work Program**

Elissa Ostergaard provided an overview of the 2018 Forum work program. This work program continues the ongoing Forum staff work of Elissa, Perry and Beth leDoux (Technical Coordinator). New work items include supporting implementation of the Snohomish-Stillaguamish LIO's 5-year Ecosystem Recovery Plan, creating a new tool for tracking Cooperative Watershed Management grants, and participating in implementing phase two of Fish, Farm, and Flood. Overall, priorities haven't changed from 2017, but we will do less outreach work until new staff to replace Polly Freeman is hired.

Henry Sladek asked what happens if the Forum doesn't hire outreach staff. Elissa answered that we try as a team to cover it, and will work with King County's public outreach person on items like press releases. There will be a lesser level of effort, but we will keep things moving. Hiring new outreach staff is more limited by capacity to recruit than lack of budget.

Trevor Kostanich expressed a concern regarding a lack of education and outreach. He said it needs to be a high priority as it is the face of the organization.

*ACTION: Forum approves 2018 Forum staff work program*

## **VII. Next Meeting**

Wednesday November 15, Snoqualmie City Hall 6:30 p.m.– 9:00 p.m.

*\*Please note the earlier start time, this is our annual cider and cheese celebration!*