

Snoqualmie Watershed Forum
MEETING SUMMARY
July 17, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Carnation City Hall, Carnation

MEMBERS PRESENT:

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| Cindy Spiry, Chair | Snoqualmie Tribe |
| Henry Sladek, Vice Chair | Town of Skykomish Councilmember |
| Brian Bodenbach | SVGA Citizen Representative |
| Becky Chaney | Citizen Representative |
| Jessica Lange | Non-profit Representative, Sound Salmon Solutions |
| Colin Wahl, for Ryan Miller | Tulalip Tribes |
| Mike Remington | City of Duvall Councilmember |
| Ernest Fix, for Jim Ribail | City of Carnation Councilmember |
| Peggy Shepard | City of Snoqualmie Councilmember |
| Trevor Kostanich (Alternate) | City of North Bend Councilmember |

Other Attendees: Matt Distler, Oxbow Farm and Conservation Center; Julie Lewis, Snoqualmie Tribe; John Velimesis; Lisa Miller; Jason Walker; Molly Jensen, Michael Bailey; Jamie Burrell, City of North Bend; Kevin Lee, Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife; Andy Obst, SVPA/WID; Janne Kaje, Teresa Lewis, Richard Martin, Matt Knox, Lane Covington, and Wendy Sammarco, King County; Brianna Finch, Cameron Hill, and Emily Steffens, Sound Salmon Solutions; Terry Lavender, Conservation Futures; Deloa Dalby, Save our Snoqualmie Valley; Heather Khan and Ingria Jones, Washington Department of Ecology; Erin Murray, Puget Sound Partnership; Kathy Woodward, The Nature Conservancy; Wadii Boughdir, Perry Falcone, Beth leDoux, Laura West, and Elissa Ostergaard, Forum staff

MEETING PROCEEDINGS

I. Introductions, Updates and Announcements

Cindy Spiry, Forum Chair, called the meeting to order and led introductions.

ACTION: The Forum unanimously approved the meeting minutes from the May 15, 2019 Forum meeting.

Snoqualmie Forum staff highlighted the following updates:

- **Farewell to Jason Walker** – Former Forum Chair Jason Walker has resigned from Duvall City Council. Jason served on the Forum for nearly seven years, and served as the Forum Chair for four years. Elissa Ostergaard, Snoqualmie Forum Salmon Recovery Manager, thanked Jason for his involvement. Beth leDoux, Forum Technical Coordinator, thanked Jason for taking on challenges and pushing forward unique efforts.
- **Staff changes-** Wadii Boughdir, Forum Communications Intern, will be leaving on August 30 to pursue school full time. Elissa thanked Wadii for his work to create Forum videos and draft a Forum Communications Plan. Elissa Ostergaard announced that Perry Falcone has accepted a two year special duty assignment as Kokanee Recovery Manager for King County. Perry has been instrumental in implementing projects in the watershed and has served as the de facto steward for the Skykomish. Beth leDoux, Matt Baerwalde, and Mary Maier, Snoqualmie Steward, thanked Perry for his guidance and

passion for the work. Perry thanked Forum members, past Forum members, staff, and colleagues for their dedication and continuing the work.

- **Advocacy for Salmon in Washington D.C.**- Elissa Ostergaard attended Puget Sound Day on the Hill in May with approximately 70 other representatives from non-profits, agencies, and Tribes. Elissa and the group spoke with members of Congress, both Washington Senators, and Congresswoman Kim Schrier. Elissa encouraged individual cities above the Snoqualmie Falls to get in touch with Congresswomen Schrier and connect on issues. Trevor Kostanich offered to follow up with representatives that Elissa met with to continue the conversation.

II. Public Comment

No public comment.

III. 2019 Awards – Conservation Futures and Parks Levy

Terry Lavender, Chair of the Conservation Futures Tax (CFT) Advisory Committee, presented the Snoqualmie Watershed parcels recommended by the Committee for acquisition. Terry explained that when King County launched the Land Conservation Initiative (LCI) four years ago, the timeframe to complete all the identified acquisitions was 50-70 years. Using bonding against CFT revenue, this first year of LCI implementation will speed up the process, increasing the annual acquisition budget from \$20 million to \$64 million. The Committee's recommendation will go to the Executive for approval, followed by the King County Council. \$1,650,000 is recommended for Moss Lake Natural Area, where the development rights have already been purchased. \$560,000 is recommended for Patterson Creek, providing good salmon and water fowl habitat, and adding onto nearby areas that have already been purchased. \$2,456,000 is recommended for the Raging River Natural Area. \$3,925,000 is recommended for Snoqualmie at Fall City, which is a major long term acquisition that will allow for multiple levee setbacks. \$500,000 is for the Tolt River Natural Area, where the final levee will eventually be removed when all the parcels are bought.

IV. Fish In, Fish Out: Status of Salmon in the Snohomish Basin

Beth leDoux introduced Colin Wahl, Co-chair of WRIA 7 Technical Committee and Environmental Scientist with the Tulalip Tribes. Colin presented the Tulalips' annual Fish in, Fish out summary. Colin defined 'escapement' as the number of fish coming back to spawn naturally. Forecasts are highly unpredictable and are modeled from previous year escapements and estimates from juvenile out-migrant numbers at the screw trap.

Colin walked through graphs showing population trends. Colin noted that 4200 Chinook returned to the Snohomish Basin in 2018, higher than the forecast of 3744. In the Snoqualmie, 1162 Chinook returned, which is higher than previous years, but still much lower than the desired return. The 2019 Snohomish Basin forecast for Chinook is 3695 and early indications show an average return, but still nowhere near the recovery goals. Recovery goals are determined by productivity, which is dependent on habitat quality. The high productivity target is 14,000, but the current habitat conditions are leading to low productivity, which has a higher target of 64,000 fish.

Coho were overforecasted in 2017, resulting in an increase of fishing that shouldn't have occurred. The fishery co-managers changed their management decisions to forecast more conservatively going forward. The 2018 forecast for coho came in under the actual return numbers. The co-managers are predicting a 2019 escapement of 50,000. Chum are doing poorly in the system. 11,557 returned in 2018, and the forecast for 2019 is only 4,583, much lower than the goal of 10,000. Pink salmon are a highly variable population, with a forecast of 128,000 for 2019.

Screw traps are used to sample juvenile fish outmigration every spring. The traps are only 1-2% accurate because they are pretty narrow compared to the river width and a lot of fish swim by. The Tulalip Tribes use tests to predict out the entire out-migrant population. The Tulalips have seen good Chinook and coho catches in the last few years. Last year, the Snoqualmie River saw more fish than the Skykomish, possibly due to river conditions during that time. 20-30% of Chinook stay in the river for a whole year, exiting the system as larger parr and spending less time in the estuary. Because of this, many of the restoration projects in the Snoqualmie mainstem are geared towards supporting yearlings, whereas estuary projects are geared towards the smaller fish that migrate out to the ocean immediately. There is less data on the yearlings, because they can more easily avoid the traps. The Snoqualmie Forum funded Josh Kubo at King County to do yearling studies in the Snoqualmie to find out where they hang out and how we can better gear restoration to them. Habitat restoration is meant to ameliorate issues like flow and temperature. Ideally, ocean and river conditions would improve in tandem with habitat restoration, but in reality there is a lot of variation from year to year. Ocean temperatures, salinity, upwelling, and snowpack all impact salmon habitat and survival.

V. Forestry Programs at King County

Elissa Ostergaard introduced Richard Martin and Wendy Sammarco from the King County Agriculture, Forestry and Incentives Program. Richard provided an overview of what the County is doing with forestry in the watershed, noting that over 70% of the basin is in forestry and 60% of County has forest cover, mostly zoned as forest production district. King County employs three foresters, two who primarily work with private landowners. The Rural Forest Commission, made up of 13 members from diverse interests, advises the County on land preservation efforts and restoration strategies. The Commission also helps support commercial aspects of forestry to provide incentives for landowners not to sell their land. King County's Strategic Climate Action Plan (SCAP) called for a 30 year forest plan, which they are currently developing. The goals of the plan are to re-tree King County, protect high priority forests, expand forests in urban areas, enhance carbon storage on public and private lands and enhance stewardship. The plan uses an ecosystem services approach, including water quality and public health. There will be opportunities for public input. The Land Conservation Initiative also guides their work, and aims to protect 61,000 acres, including 21,250 forested acres. Richard also mentioned King County's Forest Carbon Program, which uses carbon credits in urban areas and follows the verified carbon standard protocol in rural areas.

Wendy Sammarco, Stewardship Forester with King County, explained that she works with private landowners and with county- owned forest land. Wendy offers technical support to private land owners who own more than 5 acres, including development and review of forest stewardship plans, training, site visits, wildfire safety planning, and regulatory/permitting assistance. King County also provides financial incentives, including current use taxation to reduce taxes, transfer of development rights, enrollment in the forest carbon program, forest easements, and access to cost-share programs through King Conservation District or the federal NRCS program. With county-owned forest land, Wendy works to thin and diversify plantations, convert red alder forests to conifers, and sources seedlings in preparation for climate change. King County projects harvesting 175 acres per year going forward out of the 25,000 acres owned.

Brian Bodenbach commented on the tradeoff between a carbon market and a timber market. Richard Martin replied that it is currently more profitable to harvest, but that might flip in the future as the carbon market increases. John Velimesis commented that FEMA/Corps are using an ecosystem valuation approach in hazard mitigation planning and that Earth Economics is pioneering this work to capture the full economic benefit of forests. Becky Chaney mentioned recent research from UW showing the benefit of letting forests mature naturally, keeping red alder to help condition soil. Wendy noted that when King County harvests alder, they leave alder on the edges and expect some alder to return to the area. Trevor Kostanich asked about future tax benefits for selective thinning and clear cutting. Wendy thinks there is a place for both methods, as well as natural growth and emphasized the need to respect the landowner's choice.

VI. Forum Business – 2020 Budget

Elissa Ostergaard walked through the proposed 2020 budget and cost shares and commented that there is a 4.03% increase in the overall budget from 2019.

ACTION: The Forum unanimously approved the 2020 Budget and Cost Shares.

VII. Forum Business – Forum Member Policies Update

Elissa Ostergaard walked through changes in the Forum Member Policies. Becky Chaney asked about the addition of streamflow restoration. Elissa replied that it was added because the Forum is participating in Ecology's Streamflow Restoration Committee as an ex officio member and because restoring stream flows is important for salmon. Becky expressed concern over dams that decrease stream headwater flow to allow for higher streamflow downstream. Elissa shares that concern, and thinks it is important to have our voice at that table. Henry Sladek commented that the streamflow work is being done across the state. Henry also supports revisiting these policies on an annual basis. Brian Bodenbach expressed a preference for Elissa's title to be Watershed Coordinator. Elissa suggested this as a topic for discussion in advance of the next ILA re-approval in 2025. Brian asked who would replace Perry on the Streamflow Restoration Committee. Elissa replied that she is the main representative and Beth leDoux is the representative on the Technical Committee.

ACTION: The Forum unanimously approved the Forum Member Policies.

VIII. Closing

Cindy Spiry thanked everyone for coming.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, September 18, 2019, Duvall Visitor Center, 6:30-8:30 p.m.