

Snoqualmie Watershed Forum
MEETING SUMMARY
November 18, 2009
Meeting 6:45 - 9:00 p.m.
Snoqualmie Tribal Offices, Snoqualmie, WA

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Bill Knutsen	Citizen Representative
Charles Peterson	City of Snoqualmie, Councilmember
Gary Roberts	Citizen Representative
Cindy Spiry	Snoqualmie Tribe, Alternate
Elizabeth Walker	City of Duvall Councilmember

MEETING PROCEEDINGS

Introductions and Minutes

- The Forum held a year-end meet and greet to celebrate the end of 2009 Forum work.
- The Forum approved the September 16, 2009 meeting summary.

Announcements

Yvette provided the following announcements:

- *Project Updates* (1) *Chinook Bend*: Phase 1 of the Chinook Bend Restoration project (which involved removal of upstream levee and large wood installation) was completed on time and on budget, while Phase 2 construction including removal of the downstream levee and installation of recreational amenities will be done in 2010. (2) *Lower Tolt Floodplain Restoration Project*: The major restoration works at the Lower Tolt site are now complete including: construction of the setback levee, removal of the old levee, construction of large wood islands, and construction of the outlet channel. (3) *SRFB/PSAR Grants*: Two projects will receive 2010 Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) and Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) grant funding including City of Seattle's Tolt River Riparian Area Restoration project (\$40,000) and King County's Snoqualmie Fall City Reach Restoration Feasibility project (\$184,300). These funding decisions are expected to be finalized on or around December 11. (4) King County will be hosting a volunteer planting event at Chinook Bend Natural Area on Saturday November 21 from 10am-2pm.
- The *Snohomish Basin Project Working Group* held a workshop for salmon habitat project implementers on October 22. Perry co-coordinated the event with staff from Snohomish County. 32 partners (representing 22 agencies) participated in the event. Example recommendations included: *Funding* – Bundle projects to obtain larger grants. Investigate branding the Snohomish Estuary initiative following the example of the Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge. *Permitting* – Work with local permitting agencies to address permit costs. Prescreen project on the WRIA7 Three Year Work Plan for cultural assessment needs so project

sponsors know whether they need to budget for this. *Improving Project Coordination:* Develop a technical skills bank among partners.

- The *King County Open Space Charter Amendment (OSA)* was approved in November by voters. This amendment will strengthen protection on selected high conservation value properties that are currently owned or held in a conservation easement by King County. The list of OSA properties is posted at www.openspaceamendment.org. Our team will be drafting a list of the Snoqualmie-based properties on the list. Some examples include Chinook Bend Natural Area, Snoqualmie Forest, Middle Fork Snoqualmie Natural Area, Upper Raging River Forest, Griffin Creek Natural Area, Carnation Marsh Natural Area, Tolt River Natural Area and Tollgate Farm (KC parcels only).
- *King County Council is reviewing the county's proposed 2010 budget* at this time. We have no word on the content of the final 2010 budget. Based on that initial proposed budget transmitted on Sept 28, the county's Snoqualmie Forum ILA contribution would be funded in 2010. Staffing would remain at current levels (2.65 ftes) but the proposal reduces funding to the King County Agriculture Program (Farmland Preservation Program / Puget Sound Fresh) and cuts funding entirely for many WSU Extension Services. King County Council is expected to adopt the final budget on Monday, November 23.
- *King Conservation District Assessment reauthorization* was approved by the King County Council. It would be a \$10 per parcel assessment for 3 years (2010-2012). The WRIA and jurisdiction grants will be kept at 2009 levels for all three years (WRIA7-\$600K / WRIA8-\$1.2mil / WRIA9-\$1.2mil / jurisdiction grants - \$1.2mil). About \$203K in KCD grant administration and overhead costs would be taken off the top of the grant amounts – on a proportional basis. WRIA7's annual grant amount will be about \$571K once we deduct this grant administration and overhead charge.
- *Recommended 2010 Forum/KCD coordination priorities* include possible joint meetings, workshops, project ranking, tours for KCD board members; discussing details on the 2010 Opportunity Fund and confirming Snoqualmie representation in the KCD Advisory Committee.
- Bill Knutsen commented that KCD will be tackling a \$350,000 shortfall in 2010 and that a KCD interlocal agreement will be going to King County Council for approval on December 1st. Bill commended Councilmember Lambert for her role in helping reauthorize the assessment and Councilmember Walker for speaking at the County Council hearing on the topic.

Update from King County Flood Control District

Clint Loper, Supervising Engineer in King County's River and Floodplain Management Section, provided an update on the Flood District's 2009 projects and the 2010 budget. The January 2009 floods set the stage for the year with record high water elevations on the Lower Snoqualmie River at Carnation and on the Tolt River. The flood caused significant damage at several locations including a road washout of State Route 202 at Fall City, levee damage on the lower Tolt River, and inundation in the City of Snoqualmie.

- In 2009, the Flood District continued to perform its core activities including levee repairs (along the Tolt, Middle Fork Snoqualmie and Raging Rivers), levee setback projects like the Lower Tolt Floodplain Reconnection Project, acquisition projects (in Timberlane Village, Alpine Manor and at the Aldair levee), 12 home elevations (in Shamrock Park), construction of farm pads (20 over the last two years) and ongoing technical assessments. In addition, the Flood District worked with Puget Sound Energy to discuss potential adverse impacts from the Snoqualmie Falls Hydroelectric Project relicensing project and is negotiating for funding to elevate some structures downstream. Green River flooding concerns due to issues at Howard Hanson Dam led the Flood District to unexpectedly increase spending on the Green River by \$8.4M (of the Flood Districts overall \$36M budget) along with \$3.2M from the US Army Corps of Engineers on Green River flood project.
- In 2010, the Flood District will continue flood hazard reduction activities in the Snoqualmie Watershed with a budget of \$12.5M. New projects for 2010 include a county-wide automated flood warning call-out system to interested residents (similar to the City of Snoqualmie system), potential new funding for limited structure elevations in the Lower Snoqualmie River (similar to the program offered in the Upper Snoqualmie), and a formalized process for constructing farm pads in the floodplain.

Ames Lake Creek Water Quality Monitoring

Janne Kaje, Forum staff, presented the results of the 2008-2009 water quality study on Ames Lake Creek. The study was initiated due to concerns related to potential adverse impacts on salmon and farm crops for human consumption in the sub-basin. Sally Abella, King County staff worked closely with Bill Knutsen at KCD and local landowners to develop and implement the study. The study entailed collecting bacteria samples at several locations along with other water quality data and testing for E. coli which can be harmful to people at high concentrations.

- Based on water quality results, the mainstem of Ames Creek and two smaller tributaries were impaired due to high bacteria counts while Sikes Lake had surprisingly low counts compared to samples taken in prior years. In order to improve conditions, the study recommends addressing identified upstream bacteria sources, such as upland horse farms that drain into Ames Creek from the west. Further sampling is needed in upper Ames Creek to determine likely sources (i.e. wildlife, residential septic or livestock).
- Temperature, dissolved oxygen, and pH results were generally good for the sampling locations. One recommendation would be to add more sampling events during the wet season and repeat summer sampling to look into season or annual variability.
- Overall recommendations included (1) potentially providing sampling equipment and training to local farmers to monitor E. coli bacteria counts on their property, (2) provide water quality workshops for landowners, and (3) provide landowners access to technical assistance resources.
- Councilmember Peterson asked why government funds would be spent if farmers are not required to report data. Bill Knutsen responded that he expects farmers to share any monitoring information with the Forum. Gary Roberts asked if E. Coli persists in the environment and

Janne responded that it does persist in water, soil and food but is not known to cause problems for fish.

Mid-Term Watershed Report Card

Janne Kaje, Forum staff, presented an overview of the proposed Snoqualmie Watershed Report Card due for completion in spring 2010. The purpose of the report card would be to provide a status update on the implementation of the *Snohomish River Basin Salmon Conservation Plan* in King County from 2005 to 2010. The report card would be valuable during the renegotiation process of the Snoqualmie Watershed interlocal agreement in communicating progress and would be a glossy report with photos, graphs, and text describing successes as well as challenges.

- Major topics covered in the report include: environmental trends, habitat restoration and protection milestones, funding, partnerships, data gaps and priorities for 2010-2015.
- Bill Knutsen asked if staff could gather project information from state and county road agencies, and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Department especially for culvert replacement projects. Janne responded that the state's Habitat Work Schedule database should include many these projects.
- Elizabeth Walker and Charles Peterson both suggested that this report could affect future grant funding allocations and prioritization of future actions. Charles also suggested that this report may be useful to get the public informed about the Forum's efforts.

King Conservation District (KCD) Grants – Snoqualmie Funding Priorities

Perry Falcone, Forum staff, gave an overview of trends in Snoqualmie Watershed KCD allocation from 1998-2009 with regard to funding priorities and outside funding sources. The Forum has focused 69% of the KCD allocation on fish habitat protection and restoration capital projects as well as water quality and flood hazard reduction projects that have an overlap with fish habitat projects. In addition, the Forum has spent the remaining 31% of KCD funds on stand alone water quality and flood hazard reduction projects, salmon conservation planning efforts and watershed-wide education programs.

- Other key findings for the period from 1998 to 2009 include: Half of the KCD funds are spent in the mainstem rivers and the remainder is spread across tributaries, headwaters and watershed – wide efforts; the three largest recipients of grants are King County, valley cities and non-profit conservation organizations (36%, 25%, and 18% respectively); and capital projects on public lands received 55% of the overall funding while and projects on private lands received 28%. Funding for projects on private lands has increased each year, for example, these projects made up 44% of the 2009 grant round funding.
- 2009 grant funding challenges included: a static funding source, multiple program objectives (fish habitat, water quality and flood hazard reduction), increasing cost of Forum's staff grant, new initiatives (such as project maintenance, Steelhead trout projects, Opportunity Fund), and a lack of clear grant criteria.

- Key recommendations included (1) Project Review Committee (PRC) should develop criteria for Steelhead Trout projects, (2) PRC should review Flood District funding criteria and change Forum criteria to best complement this funding source, (3) PRC should create specific water quality criteria from the adopted Water Quality Report and encourage these projects to leverage funds, and (4) PRC will reconsider the \$50,000 maintenance earmark and develop more detailed criteria for maintenance projects. The Forum will adopt final funding priorities at the January 20, 2010 meeting.

General Forum Business

The Forum will hold six meetings in 2010 at various locations around the watershed.

Decision: The Forum approved the 2010 meeting schedule.

Public Comment

- No public comment.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be Wednesday, January 18 from 7:00-9:00 pm in Duvall Community Center.