

DRAFT Snohomish Basin Policy Development Committee
April 16, 2020 Meeting Summary
Zoom 10:00 -12:00

1. Agenda Overview and Introductions

- The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m.
- Introductions were made; in attendance were:
 - Kate Engel, Seattle City Light
 - Cory Zyla, Snoqualmie Watershed Forum
 - Elissa Ostergaard, Snoqualmie Watershed Forum
 - Keith Binkley, Snohomish PUD
 - Linda Lyshall, Snohomish Conservation District
 - Kristin Marshall, Snohomish Conservation District
 - Jeannie Abbott, RCO
 - Rodney Pond, Sound Salmon Solutions
 - Paul Crane, City of Everett
 - Gretchen Glaub, Snohomish County
 - Alexa Ramos, Snohomish County
 - Jen Ford, US Forest Service

2. Covid-19 Updates: Snohomish County is facing budget cuts equal to 220 positions. It doesn't seem like there will be layoffs in SWM, but some key partners are dealing with limitations that will likely have impacts on the basin's ability to support capital projects.

At Tulalip Tribes, many staff have been furloughed, including Morgan.

At Seattle City Light, there have been no furloughs or budget cuts yet, but this will likely be coming in the near future. There is a hiring freeze. They will also be waiting to pursue a rate increase that had been slated for next January. The rate increase is really needed, but timing is not ideal. Cuts to capital projects will need to be made.

At City of Everett, most staff are teleworking. The mayor has offered early retirements and is allowing those who accept to use 7 weeks of vacation. The next steps will be layoffs.

At SCD, most work is being done remotely. Minimal field work continues. They are doing alright on the funding front for now largely thanks to grants. However, budget cuts are anticipated with the legislative session coming up.

At the Snoqualmie Watershed Forum, there is a King County hiring freeze. They don't anticipate layoffs, but there will be budget cuts. They will not be asking for a SWM rate increase at this time. This will have impacts on capital projects moving forward. Otherwise, the Forum itself is in good financial shape due to the ILA funding mechanism. Staff are teleworking for now and there are conversations about transitioning back to office work.

At SSS, they are holding up well. They have received a paycheck protection loan that should help them avoid any layoffs. Right now a lot of work is being done on grant applications.

At USFS, they have pushed back the field crew start dates as they try to figure out how to navigate their seasonal housing situation with social distancing measures.

3. Stimulus Package for Projects: Gretchen has received calls from TNC and DNR inquiring about shovel-ready projects that could use potential stimulus funding. Gretchen provided them a list of projects from our 4-year work plan and other sources. In the last economic downturn the Qwuloolt project and Nisqually received large amounts of stimulus funding. Capital projects create jobs so they are prioritized in economic rebuilding strategies. So it would be prudent to prepare now and be ready to seize opportunities that could be coming.
4. DNR Coordination: Stephanie Celt has been continuing to work with basin staff to create a basin map of projects i.e.) 4YWP projects, culvert replacements, etc. This is part of the commissioner's strategy to use DNR resources to better support salmon recovery work in the watershed.
5. SRC Update: The last meeting focused on the funding strategy. See meeting summary that was distributed for more details.
6. Plan Update: The team is still compiling new information that has been developed since the 2005 plan was adopted. The water quality white paper is continuing to move forward. The goal is to have a finished draft by May/June. The basin is also hoping to support Josh Chamberlain's estuary synthesis work using the technical support funds from PSP. Snoqualmie Watershed Forum staff are creating database for the reference documents. A monitoring plan is also being developed. The timeline is to still have a final draft by June 2021.
7. SRFB 2020: Site visits were conducted virtually in March. With this year's new, accelerated timelines and a feedback step eliminated, only two projects have been cleared to proceed. Nine were designated "need more information" (NMI). It's anticipated that the basin will have around \$2.9M to allocate. Gretchen is reevaluating the June 7th date for final list approval because June 29th is the deadline for sponsors to submit more information. Then they should hear back from SRFB technical reviewers by

July 7th. Some of the NMI projects could become a “project of concern” which would then require an appeal process to move forward. A “soft” decision could be reached by June 7th at the Forum meeting and then if need there could be an online meeting between July 14 – August 14. In early June, LE staff will have an opportunity to discuss project concerns with the SRFB technical reviewers. This will enable LE staff to better assist sponsors in responding to the NMI requests.

8. June Forum: The meeting will be held online. Gretchen asked for input/additions to the agenda aside from the project ranking item and letters of support for Floodplains by Design projects. Usually, this meeting has a fish in/fish out presentation from Tulalip staff, but it's unsure if this will be possible with the Covid-19 staff shortages. It was suggested to have a presentation from Brett Shattuck on the acquisition strategy and discuss how the basin could use the tool. It would be good to have a recommendation from the Tech Comm before bringing it to the Forum.
9. WREC: Morgan, the Forum's representative, has been furloughed. Alexa is following the project side of the process closely and the Snoqualmie team has also been very involved. The group seems to be focusing on water-for-water projects rather than habitat projects due to the difficulty in quantifying their water offsets. WDFW has expressed a strong stance on quantifying water offsets from potential projects. Our Forum may want to consider speaking up regarding the importance of habitat projects and ask WDFW to reconsider their position. There is continued concern around reaching a decision by consensus since members are a bit divided on this issue. '
10. Snoqualmie Forum: The next meeting is scheduled for 5/20 and will be held online. Agenda topics will include CWM grant round decisions and budget discussions.
11. LIO Exec. Comm.: The next meeting will be held online on 4/30. The agenda includes a presentation from PSP Deputy Director, Larry Epstein, on the mobilizing funding initiative. The meeting invite will be shared with salmon recovery partners.

Meeting adjourned at 11:17am.