

# **Snohomish-Stillaguamish LIO Executive Committee Meeting Summary**

*Thursday, April 30, 2020*

*1:00 – 2:30 pm*

*Zoom*

## **LIO EC Members**

Gregg Farris, Snohomish County  
Joan Lee, King County  
Ann Bylin, Snohomish County  
David Simpson, Port of Everett  
Elisa Dawson, MRC  
Linda Lyshall, SCD  
Elise Gronewald, Port of Everett  
Pat Stevenson, Stilly Tribe  
Terry Williams, Tulalip Tribes

## **Participants**

Larry Epstein, PSP  
Lincoln Bormann, San Juan County Conservation Bank  
Ron Wesen, Skagit County Commissioner  
Jen Ford, USFS  
Keith Binkley, SnoPUD  
Bill Blake, Skagit SCD  
David Beedle, Seattle City Light  
Dani Driscoll, Snohomish County  
Susan O'Neill, ESA  
Elizabeth Butler, RCO  
Anita Marrero, City of Monroe  
Molly Fay, Watershed Council  
Denise Johns, City of Monroe  
Elissa Ostergaard, Snoqualmie Watershed Forum

## **LIO Support Staff**

Alexa Ramos, Snohomish County  
Kit Crump, Snohomish County  
Erin Murray, PSP

## **Introductions**

Co-chair Gregg opened the meeting and started introductions. He reviewed the meeting purpose and agenda. There were no members of the public present and no public comments.

## **Approval of October meeting minutes**

Gregg asked if anyone would like to request changes to the October 2019 meeting notes. No changes were requested and the notes were approved by consensus.

## **LIO Business**

Alexa provided a brief update on the following:

- The group was reminded that the LIO Coordinator is on leave with a planned return date in July.
- At the December Snohomish IC meeting, the committee selected the Healthy Onsite Sewage Systems NTA for the direct award allocation. The region has also prioritized this project so it will be fully funded.
- Eight projects from our LIO were recommended by the region for funding. See handout for details.
- This year's NTA direct award allocation decision will be made by the SWC. They have been provided with the short list of NTAs being considered by each SI lead to inform their decision making. The SWC will select an NTA by the accelerated May 20<sup>th</sup> deadline.

Erin shared regional updates of interest to the committee:

- The legislative session is going well.
- Covid-19 struck since we last met. One impact included Puget Sound Day on the Hill being cancelled. Partners have sent a letter instead.
- EPA approved \$5M additional NEP funding. EPA committed to increase funding for LIO capacity contracts. LIOs will receive \$125K each next year instead of the former \$75K. Hopefully, the additional funding continues into the future, but this is not guaranteed.
- PSP has been advocating for increased state funding to support LIOs, but they will be delaying their big push until the next biennium due to Covid-19.
- The SI leads are preparing to compete for contracts as this 5-year funding cycle sunsets.
- EPA hosted a listening session with LIOs in December to inform the next 5-year funding cycle. LIOs submitted letters with their concerns and suggestions for improvement going forward, including a desire for clarity around LIO roles in recovery, more capacity to participate, and revision to the funding model to reflect the 2014 proposal (a funding model similar to SRFB where the bulk of funding goes to local groups to allocate). The next cycle's funding model is not finalized yet. Next steps will be waiting for an EPA response to PSP and LIO letters of suggested changes.
- PSP revisited the LIO SOW to address the concerns of LIOs. Negotiations will begin in June.

## **LIO Scope of Work Changes**

The revised SOW template is intended to address LIO concerns around capacity and level of influence on ecosystem recovery both locally and regionally. The updated SOW seeks to outline tasks and resources that support both the current and ideal role of an LIO.

Alexa and Erin also explained that the additional \$5M in NEP funding made available to support increased capacity agreements for the LIOs will fund the new SOW tasks. The current agreements fund LIOs at \$75K, but next year \$125K will be available for each. The Snohomish IC committee discussed the potential use for these extra funds and areas for overall improvement in LIO functionality at their March meeting. Some members at that meeting mentioned a desire to see the LIO tackle issues such as enforcement and water quality which would unite organizations and move the needle on recovery. Focus topic subcommittees were also seen as an effective tool.

See timeline for SOW review, comment, and negotiations.

Linda shared support for Tasks 5.01 & 5.02 & 5.06, but was not in favor of Task 5.04.

Bill asked where integrating updated the Vital signs, progress measures and common indicators fits in. Staff suggested Task 4: Adaptive Management would be the appropriate place for that work.

Co-chairs Gregg and Joan commented that all of the Tasks have merit. They could see spending funds in any of the categories.

Staff will follow-up with this group and both Implementation Committees for further feedback as SOW negotiations move forward in coming months.

### **Mobilizing Funding Presentation**

Larry Epstein, PSP deputy director, presented on their Mobilizing Funding Initiative. See presentation for more details.

- ESA consulting has been a partner in developing the initial study and follow-up work happening right now.
- The impetus for this study was the \$1 billion funding gap for recovery.
- The Puget SOS bill is moving forward in legislature which would complement these efforts.
- There is also potential stimulus package coming in response to the Covid pandemic.
- PSP is exploring funding innovations that go beyond the traditional approach of focusing on legislative appropriations. They are also looking at new sources of funding.

Recommended actions in the ESA report -

- Private sector partnerships – such as “orca dollars” to generate voluntary donations to scale
- Ecosystems-based marketplaces – including trade, mitigation, in-lieu fee programs, etc. NOAA’s “Salish Sea Nearshore Marketplace” has been created for required mitigation/fee dollars for overwater development structures and will be launching in the next couple of months. PSP is collaborating with them right now. They will be looking for projects to use these funds. Susan added that they have been working with King County staff on the overwater structures program.
- Investment-grade performance measures – such as effectiveness/outcome indicators to help make funding decisions and track direct impacts on problems we’re trying to solve e.g.) “Water 100” for stormwater improvements. Boeing and TNC are collaborating, but work is on hold right now.
- PSP innovation & accountability center – examining how to get funds from sources already out there to perform most effectively to generate the results we want. This includes effectiveness monitoring, science, etc. to focus on encouraging funding sources to use their funds differently and/or allocate more to particular tasks because they are high performing. The SRC funding subcommittee is focused on this right now and seeking volunteers to work on increasing performance and revenue.
- Puget Sound recovery fund – such as developing new taxing/revenue mechanisms. This offers the highest potential revenue in income, but is also the most difficult because it’s centered on the public tax base. This is less likely to gain support now due to Covid than even a couple of months ago.

PSP analyzed the consultant’s report to see which options could have the highest impact and make the most use of funding (what was most/least viable). Larry described the current status of options being pursued.

Larry encouraged participants to volunteer to help PSP think through how to make these measures work on a conceptual level. He asked them to think about the types of projects that should be implemented through these initiatives. Sometimes NTAs are a clear fit. Other times it's not as clear what work local partners want to do because they're not included in the Action Agenda. If anyone wants to help, he directed them to reach out and let him know about your interests.

#### San Juan County Conservation Land Bank

Lincoln gave a presentation on the San Juan County Conservation Land Bank. He explained that the land bank purchases conservation easements and properties outright for the community. The effort started in the 80s driven by concern of the pace of development. Enabling legislation came in 1990. Excise tax allows the land bank to acquire and maintain properties. This requires a majority vote in the county on the amount and duration of tax collection. The land bank has been through authorization three times; each for a twelve year period. The current legislation is effective through 2026 right now. Preservation is prioritized for a variety of values: low intensity recreation, potable water, etc. Planning and prioritization is key to guiding their work. Decisions are made by a volunteer council. Then projects have to be put into a budget and approved by the county council (or rejected) in whole. This eliminates the ability to "cherry pick" proposals. At this time, the land bank maintains 45 conservation easements across 7 islands. Of the 36 preserves, 25 are open to the public. See presentation for details.

**Meeting adjourned at 2:30pm.**