

SLS Executive Committee – Refocus and Strategic Planning

December 16, 2015 12:15 – 3:30
Tulalip Casino, Douglas Board Room

MEETING NOTES

Meeting Purpose: Gather input on a proposal to restructure SLS, and discuss SLS integrated strategic plans for Snohomish and Stillaguamish basins.

Meeting Participants:

Dan Evans, SLS co-facilitator	David Remlinger, Agriculture
Cynthia Carlstad, SLS co-facilitator	Tristan Klesick, Agriculture
Terry Williams, Tulalip Tribe	Brian Bookey, Agriculture
Morgan Ruff, Tulalip Tribe	Bob Everitt, Department of Fish and Wildlife
Preston Hardison, Tulalip Tribe	Erik Stockdale, Ecology
Brad Warren, Tulalip Tribe	Jason Lehto, NOAA
Gregg Farris, Snohomish County	Lew Moore, Washington Research Council
Monte Marti, Snohomish County	Kristin Kelly, Pilchuck Audubon Society
Linda Neunzig, Snohomish County	Heather Cole, The Nature Conservancy
	Tessa Gardner-Brown, meeting documentation

Updates from SLS Participants:

Dan Evans began the meeting by thanking the Tulalip Tribe, with special appreciation to Patti Gobin, for hosting the meeting and providing lunch service to meeting participants.

Dan Evans reminded meeting participants of the upcoming SLS Annual Meeting on January 20, 2016.

Jason Lehto from NOAA provided an update on outcome of recent NOS grant application.

- SLS project was unsuccessful in securing grant funding through the Regional Coastal Resilience grant program.
- NOAA reviewed more than 130 grant applications, with just over \$1 million to award.
- Jason Lehto will work internally to understand why SLS did not receive NOS grant funding and will debrief the group afterwards.

Group discussion on additional grant funding opportunities available in 2016.

- Potential funding opportunities from NOAA through 2016 community-based grants, which focus on enhancement and on-the-ground projects.
- NOAA to receive additional funding from CEQ resiliency grants, which may be favorable due to Resilient Lands and Waters status of Snohomish.
- Monte Marti will send grant application to Terry Williams to forward to CEQ.
- Jason Lehto will send a summary of upcoming funding opportunities through NOAA.
- Future grant applications should consider linking planning projects to design/construction to provide a more comprehensive package and increase potential opportunities for funding.
- Monte Marti is working with Sen. Patty Murray and Rep. Suzan DelBene to obtain a letter of support for project packages by late December 2015.
- Grant sections for PSP action agenda will be completed and submitted by late December 2015.

- Gregg Farris suggests that the approach proposal for floodplains by design soon and reminds the group that the pre-proposal due date from Ecology is approaching (January 29, 2016).

Terry Williams distributed a draft logo for SLS to the group.

- Feedback on logo was positive, but Terry asked that any specific comments be sent to him so he can coordinate with the artist and finalize.

Kristin Kelly provided an update on transition from Futurewise to Pilchuck Audubon Society.

- Kristin will continue to stay involved in SLS as part of her new/expanded role as the Executive Director of Smart Growth at Pilchuck Audubon Society.
- Kristin's phone number will remain the same, but she will distribute her new email address to the group.

Linda Neuzig from Snohomish County provided an update on recent agricultural wins.

- Working with PCC Farmland Trust to purchase the 275 acre Cliff Bailey farm, with a final sale agreement expected by the end of December 2015.
- Working with Forterra to finalize purchase of 160-acres of agricultural land that was formerly slated for development as a subdivision. (Sale finalized during SLS meeting.)
- Home owners association, residential parcels, and developments rights will be removed from this property as part of the sale agreement.
- Funding was secured through a number of sources including Forterra, Snohomish County, Department of Ecology, and the City of Arlington.
- SLS should consider acquisition of properties adjacent to Faber Farm to preserve more agricultural land in the south slough restoration project area – doing so would create a contiguous area protected for farming.
- SLS should explore potential transfer of development rights for property between Marysville and Arlington to preserve agricultural land that is now within the designated urban growth area.

Lew Moore mentioned that the Washington Research Council is preparing a 5-year report on the Growth Management Act.

- Lew may reach out to members of SLS to gain insight on their experience with the GMA.

SLS Refocus Discussion

- Dan Evans introduces a proposed concept to refocus and restructure SLS that would make the following changes:
 - SLS Executive Committee monthly meetings would move to quarterly meetings.
 - These meetings would stay as high-level discussions, focusing on policy issues, coordination with regional and state groups, and other initiatives.
 - Basin Work Groups (for the Stillaguamish and the Snohomish) would be convened and would meet quarterly.
 - These meetings would engage basin-level stakeholders and would focus on basin-specific topics.
 - This would provide an opportunity to develop a closer connection with the watershed council in the Stillaguamish basin, but would not be a merge with the watershed council.
 - Ad Hoc Special Topic Tasks Groups would be convened and meet as necessary to implement items discussed in the Executive Committee or Basin Work Groups.

- These meetings would allow technical working groups to implement ideas and focus on detailed work products.
- Key comments in favor of the restructure include:
 - Restructure may help SLS to generate work products, build projects that are currently stagnant, and meet targets and goals that have been missed recently.
 - Staffing and directing resources to monthly meetings is difficult for many participants, and quarterly meetings may be a more reasonable expectation.
 - Some participants question whether such frequent high-level meetings are needed, and if the addition of technical working groups would increase real work product.
 - A smaller the group with a more focused the agenda could generate momentum and result in work products at the project level.
- Key comments in opposition to the restructure include:
 - Feeling that a restructure and move to fewer meetings could dilute the SLS influence.
 - General consensus that SLS has been instrumental in relationship building, and concern that this strength would be weakened if meetings were moved to quarterly.
 - Some participants feel that meeting monthly isn't quite enough, and moving to quarterly meetings would exacerbate that issue.
 - Agencies find SLS and its frequent meetings helpful in meeting internal initiatives (such as sustainable fisheries at NOAA).
 - Some participants may lose interest and investment in SLS if the larger group is separated smaller working groups.
 - Concern that many SLS projects are not yet done and a restructure at this time could result in further delays.
 - Concern as to whether the Stillaguamish Work Group would be as progressive and integrated as a Snohomish Work Group.
 - If requested, Tulalip would consider increasing its participation in a Stillaguamish working group.
- Alternative approaches to the proposed restructure (described above) includes:
 - Executive Committee with selected stakeholders and conveners meet monthly.
 - Full Executive Committee meetings held quarterly.
 - Ad Hoc Special Topic Tasks Groups would be convened and meet as necessary.

General Comments and Concerns from Group Discussion

- The Executive Committee may benefit from defining specific and measureable outputs, which may keep discussions and meetings on track and focused.
- Need to refocus SLS to work products and show that the projects identified originally will be completed.
- Need to develop a clear vision, mission statement, goals and objectives to focus SLS.
 - The SLS vision could be used to quickly describe SLS efforts to potential funders, project partners, interest groups and the public.
 - Executive Committee should review the mission statement from 5 years ago.
- Potential to show SLS success through completion of the reach plans.
- Agriculture is not yet fully represented; however, a key SLS strength is its ability to increase agricultural support and involvement.
- SLS should develop a prioritized set of agricultural wins and potential projects or land acquisition.

Review of SLS Priorities

- Dan Evans reviewed a list of SLS priorities in light of discussion regarding refocusing. The list included:
 - Developing an agricultural strategy
 - Developing an integrated floodplain management strategy
 - Protecting resource lands
 - Increasing flood control and reducing damage
 - Overlaying potential climate change issues on project packages
 - Responding to development pressure and population growth
 - Water management and water quality
 - Nutrient management and healthy soil
- Dan Evans reviewed the cornerstones of SLS in light of discussion regarding SLS vision and mission.
 - Identifying and packaging projects for a net gain
 - Working with a good information base
 - Monitoring projects and adapting
 - Collaborating and connecting with varied interests

Action Items

- Jason Lehto will work internally to understand why SLS was not successful and will debrief the group afterwards.
- Jason Lehto to send a summary of upcoming funding opportunities through NOAA.
- Monte Marti to send recent grant application to Terry Williams to forward to CEQ.
- Dan Evans to find the former SLS mission statement and review with the Executive Committee.
- Group to send comments on draft logo to Terry and Terry to revise and finalize logo.