

SUMMARY NOTES
SNOHOMISH SUSTAINABLE LANDS STRATEGY
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING 3.7.2
10:00 – 12:00 Wednesday February 15, 2017

Snohomish County Admin East Building, 1st floor conference room
3000 Rockefeller Ave., Everett, WA 98201

PARTICIPANTS

Morgan Ruff for Terry Williams, Tulalip Tribes, SLS Co-Chair (Fish)	Tristan Klesick, Stilly farmer, SLS Co-Chair (Ag)
Dave Remlinger, Lord Hill Farms, SLS EC Ag rep.	Kristin Kelly, Pilchuck Audubon, SLS EC Fish / Environmental rep
C.K. Eidem, Ducks Unlimited, SLS EC Fish rep	Monte Marti, Mgr Sno Conservation Dist., EC Ag rep
Brian Bookey, Cherry Lane Farms, SLS EC Ag rep.	Pat Stevenson, Stillaguamish Tribe for Chairman Shawn Yanity, EC Fish Rep
Bob Everitt, WDFW NW Regional Director	Bob Carey, The Nature Conservancy
Dan Evans, SLS co-facilitator	Deborah Knight, Manager, City of Stanwood
Diane Hennessey, Ecology, wetland programs	Erik Stockdale, SnoCo SWM, Special Projects Coordinator
Terri Strandberg, SnoCo PDS	Hilary Aten, PCC Farmland Trust
Alexa Ramos, SnoCo SWM, support staff	Janet Curran, NOAA, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)
Heather Cole, TNC area coordinator	Jim Wright, NOAA hydrologist
Kye Iris, WDFW land & real estate specialist	Linda Neunzig, SnoCo Ag Coordinator
Jay Krienitz, WDFW, ESRP Manager	Loren Brokaw, WDFW
Gregg Farris, SnoCo SWM	Nick Bratton, Forterra, land conservation /TDR specialist
Kelly Marquardt, Congresswoman DelBene's Office	Jeff Parsons, PSP Legislative Policy Director
Jay Kreinitz,	Robin Fay, PCC Farmland Trust
Sean Curran, SnoCo PDS	Valerie Normand, SnoCo SWM Communications Specialist

PURPOSE: The primary focus of the February SLS Executive Committee meeting is to receive a briefing on the current State Legislative session, review SLS strategic priorities and needs, and how to match and support funding for coordinated farm-fish-flood priorities. The Executive Committee will also review letters of support for the Leque Island project and Johnson Farm acquisition, as well as an update on a sub-reach plan for the Lower Sky, farm-fish-flood management updates, and upcoming events.

1) WELCOME, INTRODUCTION (10:00-10:10)

- a) **Review purpose, agenda:** The meeting was called to order by SLS Coordinator, Dan Evans. The purpose and agenda for the meeting were reviewed. Due to weather and traffic delays, the order of the agenda was altered to allow time for presenters to arrive.
- b) **Introductions:** Co-chair Tristan Klesick welcomed attendees. Executive Committee members, conveners, and other participants introduced themselves. Presenters were introduced by the Co-chair and Coordinator.
- c) **Announcements:** Monte Marti, who, in addition is also chair of the Washington State Conservation District Association, presented the Conservation Commission's Vim Wright Building Bridges Award to SLS Co-chairs Tristan Klesick and Terry Williams for their efforts here which serve as a model of farm-fish collaboration for the region and the rest of the country.

2) LEGISLATIVE BRIEFING (10:10-11:15)

a) **Session overview:**

The Washington State Legislature has been in session since January 9th. This Friday is the last day for policy bills to come out of the House so the focus will shortly turn to the budget.

i) **House and Senate profiles**

The political dynamics in the Legislature are similar to those in the last couple of sessions, with a Democrat controlled House and a Republican controlled Senate. Democrats hold a 50-48 majority in the House of Representatives. Although Democrats outnumber Republicans 25-24 in the Senate, one "Independent Democrat" senator (Tim Sheldon) caucuses with Republicans, effectively resulting in Republican control of the Senate by a 25-24 margin, forming a "Majority Coalition Caucus." Key members on the House Capital Budget include the Chair, Steve Tharinger, as well as local Strom Peterson (Vice Chair), Reps. Norma Smith (Asst Ranking Minority Member), Mike Sells, and John Koster. In the Senate, key Ways and Means Committee members on the Capital Budget panel include Chairman Jim Honeyford, Ranking Minority Member Kevin Ranker, and local Sen. Barbara Bailey.

ii) **Budget drivers, capacities, expectations**

School funding is dominating Legislative spending again this year. The *McCleary* mandate by the State Supreme Court is the biggest budgetary driver and challenge. There is also a lot of pressure on the State budget to match local school levies this year. The State has a Constitutional obligation to pay 30% of school construction. This year the total amount of local levies is much larger (\$2.3 billion) than past years. The Public Works Investment Board accounts for a large piece of the budget as well. And mental health is another growing budgetary priority.

2-Year Budget:

\$2.5 billion (Capital Budget)

- \$2.3 billion (School Levees)

\$200 million for everything else...

The *Hirst* decision (water resources decision in Whatcom Co. under the GMA) has resulted in a building moratorium. This is a potentially explosive and divisive policy issue. But it could also be an opportunity for multi-benefit projects. See the *Hirst* discussion immediately below.

b) SLS priorities and project / partner needs

Gregg Farris (SnoCo SWM) gave an overview of SB 5524, which proposes to make some landowners exempt to the Surface Water Management (SWM) fees collected by Snohomish County. The Ag Board reportedly is concerned about the intent of the bill. They are apparently submitting a letter to the County Executive and Council that the Ag Board does not support the bill. The SLS Executive Committee (EC) considered whether to send a letter on the subject by the March 8th deadline. Members of the SLS EC asked for more information regarding the legislation and a report on an upcoming meeting with proponents of the bill who reside on Ebey Island. The EC did not reach a decision and agreed to continue the conversation after receiving more information.

c) Priority funding sources for F3 / multi-benefit approach

SLS Co-chair Tristan Klesick spent Monday Feb. 13th in Olympia talking with key Legislators, including local reps, regarding the need for flexible, multi-benefit funding and the SLS. The Executive Committee and a funding work group have identified several funding priorities for this Legislative session to support multi-benefit (F3) SLS priority projects and initiatives, including:

- Floodplains by Design (FbD): \$61.5 (Stillaguamish & Snohomish projects)
- SRFB (RCO salmon restoration): \$30 million
- ESRP: \$10 million (learning projects/design, assmt, O/R)
- Conservation Commission: \$4 m additional for targeted multi-benefit acquisition
- Fish Barrier Removal Board: \$19.7 million (culvert replacements)

House and Senate will submit finals in March. FbD lobby day Feb. 22nd and others are well-timed.

3) SUPPORT LETTERS: LEQUE ISLAND, JOHNSON FARM (11:15-11:30)

a) Update on Leque Island project, relation to F3 net gain, support letter

WDFW and Ducks Unlimited are in the design and permitting phase (Phase 1) of the Leque Island restoration project. For Phase 2, in 2017 they will be digging channels. In 2018 they will breach the dikes. The team is continuing to apply for grants to fund Phase 2, which will also include a socio-economic analysis and the SLS multi-benefit approach.

As reflected in the letter of support for the Leque Island (see Appendix 2) project, it was once a lightning rod for opposition by the agricultural community to estuary restoration that impacts farmland. However, WDFW, as owner of Leque and 1237 acres on Ebey Island in the Snohomish estuary, work with the SLS to make available long-term leases for agricultural use and enhancement on Ebey that could not be used in the foreseeable future for a major dike setback restoration project. This farm-fish balance by WDFW – optimizing land uses and values – has made broad support for the Leque Island restoration project possible.

The EC unanimously approved the letter of support.

Pat Stevenson (Stillaguamish Tribes) raised the issue of federal funding and the nexus with treaty trust responsibility with the tribes.

Congresswoman DelBene's representative mentioned that it's good to let your congressperson know when you're applying for federal funding so it'd be good to contact Larson's office as well as US Senators Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell.

b) **Johnson Farm acquisition update, letter of support**

Deborah Knight explained the multi-benefit basis for the project. The City of Stanwood has been working for several years to acquire the land. It will consist of 30 acres fee simple to include the farm buildings, levee, and sea dike in addition to a 150 acre easement to provide permanent protection from development and the ability to farm with additional benefits for migratory water fowl, flood hazard mitigation, and recreation /open space. This is a win-win-win, multi-benefit project serving agriculture, recreation, flood protection, and restoration efforts implementing the SVPI.

The EC unanimously approved the Johnson Farm letter of support, which will be produced in final form and signed by the Co-chairs.

4) UPDATES & REPORTS (11:30-11:55)

a) **Lower Sky sub-reach plan update, overview**

Linda Neunzig and Erik Stockdale gave a brief update on the Lower Sky sub-reach plan.

See links to Lower Sky presentation and Memorandum (Lower Skykomish River Assessment and Conceptual Alternatives) in Appendix 1 for an overview of the assessment and conceptual alternatives.

Linda explained that local farmers were facing the challenges for some time -- losing land to bank erosion in this dynamic portion of the reach (RM 10-13), frequent flooding last winter (six significant flood events 2015/16) and having to rent replacement land. The farmers have been working with Snohomish County on the demonstration of new tools and strategies, such as flood fencing and large wood placement. After the repeated flooding last winter, changes in channel flow, and the loss of much of the new infrastructure, the farmers came back to Snohomish County for technical assistance and solutions. The County had two main goals: 1) to listen to the landowners and 2) to put together shovel-ready projects; a project package for the whole sub-reach. Erik referenced the Technical Memo, which included a flood fence to slow down flow and catch debris, flow vectoring, capturing large wood debris for engineered log jams, and other measures. The analysis is still in the works. The Labish property, Groenveld Dairy, and other landowners would be affected. The preliminary cost estimate of a suites of projects in the main and back channels is approximately \$2.5 million, with lessons that could be broadly applicable. The project team will likely come to SLS in the future for a letter of support to apply for funding. This is an opportunity to design and demonstrate innovative combinations of tools and strategies and a sub-reach scale example of multi-benefit planning, design, and implementation.

b) **Other farm, fish, flood management updates**

Erik presented the group with handouts for visits to Olympia (FbD lobby day, etc.). Someone suggested adding the FbD project list on the back of the 1-pager.

Tristan recapped his visit to Olympia earlier that week. He focused conversations on an introduction to the SLS and on FbD, ESRP, and Conservation Commission funding in keeping with the multi-benefit approach, including regulatory efficiency initiatives, such as streamlined, programmatic permitting for culvert replacements, 5-year drainage maintenance permitting with model BMPs and habitat improvements, and Responsible Stewardship (as proposed by Dan Bartelheimer and others).

PCC Farmland Trust's Hilary Aten also mentioned the Washington Land Trust lobby day will be on 2/22/17.

c) **Coordinated Investment Initiative**

Paul Cereghino (NOAA Restoration Center) was not able to attend the Executive Committee meeting to provide an update to the Executive Committee on the Coordinated Investment initiative. Instead, he provided the written summary in Appendix 4.

5) WRAP UP AND NEXT STEPS (11:55-Noon)

The meeting adjourned at 12:18 PM.

The next meeting of the SLS Executive Committee will be at the Stillaguamish Tribe Natural Resources Building on March 15th from 10-noon.

**APPENDIX 1: Lower Skykomish Subreach (RM 10-RM13) Assessment and
Conceptual Alternatives Memorandum**

See SLS Website for Memo:

<https://snohomishcountywa.gov/DocumentCenter/View/41373>

And Lower Skykomish Presentation:

<https://snohomishcountywa.gov/DocumentCenter/View/41369>

APPENDIX 2: Leque Island Letter of Support



Executive Committee

Terry Williams, Co-chair
Tulalip Tribes

Tristan Klesick, Co-chair
Klesick Family Farm

Kristin Kelly
*Secretary-Treasurer
Pilchuck Audubon Society*

Brian Bookey
Cherry Lane Farms

C.K. Eidem
Ducks Unlimited

Monte Marti
*Snohomish
Conservation District*

Dave Remlinger
Lord Hill Farms

Shawn Yanity
Stillaguamish Tribe

Sustainable Lands Strategy

Working together for farm, fish and flood net gain

Date

Bob Everitt, Regional Director
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
16018 Mill Creek Boulevard
Mill Creek, WA 98012

Re: Sustainable Lands Strategy support for the Leque Island Restoration Project

Dear Mr. Everitt:

We are writing to support the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's Leque Island Estuary Restoration Project to restore estuarine tidal marsh processes to approximately 250 acres of Leque Island.

As one of the conveners of the Sustainable Lands Strategy (SLS), you know the SLS has been following WDFW's proposed restoration at Leque Island closely for several years. We appreciate WDFW's – and your personal – efforts to work collaboratively with our farm, fish, and flood management partners to achieve overall "net gain," understanding WDFW's primary mission is conservation of fish and wildlife resources. Specifically, we appreciate WDFW's engagement with the agricultural community to make farmland available – such as multi-year leases on Ebey Island – for improved Ag productivity as well as waterfowl forage and habitat. As a package, the project and WDFW's other collaborative efforts in the area provide a net gain for salmon recovery, flood risk, and, with the addition of replacement agricultural lands, a net gain for agriculture. We fully support projects that represent thoughtfully balanced multiple benefits for farms, fish, and flood management.

The SLS was established with the intent that fish, farm, and flood management advocates can make more progress by working together than by being at odds with each other. Members of the SLS took part throughout the extensive Design Alternatives Development Process and the Stakeholder Advisory Committee and commend WDFW for their patient inclusive approach.

Thank you for your consideration

Sincerely,

Terry Williams
Co-chair of Snohomish Sustainable
Lands Strategy, Environmental Caucus

Tristan Klesick
Co-chair of Snohomish Sustainable
Lands Strategy, Agricultural Caucus

APPENDIX 3: Draft Letter of Support for Johnson Farm Acquisition

[on SLS Letterhead]
February 21, 2017

Dianne Bailey
Snohomish County Conservation Futures Program
6705 Puget Park Drive
Snohomish, WA 98296

Dear Dianne,

On behalf of the Sustainable Lands Strategy (SLS) in Snohomish County, we are writing to support the City of Stanwood's Conservation Futures grant application for \$500,000 to acquire approximately 30 acres including resource lands, farm buildings, dike and levee system, and a 150 acre farmland conservation easement on the Johnson Family Farm property located at the confluence of the Stillaguamish River and Skagit Bay.

The City has been working closely with area partners including the Stillaguamish Tribe, Department of Fish and Wildlife, local farmers, and the SLS to acquire the Johnson Family Farm. The property is a high priority for resource land protection because of its proximity to Skagit Bay and long-term benefits for farmland preservation, habitat, recreation, and flood protection. The property presents an opportunity to acquire and manage replacement lands for estuary restoration projects for farmed waterfowl forage, walk-in hunting, and wildlife viewing. The proposed 150 acre farmland conservation easement will also be a strategically important contribution for protecting farmland and conservation values as part of the Stillaguamish Valley Protection Initiative (SVPI) promoted by the SLS, land trusts, tribes and other partners. .

The Johnson Family Farm is adjacent to the 15 acre Ovenell Farm purchased by the City of Stanwood in 2015 using Conservation Futures funds. The City has completed a master plan for Ovenell Farm. The master plan offers residents and visitors opportunities to learn about the history of the region, access the Stillaguamish River, and view wildlife. Acquiring the Johnson Farm to the north will create a year-round, publicly accessible 1.25 mile lineal trail from Ovenell north to Skagit Bay. This could replace the recreation access lost by restoring Leque Island to estuary habitat for salmon and other aquatic species. In addition, acquisition of the dike and levee system will ensure long-term flood protection for the City of Stanwood and surrounding property owners.

This is truly a "multi-benefit" project protecting resource lands – preserving farmland and habitat, improving flood protection, and creating recreational opportunities. We hope you and the Conservation Futures Board will carefully evaluate Stanwood's application and recognize the important benefit the proposed acquisition will provide to Snohomish County.

Sincerely,

Tristan Klesick, Co-Chair (Ag)
Klesick Family Farms

Terry Williams, Co-Chair, (Fish)
Tulalip Tribes

APPENDIX 4: COORDINATED INVESTMENT UPDATE

Coordinated Investment Update from Paul Cereghino 2/14/17

Hello Steering Committee and colleagues,

I will not be able to attend your meeting tomorrow, and so thought I'd provide a written update:

GOVERNANCE - I have had a series of meetings with staff associated with the Governor's Results Washington (to help coordinate state agencies) and Ecosystem Coordination Board (as a more general advocacy body to keep state and federal partners accountable). Our work to identify ways to improve the "local operating environment" to achieve multiple benefits is timely and well received. Your letter from SLS to agencies is scheduled at the ECB on March 2, and we are in the final stages of having our work embraced as "improvement projects" by Results Washington, and have a meeting with the governor's policy advisor and Rob Duff next week to finalize. At that point we'll be reporting progress on these projects to agency leadership, and seeking agency support for completion. I anticipate getting final signatures on your letter and sending it out to parties next Wednesday, with a packet going to ECB Thursday.

FLOOD MGMT FORUM - TNC has indicated their willingness to support, and Ecology has indicated their support for the effort. Results Washington will engage the EMD in support. We have a planning meeting at the beginning of March with TNC and a consultation to clarify a work plan. We will be looking for how FEMA, USACE, Ecology and EMD management of flood infrastructure can be better aligned with reach scale plans. I will be hosting a session on efforts integrating flood management, agriculture, and salmon recovery, including SLS, at the Salmon Conference in April.

FRENCH CREEK - After following up with Dave, we have a general plan for how to proceed. We'll hope to work with agencies to develop a "coordinated assessment" and with the district to define an "ecosystem improvement effort" both of which will support a more general JARPA for drainage system maintenance. This will be my priority project once I can tie up other loose ends, and with increasing support from Janet Curran as she becomes free from her detail.

CULVERTS - An initial meeting with county staff helped us understand the range of culverts being replaced, and identified an apparent shift in USACE maintenance exemption policy as the source of increased cost. We are verifying this finding with USACE staff to clarify next steps.

GRANT MANAGEMENT - The Water and Salmon Funding Coordination Group has embraced our proposals. We'll focus first on organizing state and federal funding opportunities and a large project budget standard. I am scheduling with the co-chairs to clarify a work plan.

There are three NOAA grant opportunities on the street. A two-part RFP from NMFS and NOS on resilience planning and ecosystem management, and a more salmon restoration funding opportunity.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Paul Cereghino | NOAA Restoration Center | [360.534.9303](tel:360.534.9303) | mobile [206-948-6360](tel:206-948-6360) |