

SUMMARY NOTES
SNOHOMISH SUSTAINABLE LANDS STRATEGY
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING 3.7.3

(Stillaguamish Basin focus)
 10:00 – 12:00 Wednesday March 15, 2017

Stillaguamish Tribe’s Natural Resources Center, large conference room
 22712 6th Ave. NE Arlington, WA 98223

PARTICIPANTS

Terry Williams, Tulalip Tribes, SLS Co-Chair (Fish)	Tristan Klesick, Stilly farmer, SLS Co-Chair (Ag)
C.K. Eidem, Ducks Unlimited, SLS EC Fish rep	Monte Marti, Sno Conservation Dist. Manager, EC Ag rep
Shawn Yanity, Stillaguamish Tribe, Chairman	Brian Bookey, National Food, SLS EC Ag rep
Nick Bratton, Forterra	Dan Bartelheimer, Snohomish County Farm Bureau
Pat Stevenson, Stillaguamish Tribe, Environment Program Dir.	Gregg Farris, SnoCo SWM Planning Manager
Bob Everett, WDFW, NW Regional Dir.	Lindsay Desmul, WDFW
Kit Crump, SnoCo SWM Planner, Stilly Basin Coordinator	Chuck Hazleton, Stillaguamish Flood Control District Mgr, Commissioner
Dan Calvert, Puget Sound Partnership Liaison	Kirt Hanson, Snoco SWM Engineer
Janet Curran, NOAA	Kirk Lakey, WA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife
Jessica Hamill, Snoco SWM Planner, LIO coordinator	JB Bennis, WSU Extension
Jim Wright, NOAA Restoration Center	Linda Neunzig, SnoCo Ag Coordinator
Paul Cereghino, NOAA Restoration Center (by phone)	Beth Liddell, SnoCo SWM Planner
Dan Evans, Consulting, Facilitator	Valerie Normand, Snoco SWM Communications
Gregg Farris, Snoco SWM Planning Manager	Heather Cole, The Nature Conservancy
Robin Fay, PCC Farmland Trust	

PURPOSE: Update SLS Executive Committee and partners on Stillaguamish projects, including a focus on SLS Resource Lands Protection Initiative and the Stillaguamish Valley Protection Initiative (SVPI). Receive updates on and discuss several Snohomish or basin-wide issues and initiatives, and discuss implications of the “change” election on the SLS and collaborative conservation.

1. WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS (10:00-10:10)

- a. **Review purpose, agenda:** The Executive Committee was called to order with thanks to the Stillaguamish Tribe for hosting the Executive Committee (EC) meeting at their Natural Resources Center.
- b. **Introductions:** Participants introduced themselves.
- c. **Announcements**
 - Dan Evans reviewed the agenda and mentioned the three-month rotation that cycles meetings between the Stillaguamish Tribe, the County, and the Tulalip Tribes offices.

2. LOWER STILLAGUAMISH PROJECT UPDATES (10:10-11:00)

- a. Stilly indicators: salmon status, shellfish, farmland, flood management.
 - Pat Stevenson and Kit Crump presented forecast and escapement numbers for salmon species in the Stillaguamish. Congress can reduce the amount of fishing pressure in the watershed. The status quo is to roll the previous annex over but tribes want to push for a reduction in harvest in the current annex negotiations related to the Pacific Salmon treaty. Pat and Kit will provide a summary of the forecasts and escapement levels to Dan Evans to forward. The 2017 Salmon Forecast and Escapement Estimates for the Stillaguamish River runs are summarized in Appendix 1.
 - Monte Marti asked for description and definition of the Forecast and “escapement.” Kit Crump provided the following in response:
 - **Forecast** is the predicted return numbers of adult fish (anticipated run size) for a given year.
 - **Escapement estimates** are our best guess as to how many fish came into a watershed in a given year. Since we do not count or census every fish, the escapement value of fish that came back is an estimate, albeit a lot more accurate than a forecast. The term escapement relates to escaping mortality to survive and spawn.
 - Forecasts for a given year are based on several factors, including the escapement results from the previous year. The 2016 forecast was 546 adult Chinook. The 2016 escapement estimate was almost double that or 1002 adult Chinook. Because the escapement estimate for 2016 was well above the forecast for 2016, the 2017 forecast was revised upward to 899 adult Chinook.
 - Pinniped (Seal and Sea Lions) and their role as predators that harvest salmon was discussed. Terry gave provided background on what is currently known. Treaty rights and the ability to harvest seals was discussed. Other predators are an issue as well – birds, fish, amphibians. In addition to predation, Salmon are impacted by multiple stressors – habitat loss, food, water temperature and quality, disease.

- Pat mentioned the Columbia River Treaty Tribes are renegotiating the terms of their treaty rights re fish above the dams that have lost salmon runs.
 - Pat mentioned the Livingston Bay watchdogs that call when there are odors in the area, indicating a potential Water Quality issue. Stilly Tribe tested the water and found fecal coliform at 600,000, which is effectively 'off the scale.' (Update: Dept of Ag investigation revealed fecals may be from geese and swans, not from the dairy).
 - Chuck Hazleton mentioned the Island Crossing mega truck stop development proposal in the floodplain. This would be on 530 behind the 76 station on the north side of the road. Shawn Yanity stated that the Tribe was not the developer of this truck stop. Chuck suggested that we need a coalition to oppose this. He also questioned the need for another truck stop in the floodplain. Negotiating with the City of Arlington needs to be part of this effort.
 - There is another development site near the City of Stanwood.
- b. Floodplains by Design (FbD) Projects: Leque, Zis-a-ba, Irvine, Gold Basin sediment management, digester/nutrient management) --
- Leque Island: C.K. Eidem said they will meet with SnoCo to kick off the early phase of construction. There was some discussion and resolution in getting SnoCo permit fees reduced.
 - Zis a ba Restoration: Pat stated that the Stilly Tribe is evaluating contractors for the Zis a ba project.
 - Gold Basin Sediment Management: Pat mentioned the comments received for the Environmental Assessment (EA) on Gold Basin.
 - Digester / Dairy Nutrient Management: There is a proposal to NRCS for the Visser Digester as a backup in case FbD does not come in. Monte mentioned a Conservation Commission Loan program (\$2M) with a solicitation to look at locations to fund. This would be a third option to support the Omni-Digester. Heather mentioned excitement about the Omni-Digester in the state legislature to support a project potentially in the Stilly. Diking District #7 (DD7) has 100% design.
 - Ellingsen Dike Setback: Kirt mentioned an Inter-local Agreement (ILA) to support Ellingsen. Cardno-Entrix came up with a 20-acre alternative (80 and 100 acre alternatives were deemed unfeasible). Chuck mentioned that he, as a neighbor, is not in favor of the Ellingsen project. The opposition is partially based on tiles in the ground and impacts of the levee on the neighborhood properties. Linda mentioned that although some neighboring lanowners may not support the project, this is private property and the property owner has made the decision to explore this alternative. Brian Bookey noted that the property owner is receiving an incentive for

the exploration of alternative dike locations. Tristan mentioned taking this issue to the Ag board because there are larger issues related to this that are beyond just the Ellingsen property.

c. Stillaguamish Valley Protection Initiative (SVPI)

- Tristan reported on a meeting with the WA State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) to look at flexible easements in their grant programs. Heather gave more detail on the meeting. Tristan suggested an active farm plan as a requirement for Transfer of Development Rights and Purchase of Development Rights (TDR/PDR) funding. Brian mentioned that Nick is looking at the concept of a bank for this and also assuring that the land purchased through TDR/PDR programs is actually farmed and not just stripped of development rights. He mentioned creative lease payments and other options to get returns on farming investments.
- Protection of the Betcher farm was discussed. It is in the Arlington Heights area on Hwy 530 before Cloverdale. This is a high priority opportunity with a very tight timeframe. It is publically owned so it would need to be transferred to private ownership first to be eligible for funding. Nick mentioned the transaction at the Albert farm and its similarities. Robin said that PCC Farmland Trust is interested but this is a much quicker timeframe than they usually operate in. There was agreement to send a letter of interest for this property and to try and buy some time. Brian made a motion to proceed with PCC writing a letter with Forterra assisting them in this effort. C.K. offered to help potentially fund this. Terry suggested contacting Ray Clark. Tristan mentioned that upland R5 zoned properties are a different strategy requiring different funding and approaches. Kit mentioned some leftover funding to support Forterra in the development of flexible easement language for farmland that is part of the SVPI. A small diverse group met after the meeting to coordinate a proposed approach to the Betcher farm protection effort.

d. Stillaguamish Integrated Reach Plan (Kit Crump)

- Kit gave an update on the status of reach scale planning. Snohomish County received a National Estuary Program (NEP) grant to complete all four reach scale plans (Lower Skykomish, Lower Stillaguamish, Lower Snohomish and the Snohomish Estuary). With the previously mentioned projects and initiatives underway, the Lower Stilly reach plan is a high priority.

3. FISH, FARM, FLOOD CONTROL UPDATES (11:00-11:30)

a. Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) update – Nick Bratton

- Nick reported that there is significant interest by the county to develop a TDR bank. Initially Forterra stated it was premature. Now we have had sufficient activity to warrant a TDR bank. Councilperson Sullivan strongly

supports the development of a TDR bank for Snohomish County. He gave details on how this tool would be formed and what the tasks would be. This includes criteria around transactions as well as how to prioritize acquisitions. This will include funding guidance. There will also be monitoring goals to track the program and the development of program metrics to do that. This could support SLS in how we implement farmland preservation. The proposed county rezone would affect how this plays out.

- JB Bennis asked if there were any precedents. Nick mentioned King and Pierce County as having active TDR marketplaces. King County is using their bank credits to purchase Snoqualmie Valley farmland. JB also asked about outreach to farmers to make this work. There are multiple opportunities to do this (Focus on Farming, website, etc.).
- Brian Bookey suggested pre-funding the bank with development rights credits with existing farm operations that can afford to do that. Participants thought this idea has a lot of merit. Nick mentioned the limited opportunities in Snohomish County (i.e. Drivers of Demand). Terry mentioned the need to consider feasibility of the farm product distribution system countywide so that farming would really be viable, beyond the potential crops grown on protected land.
- Monte mentioned PCC Farmland Trust's prioritization and the need to link up with that.
- Heather Cole mentioned the injection of public funds. Nick mentioned the short sale of credits owned by the county to recover some part of those assets as a possibility.

b. Purchase of Dev. Rights / Conservation Futures (CF)

- Dan E. circulated to the Exec Committee a draft letter supporting Conservation Futures and PDR. Tristan mentioned three properties applying to CF. He also mentioned the inherent competition between parks and farming interests in this program. The draft letter is trying to address these conflicts early on. The letter is offering SLS to consider a committee to help address this. He mentioned separate accounts for separate interests (parks, farming) as a possible strategy but recommended they meet to discuss other options.
- Dan Bartelheimer noted the Snohomish County Farm Bureau, of which he is President, is an advocate for farmland protection. There are others who advocate for open space, fish habitat, etc.
- Dan B is on the CF board. He described the process, emphasizing the board's role is to review projects. He asked SLS to propose to the CF board that a portion of the CF funding (40%) potentially goes to agricultural preservation. This might incentivize agriculture candidates to apply. He also said that there should be something in county code about responsible stewardship on PDR purchased lands. This will help maintain

integrity of the PDR program. He also mentioned their philosophy of private ownership, having a farm remain in farming in perpetuity and that the land would not be converted to native habitat. This is more of a restrictive easement approach. This is something SLS needs to address, in terms of shared priorities for agricultural preservation.

- Dan E. asked SLS to consider its role in considering :
 - A farm-fish-flood coalition has to see a net gain for all parties when taken together. Some tradeoffs on individual projects are OK; not all individual projects or initiatives need to be a careful balance of F3 net gain, although each project proponent should strive to maximize multiple benefits. When these projects and measures are package into a reach plan, there must be F3 net gain and balance to achieve the broad support that is the SLS “magic ingredient.”
 - In estuaries and rivers, physical process create dynamic and so changing conditions require a flexible approach to land use in the future. This is a case for flexible easements and other approaches. Dan B. mentioned the need to mitigate for farmland loss. C.K. mentioned the analogies with wetland mitigation. It is hard to find equivalency between gained and lost land.
 - Terry suggested inviting CF here to discuss this and get their intentions on this question.
 - Tristan suggested that County staff could come to the Ag meeting in April to explain how CF works.
 - Dan would like the letter Tristan drafted to include prioritization of the three properties under consideration, or to use them as examples of farmland protection candidates. The economic needs of those properties exceed the amount of money in PDR to preserve them.
 - There was a discussion of who needs to be part of a coalition to address the multiple needs of stakeholders involved in the PDR program.
 - SLS agreed to forward the letter as is. Co-chairs will send the letter to the CF advisory board.
- c. Responsible Stewardship & Ag Resilience: SCD update, support letters
 - Tabled until the next EC meeting
- d. Coordinated Investment, federal-state partner reports, and Reg. Efficiency: Culvert Replacement, Drainage Maintenance Program
 - Paul Cereghino reported on a letter to the Partnership’s Ecosystem Coordination Board that includes federal, state, and local leaders, results WA and the Federal Task Force.

- The ECB supports the SLS's role and natural authority to improve program integration.
- Paul is authorized to work with ECB staff on this. He will also coordinate with Results WA and the task force.
- He is looking forward to getting back to projects.
 - Flood Hazard Management Integration and how it relates to the reach scale planning effort. TNC will support this effort and how to explore the inter-workings of the agencies that work in this arena
 - French Creek as a pilot project: this needs a work plan to detail future operations
 - Reducing the per-cost of individual culvert replacements. This will involve NOAA and USACE along with state agencies.
- e. SLS communications: flyer, website, letters of support
 - Tabled until the next SLS EC meeting.

4. LEGISLATIVE, FUNDING UPDATE / BROWN BAG LUNCH (11:50-12:30)

- a. Legislative update, state funding outlook and issues
 - Lindsey stated that Jay is working on getting ESRP funding for the projects on the list.
 - Heather thanked those who participated at the FbD lobby day. She also thanked those who wrote letters. The Senate (April 3) and House (April 10) budgets are delayed. These delays give more time to advocate for state funding for the programs that support SLS initiatives (FbD, ESRP, SRFB/PSAR, WSCC, etc.)
 - There is about \$1.3B left over for non-educational programs and \$5B of request for those funds. There is not a lot left over to support all of these efforts and a lot of demand on that pot of money.
- b. Federal Funding Outlook
 - President's proposed budget is delayed but forecasted cuts will heavily impact our ability to act on multiple benefit projects.
 - There is a DC day on the hill in May to advocate for our local programs to Congress.
 - Terry mentioned town halls as a potential outlet.
 - There was interest in exploring the infrastructure angle in terms of how we justify federal funds to our local efforts.
 - Monte mentioned engaging local House and Senate members.

- SB 5524 (Ebey Island diking district) died in the Senate. We still need to engage the issues underlying this bill.
- NOAA also wrote a support letter for the SLS project to NOAA Coastal Resiliency.

5. WRAP UP, ADJOURN (12:25-12:30)

- Terry and Tristan were recognized for their work with traditional agriculture and tribal interests.

APPENDIX 1
STILLAGUAMISH RIVER ESCAPEMENT REPORT
(STILLAGUAMISH TRIBE, NATURAL RESOURCES DEPT.)

Chinook: 899 (ESA listed; no commercial fisheries allowed)
 Pink: 40,205 (escapement goal is 155,000; no commercial fisheries)
 Coho: 7,622 (critical range; up to 10% total exploitation rate allowed)
 Chum: 5,614 (odd year goal is 13,100; no commercial fisheries)
 Winter Steelhead: TBD in October

2016 forecast and post season Escapement Estimates (EE) for Stilly:

2016	FORECAST	ESCAPEMENT
CHINOOK	546	1,002
COHO	2,770	12,933
CHUM	14,877	6,549

Notes on Escapement Estimates (EE):

Chinook EE: includes broodstock intake 141 count;

Coho EE: most PS stocks were projected QUITE LOW but came back nearly in full force/normal and of good size. We had projected a critical year (below 6,000) and held the state and treaty tribes to limited/no fisheries. 2015 EE was 2,909 so the sky did feel like it was falling at this time last year.

Chum EE: bleak. So bleak. Silver lining: an “uptick” from 2015’s EE of 2,539. Even year goal w/o pink is 33,100.

APPENDIX 2



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

March 3, 2017

NOAA Office for Coastal Management
1305 East-West Hwy, N/OCM6
Silver Springs, MD 20910

Re: Support for Coastal Resilience Grant from Snohomish Conservation District

Dear Evaluation Committee:

The Executive Committee of the Snohomish County Sustainable Lands Strategy (SLS) wishes to express our enthusiastic support for the grant application submitted by the Snohomish Conservation District and partners to develop and implement a strategic approach to climate resilience in the Snohomish and Stillaguamish Rivers in Washington State. The SLS, convened in 2010 by Snohomish County and local municipalities, Tulalip and Stillaguamish Tribes, state and federal agencies, and agricultural, infrastructure, and environmental stakeholders, is a collaborative forum with the goal of generating progress – “net gain” – for fish, farm, and flood control (F3) communities.

For the last six years, the SLS has been developing the tools and strategies to achieve net gain for these interests through 1) an integrated information system and GIS, 2) connecting and providing a forum for coordinating F3 stakeholders, 3) building net gain F3 packages at a reach scale that are technically sound and earn broad support, and 4) measuring and evaluating performance. The SLS, with a reach- and watershed-scale focus, has coordinated closely with such regional efforts as the Puget Sound Partnership, Floodplains by Design, and the Coordinated Investment Initiative in addition to F3 stakeholders. We are pleased the Snohomish Basin is one of four areas nationwide to be designated a “priority landscape” under the federal Resilient Lands and Waters Initiative, due in large part to the local and regional coordination of multiple interests and work to build resilient and productive ecosystems, farms, and communities.

The proposed grant will provide climate change flood and groundwater modeling that is critical to development of resilient salmon recovery, flood mitigation, and agricultural projects. In addition, development of the Agriculture Resilience Plan will fill an important gap in our knowledge, allowing us to more effectively and collaboratively develop multi-benefit project packages.

We encourage you to give careful consideration to the innovative collaboration taking place in the Snohomish and Stillaguamish Rivers and the opportunity to build on and extend this promising work.

Sincerely,
Executive Committee
Snohomish County Sustainable Lands Strategy

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

DISCUSSION DRAFT LETTER OF SUPPORT CONSERVATION FUTURES PROGRAM ADVISORY BOARD

The Snohomish Sustainable Lands Strategy (SLS) is pleased to see the Johnson, Reiner, and Bartelheimer farms have submitted Conservation Futures applications for farmland preservation. We would request your continued support for using Conservation Futures monies to preserve farmland and associated community benefits such as sustaining local food production/security, providing long-term habitat for multiple species, job creation, and open spaces. Agriculture and natural resource preservation is an important component of maintaining and building a vibrant and functional resource landbase within Snohomish County.

The SLS is organized to bring together a coalition of diverse interests to ensure that future generations will have these resource lands for food production, recreation and natural experiences, healthy ecosystems, and flood protection to make our communities more livable and vibrant.

SLS has been supporting a multiple benefit PDR easement program in the Stillaguamish Basin through the Stillaguamish Valley Protection Initiative (SVPI). The SVPI is a broad coalition of local farmers, the Tulalip and Stillaguamish tribes, The Nature Conservancy, Forterra, PCC Farmland Trust, Snohomish Conservation District, the city of Stanwood, Snohomish County and other partners aimed at providing flexible, long-term protection for core farmland, as well as for habitat and open space needed to sustain agriculture, fish, and healthy communities.

Livable communities and quality of life are important goals and preserving and enhancing ecosystems is one of the strategies to ensure that future generations will be able to avail themselves of these rich natural resources. At the same time, SLS recognizes that creating and preserving open spaces and parks is also an important strategy for future generations to make our communities more livable and vibrant.

It appears that demand for Conservation Futures funds from the agriculture community is increasing and probably will continue in the future. SLS believes that both parks and farmland preservation are important to future generations and we would like to consider, along with other stakeholders and entities, how to balance and fund both needs. Our coalition has demonstrated a willingness to wrestle with issues like this in the search to help find creative and sustainable win-win solutions.

To initiate this dialogue, we would be happy to create a subcommittee between the SLS and The Conservation Futures Program Advisory Board to tackle this on-going need for open space and farmland preservation. We would like to work together and begin a conversation around funding for the next 10 years and beyond.

Thank you,

Terry Williams

Tristan Klesick