

SUMMARY NOTES
SNOHOMISH SUSTAINABLE LANDS STRATEGY
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING 3.8.3
Wednesday March 21, 2017 9:00 – 12:30

Stillaguamish Tribe Admin. Center 3322 236th St. NE Arlington, WA 98223
 (Take I-5 Exit 210 east 236th, turn right just before T intersection, south of casino)
 NOTE: Meeting is at [Tribal Admin Center](#), NOT Nat Resources Center, as usual

PARTICIPANTS

Ann Bylin - Snohomish County SWM
Bob Bernhard – Snohomish County SWM
Brendna Brokes (for Amy Windrope) - Washington Dept. of Fish & Wildlife
Brian Bookey - National Foods, EC Ag rep
Chuck Hazleton - Stillaguamish farmer, Flood Control District Mgr.
Cindy Dittbrenner - Snohomish Conservation District
C.K. Eidem - Ducks Unlimited, EC Fish rep
Dan Evans - Dan Evans Consulting, facilitator
David Vliet - Bothell Planning Commission
Donald “Kit” Crump - Snohomish County SWM
Erik Stockdale - Snohomish County SWM
Erin Murray - Puget Sound Partnership
Heather Cole - The Nature Conservancy
Hilary Aten - PCC Farmland Trust
Jason Griffith - Stillaguamish Tribe Fish Biologist
Jay Krienitz - Washington Dept. of Fish & Wildlife
John Misich (for Dan Bartelheimer) – Sno Farm Bureau, Sno Valley Farms
Josh Chamberlin - NOAA
Kirk Lakey - Washington Dept. of Fish & Wildlife
Kurt Nelson - Tulalip Tribes
Linda Neunzig - Snohomish County Ag Coordinator
Lindsey Desmul - Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife
Monte Marti - Snohomish Conservation District, EC Ag rep
Morgan Ruff - Tulalip Tribes
Pat Stevenson (for Shawn Yanity) - Stillaguamish Tribe
Robin Fay - PCC Farmland Trust
Terry Williams - Tulalip Tribe, Co-chair (Fish)
Tish Conway-Cranos - Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Tristan Klesick - Stillaguamish farmer, Co-chair (Ag)

PURPOSE: The March SLS Executive Committee meeting was a combined “super session” that focused on the Stillaguamish Basin, including an “indicators update,” as well as on Snohomish and Countywide / Ag items carried over from the cancelled February EC meeting. Special reports and discussions include a NOAA estuary monitoring summary; updates on the Legislative session, Capital Budget, and grant funding; progress on resource lands protection; an emerging Project Integration Initiative, and partner updates. Task Group updates are available on the SLS [website](#). Participants are invited to bring a brown bag lunch; coffee and snacks will be provided.

1. Welcome, Introduction (9:10-9:20)

After participants introduced themselves and Dan Evans reviewed the agenda.

1. Stillaguamish Indicators Update: Fish, Farm, Flood (9:20 – 9:40)

- a. A brief conversation began about Chinook numbers in the Snohomish and Stillaguamish watersheds. The bottom line is that only about 1000 Chinook salmon returned to spawn and the Chinook fishery is shut down.
- b. Pat Stevenson reviewed the Floodplains by Design (FbD) package submitted for the Stillaguamish watershed and requested letters of support.
 - The FbD scoring system and the importance of having letters showing local support were explained to the EC.
 - FbD applicants selected for a full submittal will be notified on 3/23.

2. NOAA Estuary Snohomish Monitoring Report (9:40 - 10:30)

- a. Josh Chamberlin (NOAA) – Summarized Snohomish estuary monitoring efforts, guided by the following question: Is there restoration potential and where do we focus our efforts?
 - Chinook studies at 4 large delta landscapes (Snohomish, Skagit, Nooksack and Nisqually)
 - Tributaries = main flow through/waterway, uni-directional flow; and off-channel = rearing areas, bi-directional flow
 - Habitats: Forested Riverine Tidal (FRT), Estuarine Forest Transition (EFT) and Estuarine Emergent Marsh (EEM)
 - FRT > EFT > EEM, higher density of fish (rearing capacity)
 - Function of habitat changes through the life cycle of the fish so a variety of habitats is optimal
 - Landscape connectivity: how complicated is it to get to the source (e.g., Snohomish River) from a site.
 - Better connectivity is desired by out-migrating fish.
 - Density decreases as connectivity decreases.

- Snohomish estuarine sloughs (e.g., Ebey) typically have lower connectivity.
- Habitat and connectivity are both important for rearing
- Focus is to reconnect off-channel habitats
- Upstream, off-channel habitats also help account for sea level rise
- Growth opportunities are better if densities are not too high.
 - Skagit - Restored 650+ acres of habitat so fish aren't as crowded and are able to gain size = better chance for marine survival
- b. Jason Griffith/Stillaguamish Tribe - Applications of estuary monitoring findings to the Stillaguamish estuary
 - Dataset not nearly as large as Snohomish and Skagit
 - Similar to the Skagit (not like Snohomish = drowned valley)
 - 90% loss of historic estuarine habitat
 - Subsidence of delta wouldn't allow former habitat to exist in historic range, would have to move upstream or fill subsided areas
 - Rearing capacity off-channel > distributary
 - Fish numbers are maxed out (seeded), need new habitat
 - Forested Riverine Tidal good for Chinook
 - Skagit fish also benefit from estuarine projects (e.g., Leque and zis a ba)
 - Improve connectivity at the upper end of mainstem and Hatt slough
 - Fish are adapting to the Oso slide sediment load, moving downstream
 - Chinook distribution = North Fork (80%) > South Fork (20%)
 - Freshwater and estuarine habitats important but what goes on in the ocean will change efforts in the fresh water and estuarine habitat

3. Task Group Focus -- Resource Lands Reports (10:30 - 11:25)

- a. Stilly Valley Protection Initiative (SVPI), easement tool, RCO
 - 2 outreach grower meetings = 3,000 acres from Arlington to DD7
 - People want to participate but funding is lacking
 - \$1,000,000 Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) from Conservation Commission (Cindy D/SCD)
- b. TDR & Multi-Family Rezone

- Nick Bratton with Forterra was unable to attend but sent an email, which Dan Evans read to the group and included the following points:
 - 3 of 5 county council members in support
 - Earliest adoption could be in April
 - Growing support in county council for TDR bank
 - Forterra to pursue expansion of TDR bank in Seattle with credits from Snohomish
 - SWM ask council if remaining PDR funds (\$100,000) can be used for TDR acquisitions in Snohomish basin
 - Forterra property in French Creek or in the Stillaguamish, choice made by council
 - Tulalip hoping to make annual donation into TDR account/bank

c. Sno Farmland Conserv Working Grp, PCC Prioritization, other RL reports

- Robin Fay/PCC
- Over a year working on farmland prioritization map
 - Sections with the reach-scale plans will be available on the SLS web map in the near future
http://gismaps.snoco.org/Html5Viewer/Index.html?configBase=http://gismaps.snoco.org/Geocortex/Essentials/REST/sites/LowerSky_RSP/viewers/LowerSky_RSP/virtualdirectory/Resources/Config/Default
- Working group to work on transactions, collaboratively in a proactive way
 - Past 6 months (PCC Farmland Trust, Forterra, SCD, DFW, DU, the county)
 - Monte - Will the group work on regional processes, not just single sites?
 - Robin - Mixed response, larger scale is desired but tools are needed for individual projects.
 - Tristan – larger scale planning is more of an SLS type initiative.
- [Snohomish Farmland Conservation Strategy](#) handout
- Cindy/SCD – Ag Resilience
 - Priority areas identified but no funding

d. Executive Order – fee program, farmland preservation

4. Project Integration Initiative (11:25 – 12:15)

- a. [Concept overview](#) handout and presentation by Morgan & Cindy
 - Evaluate impacts (negative) and benefits to select projects SLS would like to see go forward
 - Other projects may be better suited for other groups (e.g., fish, flood or agriculture)
 - Identify areas beneficial for ag and fish projects (separate maps)
 - Similar group in the Puyallup - Projects Lead Group/Jordan Jobe
 - Package proposals for FbD and similar grants could be discussed year round (not a last minute rush)
 - A coordinator is needed to manage the committee
 - Projects could get a 'stamp of approval' and/or direction from the committee
- b. Proposal/Funding for Integration Committee
 - No objections to proceed with IC
 - No objections to draft a combined letter of support
 - Cindy and Morgan asked for Letter of Supports for IC related
 - Heather Cole, Jay Krienitz and Lindsey Desmul asked for Letters of Support

5. Legislative Report, Funding Update (12:15 - 12:30)

- a. Capital Budget: FbD, ESRP, Conservation Commission, PSAR...
 - 2018 Supplemental budget
(<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/WAPSP/bulletins/1e2b6e0>)
- b. Grants: FbD pre-proposals Sno & Stilly basins, NTA coordination
 - FbD applicants notified on 3/23 for full submittal
 - Both Snohomish and Stillaguamish FdD packages were asked for a full submittal
 - NTAs due by 3/30

6. Partner and Farm-Fish-Flood Updates (12:30 – 12:40)

- a. Roundtable updates
 - Jay Krienitz/WDFW – Chehalis Basin Strategy
 - Justin Allegro (new director) set up Chehalis Basin Strategy
 - Speakers from Chehalis Basin to speak to SLS (April or May mtg)
 - Jason Griffith/Stillaguamish Tribe – SLS needs to consider land protection for tribal harvest/farming as well
 - Monte/SCD – budget process 4/25-4/26 for biannual

- Dan E – tax incentives for DNMP and gas production
- Terry Williams - 2050 document: Comprehensive map showing important areas for the tribes and county including:
 - Stumbling blocks
 - Projects completed
 - Key habitats
 - Forestry
 - Agriculture
 - Fish and Wildlife
 - Help identify areas for housing (220,000 homes/10 yrs)
- Tristan – Leque and zis a ba updates in the future
- Tristan/Monte – future discussion on the frequency of SLS EC meetings
- Chuck Hazelton – Church Creek and Jorgenson Slough over topped
 - 4.25"/week in February
 - 9 days to drain
 - Erik Stockdale suggested Chuck meet with SWM

7. WRAP UP AND ADJOURN (12:40)

[Task Group Updates – Available on SLS [website](#)]

- a. Resource Lands Protection: SVPI, TDR / PDR
- b. Regulatory Efficiency: culverts, drainage, Responsible Stewardship
- c. Reach Plans: Sky, Stilly, Sno-Estuary
- d. Ag Resilience Plan: plan development, ag engagement, climate impacts
- e. Confluence Projects: 180 ac restoration, Meadow Wood, sub-reach plan
- f. Communications: essential items, strategy based on Basics & capacity

Future Executive Meeting Items – Preparations

- Updates on Leque and zis a ba
- Executive Committee meeting frequency
- Chehalis Basin presentation



Snohomish Farmland Conservation Strategy

Farmland in Snohomish County is at risk. As one of the fastest growing counties in the country, we are losing farmland to development and other non-agricultural uses quickly. Agriculture in Snohomish County is a \$139.5-million-dollar industry, and Snohomish County residents place significant value on farmland for the many benefits it provides: local food, open space, wildlife habitat, and flood storage. The goal of the Snohomish Farmland Conservation Strategy is to protect our farmland into the future.

Snohomish Farmland Conservation Working Group

The Snohomish Farmland Conservation Working Group (the Working Group) is responsible for implementing this strategy, and includes the Snohomish Conservation District, PCC Farmland Trust, Forterra, The Nature Conservancy, Snohomish County, and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, with input from the Agriculture Resilience Plan Steering committee and other local farmers. The Agriculture Resilience Plan is a larger effort to create a countywide plan for a resilient farming community in Snohomish County.

Goals & Priorities

With input from local farmers and partner organizations, the Working Group has developed a map of priority parcels to serve as a guide for conservation. The Working Group's conservation goal is 15,000 acres over 10 years. While this goal is short-term, the Working Group will continue to build a long-term goal that ensures a critical mass of farmland is protected in Snohomish County to sustain the agricultural industry into the future.

10 year goal = permanently protect 15,000 acres of the best farmland

Conservation Strategy

The Snohomish Farmland Conservation Strategy uses a voluntary conservation approach that includes the purchase of agricultural conservation easements or acquisition of land from willing sellers. Farmers decide if they want to protect their land for future generations of farming and are compensated for the sale of their development rights. The Working Group's mapping effort will help prioritize areas that are of high-value for farming and at-risk for conversion to other non-farming uses.

Funding Strategy

The Working Group will be collaborating with existing granting agencies at the local, state, and federal levels to increase the capacity and efficacy of farmland preservation funding programs. Due to limited funding availability, the Working Group is exploring the potential to leverage new funding sources by increasing landowner interest in conservation and seeking landscape-scale opportunities within local farming communities.

Farmland Prioritization Mapping

Based on feedback from the eleven local farmers that serve on the Agriculture Resilience Plan Steering Committee, other local producers, partner organizations, and agricultural interests, criteria were developed and mapped to prioritize the protection of large, contiguous blocks of farmland critical to sustaining long-term commercial agricultural production. Our map will serve as a working document that will be informed by forthcoming information on potential climate impacts to flooding, sea level rise, and groundwater levels. Below are some examples of our mapping criteria.

Quality of Farmland

- Parcel size
- Zoning
- Adjacency to other farms
- Prime soils
- Low wetland abundance
- Protection from flooding

Threat of Conversion

- Proximity to UGA
- Pending plats
- Retention of development rights
- Projected population growth

Likelihood of Funding

- Proximity to conserved lands
- Proximity to open space corridors
- Presence of fish and wildlife habitat



Key Partners & Initiatives

This countywide farmland protection effort is an integral component of the **Agriculture Resilience Plan** (the Plan), which is led by the Snohomish Conservation District and local farmers. The priorities identified in the Plan, including farmland conservation, are a part of the **Sustainable Lands Strategy** – a multi-benefit planning process for our floodplains that aims to optimize solutions for salmon habitat restoration, farm viability, and flood risk mitigation. Informed by the Snohomish Farmland Conservation Strategy, the Plan will provide risk management tools such as flooding and groundwater predictions to farmers as well as help develop landscape-scale resilience projects that ensure farmland viability into the future.

The Stillaguamish River Valley is one of the high-priority areas targeted for voluntary farmland protection. An outreach effort led by The Nature Conservancy and Klesick Family Farms, the **Stilly Valley Protection Initiative**, has activated the enthusiasm of local farmers to start using conservation tools within this valley. Farmland protection in this valley ensures local food production, wildlife habitat, and flood capacity for our communities. Funding for implementation of this initiative is not yet secured.

As with other real estate transactions, the discussions and details of the Working Group are intended to be confidential. However, collaborators and stakeholders in Snohomish County will be briefed regularly.

*For more information about the Snohomish Farmland Conservation Strategy, contact **Robin Fay at robin.fay@pccfarmlandtrust.org**. To learn more about the Agriculture Resilience Plan, contact **Cindy Dittbrenner at cindy@snohomishcd.org**.*

Draft Concept for the Snohomish Sustainable Lands Strategy Project Integration Committee

Why do we need ANOTHER committee?

We all care about and value the same areas of our watersheds, but often we want different functions and services out of them. SLS has made great gains getting everyone on the same page and advancing an approach that represents a unified vision and quest for net gains for fish, farms, and reduction of flood impacts. A lot of effort over the past 10 years has been put toward developing shared goals and understanding, building relationships, and launching some multi-benefit initiatives. In addition, reach scale plans have been or are being developed for the major reaches that help to describe actions that will help us achieve our lofty goals. These plans serve an important role in starting to set the table for our overall vision, identifying potential project sites and hot spots, and bringing consideration for multiple values into one place.

But how do we start to make these plans a reality on the ground? How do we work together to develop detailed project packages that advance our flood, fish, and farm goals? How do we ensure these plans don't sit on the shelf, but are working and evolving with our ever dynamic riverine and human environment? These discussions have been happening ad hoc between partners for specific projects and in particular, when we need to pull together a proposal for a grant. We have work to do, however, to bring together the technical interests to gain agreement on what type of actions to place where, model impacts, and understand the potential costs and benefits. The work to do this requires assistance from multiple technical interests and staff to weigh trade-offs, identify key information gaps, and provide recommendations on ideas and funding requests.

What would this committee do?

Focus on develop of multi-benefit project packages and implementation of reach scale plans in the Snohomish and Stillaguamish basins.

- Technical level staff from the fish, farm, and flood interests will work together to develop projects and map the spatial extent of those projects on the landscape.
- Host robust conversations between technical staff representing these three interests with the goal of developing multi-benefit project packages that maximize benefits and minimize negative impacts to all three.
- Use technical information to understand potential trade-offs, opportunities and scale of proposed actions.
- Identifying and find funding for key gaps that would further inform project development.
- Report the results of these discussions as well as project package development to the Executive Committee for policy discussions and approval.
- Use these project packages to feed into Floodplains by Design and other grant applications.

Who would serve on this committee?

The Executive Committee represents a mix of higher level policy thinkers and technical staff. In order to maximize time spent at Executive Committee meetings, we propose that the Project Integration Committee host more technical conversations about project coordination and implementation. For this reason, technical staff that develop projects and have a high level of understanding of the needs of salmon recovery, flood mitigation and/or agriculture resilience will be represented.

How would this committee interface with the Executive Committee?

Below is a proposed structure for the existing SLS committees (blue) and how the Project Integration Committee could fit in. Farming interests would be represented through the structure and process developed for creation of the Agriculture Resilience Plan. Fish interests would be represented by members of existing technical committees for salmon recovery. And work needs to be done to develop a technical group working on development of flood projects.

