

**SNOHOMISH SUSTAINABLE LANDS STRATEGY (SLS)
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (EC) 3.8.11
Wednesday November 7, 2018 10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Stillaguamish Natural Resources Center 22712 6th Ave. NE Arlington, WA 98223
(Take I-5 Exit 210 west on 236th, turn left on 6th, right near end of road)**

PARTICIPANTS

Aten, Hilary - PCC Farmland Trust	Hazleton, Chuck - Stillaguamish farmer
Bernhard, Bob - Snohomish County SWM	Hushagen, Kevin - City of Stanwood
Bookey, Brian - National Foods, SLS EC Co-chair (Ag)	Klesick, Tristan - Stillaguamish farmer, Co-chair (Ag)
Bylin, Ann - Snohomish County SWM	Krienitz, Jay - WA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife
Calvert, Dan - Puget Sound Partnership	Lee, Kevin - WA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife
Cereghino, Paul - NOAA	Masterson, Ikuno - Snohomish County
Christianson, Joe - Stillaguamish Flood Control District	Murray, Erin - Puget Sound Partnership
Cole, Heather - The Nature Conservancy	Nelson, Lisa - WA Dept. of Ecology (Floodplains by Design)
Desmul, Lindsey - WA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife	Ruff, Morgan - Tulalip Tribes
Dittbrenner, Cindy - Snohomish Conservation District	Stevenson, Pat - Stillaguamish Tribe
Eidem, CK - Ducks Unlimited, EC Fish rep	Stockdale, Erik - Snohomish County SWM
Evans, Dan - Dan Evans Consulting, facilitator	Williams, Terry - Tulalip Tribe, SLS EC Co-chair (Fish)
Fay, Robin - PCC Farmland Trust	

PURPOSE: The November SLS Executive Committee meeting will focus on the Stillaguamish Basin, including an “indicators report,” Stilly Watershed Council (SWC) restoration priorities, a discussion of coordinated multi-benefit strategies for the Lower Stilly area, and Floodplains by Design (FbD) projects status and grant application overviews. The principal presentation will be the SLS Integration Team progress report and discussion. Additional agenda items include preparation for upcoming legislative session, focusing on funding for key partner programs and multi-benefit policy initiatives, as well as Partner updates. Task Group updates are available on the SLS [website](#).

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

- a. **Review purpose, agenda:** The Executive Committee was called to order. Dan Evans reviewed the agenda and purpose for today’s meeting.
- b. **Introductions:** In addition to self-introductions, Lisa Nelson (lisa.nelson@ecy.wa.gov), a new employee in Department of Ecology’s Floodplain by Design grant program (NW Region), was welcomed. Lisa offered feedback to those who submitted FbD proposals.
- c. **Southern Resident Killer Whale Recovery Task Force:** Terry Williams gave an update on the [task force](#). The task force has been meeting for 6-7 months and has created a [report and recommendations](#). Within the report the task force recommended several actions to be taken including: increasing Chinook abundance (creating more hatcheries), decreasing disturbance of and risk to orcas from vessels (e.g., whale watching boats),

reducing exposure of orcas and their prey to contaminants (e.g., stormwater/wastewater runoff), and ensuring funding, information and accountability mechanisms are established to support the implementation of the three previous recommendations.

Jon White and Joe (Sea Dock Society) requested legislature to continue funding plankton monitoring (\$8 million in research so far, about the same needed for future monitoring). Nutrients are a major contributor to a shift in plankton communities within Puget Sound. The diatom-based community (protein and lipid rich, good for planktivorous fish/Chinook prey) is being replaced by a dinoflagellate-dominated community (carbohydrate rich, not ideal for planktivorous fish). Washington State Department of Ecology has formed a [nutrient forum](#) to collaborate on reducing human sources of nutrients from entering Puget Sound. Additional work will focus on the restoration of habitats that can sequester carbon (e.g., kelp, eelgrass).

- d. **Puget Sound Regional Council:** Terry briefly discussed the Puget Sound Regional Council's progress on open space mapping, part of the [Regional Open Space Conservation Plan](#). A goal of the plan is to identify areas needing protection and secure it from development/landuse change.
- e. **NOAA Lifetime Achievement Award (estuary):** Terry is one of two awarded the 2018 lifetime achievement award for estuary work.

2. Stillaguamish Indicators Report, Updates: (10:10 – 10:40)

- a. **Fish & shellfish:** Pat Stevenson gave an update on forecasted Chinook numbers. The estimated escapement was 1,500 Chinook, unfortunately less than half came back, with the majority (70-80%) comprised of hatchery fish. Coho and chum salmon are returned in small numbers.
- b. **SWC & Tribal restoration priorities:** The Stillaguamish Watershed Council (SWC) submitted their 2018 project list to the [Salmon Recovery Funding Board](#) on November 7th, 2018. Included in the list is the Gold Basin project, which currently remains a project of concern. Pat Stevenson, Bill Blake and Kit Crump will travel to Olympia on December 5th to address the Board's concerns over the project.

Two commissioners from Alaska toured the Stillaguamish watershed to see why Chinook numbers are so low. After the tour, it was decided that \$5 million would be given to the watershed in order to increase Chinook escapement.

The SWC will take a vote on January 23rd, 2019 (originally slated for November 28th, 2018) on whether the SWC supports the Stillaguamish Tribe's acquisition of the Twin City foods property east of The Nature Conservancy's Port Susan property using PSAR funding.

Tristan Klesick asked if SWC is expanding their membership (e.g., agriculture representative) to better advance the Puget Sound Partnerships' Action Agenda. Pat mentioned that the creation of new SWC representatives (e.g., agriculture, stormwater, shellfish) is on the November 28th agenda. Included in the new representation is a spot from the Stillaguamish Valley.

- c. **Ag, flood hazard reduction**
- d. **Multi-benefit strategies – buffer incentives, SVPI & flex easement**

Robin Fay gave the SLS an update on the Stillaguamish Valley Protection Initiative. Since the inauguration of SVPI, PCC Farmland Trust has held three outreach events and has secured funding to implement five conservation easements (~700 acres) which are currently going through the application process. Robin expressed that he's looking forward to working/hearing from the Integration Team on future projects.

3. SLS Integration Team Report & Discussion (10:40 - 11:20)

- a. **IT overview – mission, goals, objectives, structure:**

Cindy Dittbrenner and Morgan Ruff gave a presentation (see attachment) to the SLS on the progress of the Integration Team (IT). The goal of the IT is to develop project packages that address farm, fish and flood issues within designated reaches/subreaches. The project packages will be brought to the SLS EC for review and approval, and will be submitted for grant applications such as FbD.

- b. **IT “focus areas” – Sultan Reach, Lower Stilly Reach, culverts, water mgt?:** Terry mentioned that Kurt Nelson and Bob Aldrich are applying for grants for hydrologic modeling of the Snohomish River. They wish to better understand the water storage capacity of the river, from the glaciers to the plateaus to the wetlands.

Morgan reviewed the three potential focus areas.

- The Lower Skykomish ranked sixth on the FbD funding list and will most likely be funded.
 - An ESRP grant was submitted for Ebey Island/Upper Snohomish Estuary to model groundwater and subsidence. Agricultural viability in the Snohomish is currently being examined through the Snohomish Conservation District's Ag Resiliency plan. Several large restoration projects have been completed in the lower estuary (e.g., Qwuloot and Smith Island) so perhaps efforts could be focused in the upper estuary.
 - The Mainstem Stillaguamish River ranked ninth on the FbD funding list and isn't as likely to receive funding as the Lower Skykomish. Selecting the Mainstem Stillaguamish as a focus area may help SLS reengage with the Stillaguamish Tribe, which had recently left the SLS EC.
- c. **Key issues, challenges, and opportunities – what makes a reach ready?:** Cindy reviewed the keys of success for the IT and what it is that makes a reach ready, including:
 1. Farmers/landowners involved or represented
 2. Right scale – not too big, reconfigure for project/subreach needs

3. Core group with other members, flexible based on area and project needs
4. One or a few people leading
5. Need follow-through for implementation
6. Not redundant with other meetings
7. Prioritize projects – know impact of whole project package
8. Reach-scale plan not static – portion gets adapted over time
9. Need to engage flood representatives
10. Timing

Not on the list but mentioned was the need for projects to benefit from each other within a limited area (e.g., Sultan reach plan)

- d. **Schedule and next steps:** Between now and July 2019 the IT will agree upon a focus area and develop a package process, developing project goals and metrics. Once FbD funding is received (July 2019) the IT will identify gaps within the submitted FbD package.
- e. **Reach-scale Plans:** A participant commented that the SLS needs to define desired landscapes within each of the three reaches. Currently the plans only document known problem areas and potential projects.

4. Legislative Update, Priorities, Engagement (11:20 - 11:45)

- a. **Partner funding priorities: FbD, WSCC, ESRP:** Heather Cole briefed the SLS EC on The Nature Conservancy's (TNC) involvement with the next phase of Floodplains by Design. Upon completion of a five year strategic plan, TNC has decided to lessen future involvement. TNC will work to institutionalize the grant program, transferring some of TNC's core elements to another agency for a long-term success. Heather mentioned that though TNC's future role will be limited, they will still be involved in FbD.

Terry suggested that SLS have a meeting with TNC and other folks to talk about the future of FbD. Another participant mentioned that the flexibility of funding may disappear if another agency manages the grant in the future, although this is the natural process with most grant programs, loosely applied in the beginning and more regimen as the program evolves. Washington Department of Ecology is getting feedback from the last grant round.

On December 4th, 2018 King, Pierce and Snohomish counties are meeting to help institutionalize FbD. All three counties are sending letters of support to the Governor's Office of Financial Management for Department of Ecology's current \$70 million budget request.

5. Partner Updates (11:45 - 12:00)

- a. Brief updates and news from farm, fish, flood/water mgt participants

6. WRAP UP AND ADJOURN (12:00)

[Task Group Updates]

- a. **Regulatory Efficiency: culverts, drainage, Responsible Stewardship:**
Paul Cereghino gave an update on his efforts to improve the regulatory efficiency for permitting culverts. The objective is to develop a mechanism to minimize permitting requirements between NOAA, USACE, WDFW and Ecology and to minimize costs (e.g., reduction of permitting from \$20,000 to \$5,000). Paul discussed his objective with the Ecosystem Coordination Board and has since identified a contact for each of the four agencies listed above, to help him solve the regulatory problem. Paul stated that he needs to engage tribes in the process as well. Upon completion (within the next six months), the standardized process will help agencies identify and solve regulatory efficiency problems. Paul's goal is to train those in the coordination community (e.g., Morgan Ruff, Gretchen Glaub and Kit Crump) to identify problems and solution and bring them to the Ecosystem Coordination Board through a standardized process.