

Snohomish Basin Salmon Recovery Technical Committee Meeting

May 4th, 2021, 9:00—12:00

Zoom Meeting

Attendees

Emily Davis, Snoqualmie Watershed Forum
Mike Rustay, Snohomish County
Alexa Cummings, Snohomish County
Erin Murray, Puget Sound Partnership
Kirk Lakey, WDFW
Kollin Higgins, King County
Amea Bahr, RCO
Morgan Ruff, Tulalip Tribes
Lindsey Desmul, WDFW
Daniel Howe, Snohomish County
Matt Baerwalde, Snoqualmie Tribe
Elissa Ostergaard, Snoqualmie Watershed Forum
Denise Di Santo, King County
Gretchen Glaub, Snohomish County
Andrea Mojzak, King County
Kathleen Pozarycki, Snohomish County
Keith Binkley, SnoPUD
Doug Hennick, WFC
Ryan Lewis, Tulalip Tribes
Carson Moscoso, SCD
Marty Jacobson, WA Dept. Ecology
Kevin Lee, WDFW
Lisa Tario, Snohomish County
Jessica Lange, Sound Salmon Solutions
J Ambrose, ESA
Stephanie Celt, DNR
Jim Shannon, Hart Crowser
Denise Krownbell, Seattle City Light
Stephanie Cotton, Snohomish County

Intros, brief agenda review

Emily opened the meeting. Attendees introduced themselves. Emily reviewed the meeting agenda.

Impromptu Networking

Attendees entered breakout rooms for 5 minutes.

Basin and Regional updates

[Puget Sound Salmon Funding Investment Strategy](#) – SRC Retreat Outcomes from March 26th Meeting: Erin gave an overview of what the SRC is and their purpose and role in recovery. The SRFB sets the allocation of funding among the watersheds. She then shared the current PSAR and SRFB formulas for

allocation. The recent retreat focused on revisiting the investment strategy based on the recent *Factors Affecting Salmon Recovery* white paper in 2020/2021. Currently, in odd years, the basin only receives SRFB funding; and in even years, the basin receives SRFB, PSAR, and PSAR large capital funding. The allocation formula is approved regularly every two years and usually just reapproved without changes. Based on the initial outcomes from the retreat, Erin suggested that the basin thinks about what are the “mega projects” that could use support elevating for funding and what are some PSAR large capital investment focus areas that would benefit the basin? There was discussion about why the SRC is focusing on changing the allocation formula rather than the other reasons cited in the white paper about the lack of recovery results. Members were concerned about focusing on different ways to cut the same pie rather than trying to get a bigger pie.

There was discussion about what the potential “mega project list” would be focused on; just salmon specific or multi-benefit projects too? It seems uncertain at this point. Also, what qualifies as “mega”? \$20 million? Bigger? We’re not sure yet. This will need to be fleshed out at additional meetings of the SRC.

Elissa commented: Something that would be really helpful would be to get everyone's ideas about the super big projects that you never really thought were possible but that would make a huge difference for salmon in our watershed. Like... lifting I-5 off the estuary? Elevating BNSF in certain places to allow for beach processes?

Comments from the provided Google slide:

- Estuary projects - DD6, Spencer and N tip of Ebey... and beyond - acquisition plan to allow future work; mainstem opportunities?
- Retrofit wastewater, stormwater
- Concern / question- we have big ideas but putting specific locations on a project list could be detrimental as we have much work in the landownership/feasibility arena before they are really viable to move forward - what role could the state or region play in helping watersheds overcome the barriers of ownership/site control in our floodplains and estuary?

The group discussed timing and next steps. Possible next steps: create a survey or input tool that allows for generating a big list of concerns, project ideas, and general input related to these three SRC outcomes. SRC meets again May 27th.

There was discussion about utilizing our existing 4-year work plan to develop this “mega” project list.

2021 SRFB Grant Round – Gretchen gave an overview of the ranked project list: 1) Snoqualmie River Large Wood 2) Catherine Creek Large Woody Debris 3) Woods Creek Culvert Coop. The review committee recommends not moving either of the two Langlois Creek Culverts projects forward. Since we are not recommending Langlois Creek, we pulled up the first few projects that ranked just below the funding line last year, as replacements (this includes Catherine Creek). Gretchen spoke with the sponsor to relay the committee’s concerns and SVWID will be withdrawing their application.

Gretchen is also exploring options for lending money to another watershed this year as we have some return funds and a shorter project list.

DECISION: Gretchen asked for Tech Comm support to move the recommended ranked list to the Forum for approval. There were no objections.

Capital Funding – Gretchen announced that the House and Senate passed a consensus budget. Floodplains by Design will fund the King County Fall City Floodplain Restoration project and Snohomish County’s Lower Skykomish and estuary work. ESRP is receiving much more funding than usual. We don’t have many applications this year through. The PSAR Large Capital program will fund the top three projects; this includes King County’s Fall City project too, so that project is fully funded.

Tech Comm Mission and Roles: Hey, Why Are We Here Anyway?

The co-chairs and core team thought it would be useful to revisit the mission, roles, guiding principles and member organizations, because there has been so much turnover in the past few years. If we can get everyone on the same page this will build better buy-in and accountability. The co-chairs provided members with a revised draft of the mission/vision/roles document, which was originally drawn up in 2004, and presented it to them for their feedback. Mike gave an overview of the technical committee’s history, its role in relation to the Forum and PDC, and its, guiding principles. The group was then invited to discuss the revised draft Mission document that had been sent out previously and any suggestions for revision.

There was discussion about the committee’s role with harvest, hatchery, hydropower, and habitat. Some members felt that we don’t have a real influence over harvest and rarely submit formal comments on it. Emily commented: Perhaps it would be good to specify the nuance here-- we can and do comment on technical issues for all the H's, but of course we don't have jurisdiction over what actually happens with many of the H's. Elissa added: It seems like keeping the wording of Committee Roles #5 *“Review and provide technical comment related to harvest, hatchery, hydropower, and habitat—specifically, land use, water quality and water quantity management”* would be good - I think there are efforts to continue to have more transparency around harvest and hatchery management and decisions from the comanagers and NOAA, and the more we know about them, the better. Even if we decide not to comment.

Kirk asked about our role with commenting on land use issues and discussed WDFW’s involvement with buffer width recommendations being led by the Governor’s office. Gretchen added: I think comments on CAO, comp plans, etc. would be great to bring up with the PDC as well.

Members continued to share their thoughts/ideas in the provided Google slide:

- The consensus continuum should probably be clearly described.
- I like the consensus continuum.
- How about we define what groups can be members. If it isn’t spelled out in the RCW or the RCW doesn’t apply, perhaps it could be something about LE, comanagers, major local jurisdictions, hydropower operators, HCP implementers, major project sponsors? Just spit-balling here.
- Add that the Tech Comm serves as the TAG for lead entity responsibilities, reference RCW

Tech Comm Membership: Its Evolution, Current Day Status, and Why It Matters

Mike gave an overview of membership history for the committee and what membership looks like today. Emily added: we dredged up several conflicting lists and really pored over them trying to figure out where they came from, why they conflicted and how-- there really is no rulebook for how this is done. YOU ALL get to decide. Emily and Mike then presented the group with a straw man list and proposed a plan for moving forward.

Kirk mentioned Ashley Kees should be on the list. Kollin added that Josh Kubo should be on the list. Morgan commented: I need to continue to have conversations with Tulalip about our roles/membership/ etc.

Gretchen commented: I think when it comes to decision making, there should be one representative for each agency/organization. But when it comes to participation in discussions etc., then I think the broader, multiple persons per organization, is totally fine. Emily agreed.

Gretchen noted: I see the need to distinguish between voting member agencies (ultimately responsible for decision making) and participating agencies and staff (i.e. invite WSDA, DOH etc.)

From the Google slide:

- Is there a formal or informal onboarding process for new members?

Staff will look into RCW 2496 that established salmon recovery lead entities to understand which agencies are required members. Co-chairs will revise the documents and membership list based on the feedback they heard today, then return with another iteration in June for further comment.

Round table updates and announcements

- DNR is pulling together partners with an interest in working in the headwaters/forestry realm to discuss a potential funding initiative with Blue Forest Conservation to develop a Forest Resilience Bond in the Snohomish Basin. Contact Stephanie Celt if you/a member of your organization is interested in being involved in an initial overview/discussion with DNR and Blue Forest about what a forest resilience bond could do for the basin... Similar efforts are underway in the Puyallup. Blue Forest Conservation presented at the SRC conference last week.

The meeting adjourned.