

Meeting Summary

SLS Steering Committee

October 7, 2020 10:30AM – 12:00PM

Zoom meeting



Participants

Brian Bookey FARM

Linda Lyshall FARM

Erik Stockdale FISH & FLOOD

CK Eidem FISH

Robin Fay FARM

Kristin Marshall FISH

Rodney Pond FISH

Team building

Hopes for your time and participation this coming year? What specific talents do you bring to the group?

Erik Stockdale – (Snohomish County)

Erik believes building trust, while difficult to quantify, is a priority and has been a big value of SLS. He brings knowledge, history, and relationships to this process.

Robin Fay – (Washington Farmland Trust)

Robin likes building energy and passion at this critical time for SLS. He sees farmland conservation as bridging political, urban, and rural divides. He brings personal ag experience, a nonprofit perspective, ability to leverage nonprofit status to this process.

Linda Lyshall – (Snohomish Conservation District)

While new to SLS, she is not new to the issues. Linda has local and state experience in salmon restoration, ag issues with farmers, and conservation efforts. She brings a balanced perspective at the intersection of issues and ability in collaborative and organizational management to this process.

Brian Bookey (Cherry Lane Farms)

The challenges of manure management and meeting regulations engaged him in this work, but he decided to be part of the solution. As a result, he has connected with others from the farm community and learned about other issues – not just environmental ones. He tries hard to maintain relationships and be a voice in the community. He brings agriculture and business skills, history with SLS, and relationships to this process.

C.K. Eidem (Ducks Unlimited)

CK hopes that SLS can outlive all of us and form a bridge for relationships. He is ready to define roles and responsibilities, and then get on with the work he sees as critical and urgent to the area. He brings nonprofit board experience, relationships, and creative thinking to this process.

Rodney Pond (Sound Salmon Solutions RFEs, ED)

Snohomish County is Rodney's "work" home. As the newest member to SLS, Rodney brings a deep background in water quality, previous work at Snohomish and King County, research, project management, and public outreach with a lot of landowners and farmers. He understands the "working poor" perspective. He loves to work from an intersectional perspective. Ag, restoration, resource

management, watershed planning, and wildlife management are all going to have to change in response to climate change. He sees SLS as a way to lead and stay in relationship with each other effectively.

Kristin Marshall (Snohomish Conservation District)

Kristin was nominated to join this group, but her other commitments on the Stilly and Snohomish IT will keep her from participating. These processes are still under the SLS umbrella. Her background and strength is in project implementation.

Roles and Responsibilities

We discussed a draft document David prepared outlining a proposed SLS organizational structure and describing the primary responsibilities of each group. The document includes recommendations for leadership, membership, representation, decision processes, staffing, and meeting frequency.

The proposal calls for a renaming and expansion of the Executive Committee to make it more inclusive and action oriented. The new name will be the SLS Steering Committee (SC). It will be made up of 14 people – seven people with interests in fish and seven with interests in farming. Two of the members with fish interests will be available for the Stillaguamish and Tulalip tribes. If either tribe should decline having an SC member, another person with a fish interest will be added and the tribe(s) will be consulted to determine if they are comfortable with the overall fish representation.

Officers for the coming year

Brian Bookey and Terry Williams currently serve as co-chairs. Cognizant of his own capacity, Brian would like to step down as Chair. Those in attendance endorsed Linda Lyshall as the new Chair representing agriculture and Linda agreed to serve. ***Terry and Darrell were not in attendance, so the group will wait until the next meeting to hear their intentions. David suggested the Chair position could be a year at a time.**

What are the things SLS should focus on in the coming year?

Workplan – Regarding the workplan, we will be examining overall organizational structure, support for ITs and preparation of a communications plan.

Advocacy and legislative strategy – We agreed that the SLS could better use its influence and that a more structured approach is needed. We discussed the values of bridging intersections, building and maintaining relationships, elevating conversations to action, and garnering funding. Everyone agreed to the importance of an advocacy and State legislative tracking plan as their decisions could greatly impact SLS. We also agreed that there should continue to be strong cross-county coordination which addresses SLS's role in the broader context of planning and watershed processes.

Outreach – ***Erik suggested we schedule meetings with elected officials:** the first to brief the Executive on SLS roles and activities and the second, to meet with Council Member Sam Lowe to discuss Floodplains by Design work being done in his district. ***Brian will attend more Ag Advisory Board meetings to advocate there as well. *CK suggested staying on top of the US 2 Trestle project with WSDOT where public meetings are commencing.**

Funding – We noted that the Stillaguamish Tribe's application is not in a favorable position in the next round of Floodplains by Design funding, so SLS's help would be necessary and advantageous. We should

be aware not to exceed the cutline of \$50 million for funding which could risk rejection. It will be necessary to project and plan for how funding limitations could impact our partners and SLS.

Upcoming SLS activities – The following will also require our attention: Land use policy review, communications plan development, monitoring plan development by a future work group, and ongoing IT implementation. Everyone is committed to evaluating and clarifying our roles and responsibilities as soon as possible, so we can get on with the work at hand.

It was noted that the website may have statements on it that have not gone through full SLS discussion. Once this is agreed upon, then the website content should be congruent.

Summary of feedback from Partners on Draft Roles and Responsibilities document

The Roles and Responsibilities document received a lot of comments and wordsmithing from 5-6 people which indicates there remain sensitivities about the words we use and their meaning. Comments addressed basic questions about mission and vision and how to be true to them; the desired future we want to advocate for; and the specific SMART goals that we can outline.

David suggested a few members refine the document and create a new draft incorporating thoughts and comments. ***Robin, Linda, and Kristin agreed to get a final draft to the group. *David will also send the summary of the comments on the document.**

Rodney hopes for a visionary steering committee that pushes leaders to do more long-range planning regarding impacts of climate and the changes it will create on the landscape. Old solutions, inaction, or knee-jerk reactions won't work, whereas a structured plan and vision for how we transition to resilience with long-term solutions will be necessary. He feels our group can provide leadership, advocacy, and strategy and look to innovation and best practices in order to anticipate where the challenges will be. Realistically addressing farmland preservation while adapting to the coming changes of our landscape will be tricky. CK saw hidden in the document a message that speaks of this "shared vision of the future" operating in a collaborative space.

Rodney reiterated that ag isn't just an economic enterprise, it's a way of life. This strong connection to the land, while hard to quantify, should be articulated in this vision. He is confident that there are ways to maintain way of life and be innovative. The future will be unavoidable, but that doesn't mean the end of farming culture. He used the words, "challenge by transformation" to describe the role of SLS. For instance, net gain may not be in maintenance of acreage, but could be increases in productivity and resilience of the land through innovative practices. He also feels that it won't be regulations taking the land; it will be more like nature taking unless we plan for greater resilience.

Rodney also would like more clarity about the level/scale we are working; how much purview does SLS have and how to can we balance conflicts while making progress?

SLS has a unique opportunity to contribute to the Comp Plan process slated for completion in June 2025. One of David's team members will be conducting a policy analysis regarding conflicts in SLS policies and code that could be limiting the SLS mission. We also need to take a comprehensive look at climate impacts. The next step will be to assign folks to work on our priorities.

Definitions of net gain and no net loss – Net gain and no net loss need further clarification. For instance, if no net loss of farmland is a condition, how can both salmon restoration and future flooding be

addressed? Or, is no net loss about preserving acreage, improving drainage, sustaining a way of life, and/or increasing productivity of the land with amendments such as adding digester solids? Rodney feels a common understanding needs to be understood within the larger group.

Kristin agreed that questions remain about what ag needs in terms of: economics, acreage, productivity of the land, and moving people out of the floodplain. Lists of projects exist, but the strategy that ties them together under a common vision is muddy. Kristin and Linda are working on defining multi-benefit monitoring and identifying shared goals which could be adopted by SLS on how to measure progress and how it meets priorities. The IT structure/function will soon be ready for review. Use the best available science, tech support, a respectful forum, and monitoring and evaluation to measure progress.

David feels this is an area rich for key conversations and future possibilities for SLS. It is critical that SLS clearly communicates expectations and stands up and communicates how SLS can serve as a backbone organization. The steering committee can't do everything, so David suggests a collaborative and sustainable committee infrastructure for this time-crunched, volunteer coalition of willing people to establish what collaboration and trust look like. It could be a backbone organization or a more centralized authority. A single point of leadership has its advantages such as seen in the Nooksack or in the Puyallup drainages. ***David asked the members to read about a potential Stanford leadership model regarding backbone organizations for review at the November meeting:**
https://ssir.org/articles/entry/six_proven_practices_for_backbone_organizations

Collaboration – Where is collaboration taking place – through workgroups, SLS Executive Team, or a community-wide decision-making process? Is it consensus based? Brian suggested there's a distinction allowing room for pure collaboration AND groups that aren't obligated to take "instruction" from SLS while they may want SLS endorsement.

Regarding development pressures, how can SLS step up and be a balancing force? Linda Neunzig asked Dan Bartelheimer about downzoning as a way to protect farmland. Erik suggested PDS could be at the table in discussion to address development pressures. The risk is that it can be perceived as a taking of property.

Kristin will take this statement (in quotes) to her group:

Want to see more conversation about the Stilly IT function. Is this function supported by the SC?

"increase the pace, magnitude and effectiveness of on-the-ground actions that collectively produce results aimed at meeting salmon recovery goals, protecting and enhancing agricultural viability and reducing new and current flood risk."

Dates for future meetings

November 12 will be a regular SLS Partner meeting. The final version of the FbD Land Acquisition strategy will be presented by Spencer Easton. Kristin's group will share the Stilly IT Workplan for the coming year and Lindsey Desmul will have a Communications Plan to present.

***We agreed to a Steering Committee Meeting on December 10** to address draft language regarding roles and responsibilities. The goal is to complete the organizational structure document by year end. David suggested the group do a "deep dive" into vision early in 2021. It's important to maintain momentum and keep partners engaged and facilitate internal and external communications. We will

intersperse somewhat shorter Steering Committee (SC) and Partner meetings every other month into 2021.

Notes prepared by Allison Roberts and David Roberts