

Meeting Notes
Envision Skagit Citizen Committee
Nov. 4, 2010 – 1:00 to 5:00 pm
Padilla Bay Interpretive Center
Bayview Edison Road

Attendees:

Kerri Cook
Cory Ertel
Peggy Flynn
Jim Meyer
Kim Mower
Grace Popoff
Gustavo Ramos, Jr.
Tim Rosenhan

Ryan Sakuma
Gary Thor
Nate Youngquist
John Cheney
Kirk Johnson, Skagit Co. PM
Lisa Dally Wilson, Facilitator

Presenters:

Jon Riedel, Natl. Park Service
Tim Beechie, NOAA - NWFS
Eric Beamer, SRSC
Libby Mills, Wildlife Biologist

** Please remember to fill out and submit your “in-kind hours” time sheets each month. Feel free to include time for any additional reading or research you do on the project.

Meeting Handouts:

1. Meeting Agenda
2. Summary Meeting Minutes from October 14 CC Meeting (emailed)
3. Revised Groundrules
4. Letter to editor re: Envision Skagit Lincoln Theater event

Welcome and Introductions

The meeting began shortly after 1:00 p.m., and committee members, project staff, and presenters introduced themselves.

Logistics

- **Oct. 14 meeting notes:** There were no comments, edits or suggested changes to the Oct. 14 summary meeting minutes, which are now considered final and approved by Committee.
- **Groundrules:** Lisa summarized the changes to the draft groundrules agreed to by the committee at the previous meeting, reflected in the revised groundrules document that committee members received by email. The committee agreed to these changes and approved the groundrules.
- **Nicole Pomerleau:** Lisa noted that Nicole has formally withdrawn from the committee due to time demands created by her new nursing job and parenting responsibilities. Lisa read a message send by Nicole, who remains interested in helping with public outreach on the project.
- **Letter to editor:** Kirk passed out copies of a letter to the editor of the Skagit Valley Herald regarding the Envision Skagit/Robert Lang presentation at the Lincoln Theatre. The letter

praised the great turnout at the event, but said that project participants appeared to be the "same 'club' that decides everything of importance in this county." There was brief discussion of the letter, which was further discussed toward the meeting's end.

Ecology of Place Presentations

Kirk explained that the purpose of the day's four presentations was to provide an overview of the formative processes that created the Skagit Valley landscape, including highly productive conditions and habitat for fish and wildlife. The intent is that this information will help the committee understand the potential impacts and tradeoffs of land use choices and recommendations that it will be making through the project. After individual presentations, the committee members circulated in small groups to enable discussion with each individual presenter.

NOTE: Powerpoint presentations are also being placed on the Committee's ftp site.

Jon Riedel, North Cascades National Park: *Geologic Evolution of the Skagit Channel Migration Zone*

Tim Beechie, NOAA Northwest Fisheries Service: *A Landscape Context for Salmon Restoration*

Eric Beamer, Skagit River System cooperative: *What Salmon Need*

Libby Mills, Wildlife Biologist: *Skagit Wildlife*

Reactions to Robert Lang presentation

Committee members expressed a variety of opinions.

"The presentation was right on – I've watched areas in southern California where I grew up transform from orchards to wall-to-wall development. That's what will happen here if action is not taken soon."

"Lang's view was from 60,000 feet – he seemed to understand the region primarily through statistics, and did not address some of the local conditions and desires that are unique to the Skagit Valley." A number of committee members agreed with this reaction/concern.

"If we don't start coordinating with communities and planning organizations to the south of us, they will be happy to decide our fate for us."

"I question the feasibility of bringing high speed rail to the Northwest, because as elsewhere the freight railroads own and control the tracks. It would require building a whole new set of high speed rail lines which is financially unfeasible."

Thoughts on Herald Letter to Editor

There was discussion on whether the Committee or project should respond to the letter to the editor in the Herald praising the Lincoln event but criticizing the project as being “the same old people.”

After some discussion, there was general agreement that responding in a defensive, case-by-case manner is not productive. Instead, we need to put out more information about the composition of the Citizen Committee and about opportunities for the public to become involved in the process. The possibility of crafting a joint letter from the Citizen Committee just prior to the first of the larger scale public meetings was discussed.

At part of the December 1 meeting we will begin planning community outreach meetings likely to start up in January.

Gus reminded Kirk and others that he has a bi-lingual radio show on KSVR which is a good way of reaching out to certain segments of the community. Maybe Kirk and an interested member of the Citizen Committee could join Gus to discuss the project in the near future.

There was some discussion about more broadly informing the general public about Citizen Committee meetings. Committee members were generally comfortable with that, although wondered what the public expectation would be. Kirk explained that non-committee members would be free to observe the committee meetings, but not be active participants – unless, at times, the committee wants to seek or allow public comment.

John Cheney said taking public comment from time to time is a good way to encourage public input.

Meeting Adjourned

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 pm

Near Term Schedule

- **Friday, November 19th** – All Day Upper Skagit Field Trip – meet at County Admin building parking lot, 8:15 (or Hansen Creek spot to be determined)
- **Wednesday, December 1**, all day meeting – review Envision model results; discuss all input received to date, what committee is thinking; also begin planning community outreach meetings.
- **Thursday, January 6**, all day meeting – the built environment; will seek to include time with county commissioners, mayors, and city/town/county planning staff to discuss issues such as density and UGA expansion.