

**Skagit Watershed Alternative Futures Project
Steering Committee Summary Notes
Wednesday, March 4, 2009
Skagit Valley College Multi-Purpose Room**

Attendance

Members

John Doyle, Town of La Conner	Jan Ellingson, Better Homes and Gardens Real Estate Exec.	Margaret Fleek, City of Burlington
Rebecca Bradley-Lowell, City of Mount Vernon	Carolyn Kelly, Skagit Conservation District	Paul Kriegel, Private Forester
Ryan Larsen, City of Anacortes	Jack Moore, City of Sedro-Woolley	Kevin Morse, The Nature Conservancy
Rebecca Ponzio, Puget Sound Partnership	Allen Rozema, Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland	Mike Shelby, Western Washington Agriculture Association
Shirley Solomon, Skagit Watershed Council	Margaret Studer, Futurewise	Larry Wasserman, Swinomish Indian Tribal Community

Other Participants:

Tim Holloran, Skagit County	Kirk Johnson, Skagit County	Gary Christensen, Skagit County
Kendra Smith, Skagit County	Lisa Dally Wilson, Dally Environmental	Derek Poon, Environmental Protection Agency
John Lombard, University of Washington	Sara Breslow, University of Washington	Jon-Paul Shannahan, Upper Skagit Indian Tribe
Mike Rundlett, Western Washington Agriculture Association	Linda Christensen, Skagit County	Mark Personius, Growth Management Consultant

Handouts:

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Updated Steering Committee Membership List 2. March 4 Agenda 3. Decision Points, Pre-Stakeholders 4. Project Organization Chart - DRAFT 5. Population Projection Discussion Questions | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Skagit 2000-2060 Population Projections 7. Forestry Future Discussion Questions 8. Stakeholder Committee Discussion Questions 9. Technical Committee Membership List |
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The sixth meeting of the Alternative Futures Steering Committee began at 9:10 a.m.

Kirk Johnson welcomed and introduced three new members of the Steering Committee: John Doyle, Town Administrator and Planning Director for the Town of La Conner; Ryan Larsen, Director of Planning and Community Development for the City of Anacortes; and Jack Moore, Planning Director and Building Official for the City of Sedro-Woolley.

Kirk also welcomed and introduced Lisa Dally Wilson, of Dally Environmental. Lisa will be the facilitator for the Stakeholder Committee, for joint meetings of the technical committees, and is assisting now with strategic planning and design of the Stakeholder process.

Agenda Review

The February 4th Steering Committee meeting summary was circulated. The committee will be asked to approve the summary at the next meeting. It was requested that the summary be provided to the Steering Committee electronically for review purposes.

GMA Steering Committee Support

Last week, Kirk and John Lombard made a presentation on Alternative Futures to the Growth Management Act Steering Committee (GMASC). The group, composed of county commissioners and five mayors, was established in the early 2000s to address regional planning issues under the Growth Management Act (GMA).

The GMA Steering Committee agreed to adopt the Alternative Futures project as its work program for the year, provided that the planning directors from Anacortes, La Conner and Sedro-Woolley be added to the Alternative Futures (AF) Steering Committee, and that the AF Steering Committee establish a voting process on issues where it can't reach consensus. The GMA Steering Committee wanted assurance that the Alternative Futures project would result in an actual product.

Several Steering Committee members expressed concern regarding establishing a voting process for committee decisions. Some also expressed concern about requirements being imposed on them from the outside. Others, especially the newly added planning directors, said they understood that establishment of a voting process when consensus can't be reached was a condition for their participation.

Lisa Dally Wilson explained that in her experience, committees with full decision-making authority – such as the Stakeholder Committee – often resort to a two-thirds vote when they can't achieve consensus. Typically one vote is provided per organization/entity on the committee. Lisa said that rarely does an advisory committee such as the Steering Committee have to rely on this type of formal decision procedure.

Lisa mentioned that the Stakeholder Committee will make final decisions based on information received from the Steering and Technical Committees. An official way for the Steering Committee to make decisions could be to determine whether there is full consensus by a tally/vote. If there is not full consensus, both majority and minority opinions would be logged and all perspectives would be included in the record. All concerns would be tallied including the sticky points.

There was general agreement with the consensus/voting process that Lisa described. Kirk asked if committee members wanted to see the process explained in writing before approving it. The committee indicated that it understood and approved of the process.

It was mentioned that Technical Committees should determine their own decision making protocol given that their role may be different from that of the Steering Committee.

A member asked about the role of public involvement. Kirk said that the Steering Committee ground rules (approved 1/7/2009) state that public input to the Steering Committee process will be welcome through the Alternative Futures website, and that the committee will agree when to invite public attendance and participation in meetings. County staff is working to update the project website to note Steering Committee meeting dates, times and locations, agendas, and

approved meeting summaries and other committee-approved materials. Kirk said that Stakeholder Committee meetings will be open to the public but the overall details of that process remain to be worked out.

Committee Organization

Kirk circulated a three-page handout that describes (a) overall project organization, (b) decision points and the relationship between committees, and (3) membership in each of the technical committees. He noted that the recently-formed Growth Management Technical Committee is essentially the Skagit Council of Governments planners group, which meets on a monthly basis. He thanked Mike Rundlett of the Western Washington Agriculture Association for agreeing to coordinate the agriculture technical committee.

In response to a question regarding Steering Committee roles, Kirk explained that the Steering Committee will recommend potential Stakeholder Committee membership and provide input on design of the Stakeholder process. Steering Committee members may be asked to suggest educational materials or assist with orientation field trips so Stakeholder Committee members have a shared set of experiences related to the Skagit ecosystem and the valley's natural resource industries and human communities. Lisa Dally Wilson will help to map out the Stakeholder process before the committee commences work.

Some committee members raised concerns about how the County is handling contractors who are also technical committee members. There is a concern about conflict of interest if those who are doing contracted work are also reviewing the work. A concern was also expressed about uncompensated time spent on the project for those entities that are not receiving funds through the EPA grant received by the County. There needs to be greater clarification and transparency regarding the role and scopes of work of contractors who also participate on the technical committees. One member said even the perception of a conflict of interest can kill the process.

John Lombard explained that the technical committees are at a point where they need certain expertise and information. The project has contracted with WSU to develop a model for assessing the critical thresholds for agricultural viability. The Skagit River System Cooperative has developed a highly regarded model for Chinook salmon in the Skagit and is involved in a study of the effects of climate change on the delta/estuary. John has contacted the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) for technical information on fisheries. The Ecosystem Technical Committee and project staff are collecting and reviewing ecosystem indicator examples from previous alternative futures efforts, The Nature Conservancy, Puget Sound Partnership, Heinz, and EPA work on ecosystem services. Drawing on existing, credible research or modeling will help to extend the project's budget. Kirk said any work the County contracts for needs to be objective, scientifically/methodologically sound, timely, specific to project needs, and accessible to the public.

EPA Grant Discussion

Kirk explained that both the County and Swinomish Tribe submitted grant proposals separately to the EPA. Kirk briefly summarized the County's 2008 grant and the 2009 Alternative Futures supplemental grant proposal. Sara Breslow is assisting with applications to foundations for additional financial support. The County is seeking supplemental funds from EPA for County staff support, John Lombard's time, technical support from OSU for the Envision software, and funds to complete phase 3 of the agriculture study.

Kirk said the Swinomish Tribe submitted its own proposal to the same EPA grant program. There was some discussion between County and Tribal staff but the two proposals were not formally linked. Larry Wasserman briefly summarized the Swinomish grant proposal. He explained that the Tribe's proposal supports the Alternative Futures project by requesting funds for the agriculture study and Envision, and seeks funds for other issues important to the Tribe. Larry said the Tribe requested funds for Envision and phase 3 of the agriculture study to be helpful to the Alternative Futures project, and if they receive those funds, they would pass them through to the County.

Small-Group Discussions

Small groups were convened to address issues of population projections, possible creation of an agriculture-forestry future, and composition of the Stakeholder Committee. Questions for each small group were distributed to the Steering Committee prior to this meeting (see meeting handouts). The following bullets are drawn primarily from the flip chart notes from each small group discussion.

Population:

- Biodiversity of the watershed should be reflected in developing or using a lower than historic growth projections (i.e., Office of Financial Management low projection)
- We should use a Countywide Planning Policy (CPP)-consistent population projection to reflect current practice (OFM medium or average OFM med/low)
- Look at a high population projection (fear factor #)
- How difficult would it be to analyze three different population growth scenarios across all the Alternate Futures?

Ag-Forestry Future:

- Funding/resources to carry out
- Consequences for agriculture?
- Ability to pull in from existing resources?
- Question not whether to evaluate forestry, but how?
- Why not a Forestry Technical Committee?
- Forestry "critical mass"?
 - Credible analysis
 - "Sustainable"/"Viability"
 - Resolve vs. education?
- Role of markets
 - Common issues with agriculture
- Common resource industry concerns
 - Stewarding/maintaining land base
- Need to define research/analytical needs – define scope of work
- Contact major landowners
 - Distinct from small landowners
 - Mills and land

Stakeholders:

- Stakeholders Committee – What is the ideal size? Who should be represented that is not on the Steering Committee?
 - Size – no more than 20. 15-20

- Recreation/open space, farmers, citizens, upriver community leadership – how far?
- Less agency focus
- Latino community
- Younger generation
- Tribal members
- EDASC
- Schools
- How do we engage interests that don't have time or resources to attend all Stakeholder/Steering Committee Meetings?
 - Small focus groups and report back to Stakeholders Committee (follow-up)
 - Select spokesperson from larger group
 - Rotate meeting times/locations
 - Longer meetings
 - Individual or small group meetings with some interests
 - Follow up with quieter voices
 - Concern that Stakeholder Committee with elected officials will result in lack of voice from other members
- Ideal characteristics of committee members
 - Commitment, on-time, be there, work well with others
 - Range of age groups
 - Respected leaders
- When do we convene the Stakeholder Group?
 - As quickly as possible – begin on vision, selection criteria
 - Not before four futures are fully articulated
 - After Steering Committee is clear
 - While Steering Committee is intact
 - Plan resources/time to deal with Stakeholder Committee acceptance

Ecosystem and Growth Management Vision Statements

Kirk distributed a draft combined project vision statement that draws from the Ecosystem, Agriculture, and Growth Management vision statements. The Steering Committee will discuss this draft at a future meeting.

April Meeting Scheduling

Kirk announced that he, Gary Christensen and possibly others would not be able to attend the April 1st meeting due to school vacations. There was a brief discussion of whether to reschedule to another date or skip April and convene in May. Several committee members indicated it would be a hardship to reschedule to a different date and that they would prefer to skip a meeting rather than reschedule. It was determined that the committee would be notified once the management committee makes a final decision.

Parking Lot

Issues from the meeting that were not on the agenda or will take longer than the allotted agenda time are “parked” in the parking lot with the intent that they will be addressed at a future meeting.

- Distinguish between contractors and reviewers (i.e. technical committee members). Address concerns. Be consistent across all technical committees. (next meeting)

- Technical committees to determine their own decision making structure (at individual technical committee meetings).
- When do we bring in the Stakeholder Committee? (Full group discussion next meeting)

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.