

**Skagit Watershed Alternative Futures Project
Steering Committee Meeting Summary
Wednesday, December 3, 2008
Skagit Valley College Library**

Attendance:

Margaret Studer

Jan Ellingson

Shirley Solomon

Rebecca Bradley Lowell

Alternate for Jana Hanson

Rone Brewer

Gary Tollefson

Paul Kriegel

Patsy Martin

Rebecca Ponzio

Kevin Morse

Other Participants:

Derek Poon

Tim Holloran

Hector Saez

Ryan Walters

Ann Marie Gutwein

Kirk Johnson

John Lombard

Mary Marshall

Sara Breslow

Josh Greenberg

Gary Christensen

The third meeting of the Alternative Futures Steering Committee began at 1:12 p.m. Project Manager Kirk Johnson welcomed new member Paul Kriegel. Rebecca Bradley-Lowell attended as an alternate for Jana Hanson.

The committee had no questions about or corrections to the prepared November meeting summary. Silence indicated consensus that they be approved.

I. Sara Jo Breslow, of UW, led a review and discussion of the ground rule revisions that the committee had requested at the November meeting. Decision points:

A. Representation: are committee members expected to represent their constituents? Members suggested removing from rule number 1a phrase about maintaining “lines of communication between the committee and broader communities,” and moving a sentence about representation from rule number 1 to the introduction paragraph.

B. Alternates: should members be allowed to designate alternates? Some members expressed a desire to be able to designate an alternate for unavoidable instances when they could not attend a meeting; others felt they were not in a position to designate an alternate. The committee agreed to allow for (but not require) the designation of an alternate for the rare case of a necessary absence.

C. Meeting minutes: The committee supported the keeping of minutes recording the general flow of discussion. Audio and video recording of meetings will occur only with the agreement of the committee, and meeting notes will be posted to the Alternative Futures website only after review and approval by the committee.

D. Public meetings: should committee meetings be open to the public? Special Deputy Prosecuting Attorney Ryan Walters advised that the state Open Public Meetings Act did not require the meetings to be open. Committee members expressed some differences of

opinion on whether the meetings should be generally open to the public or generally closed. Open meetings might inhibit candid conversation among the committee, while designating meetings as officially closed could send the wrong message to the public. There seemed to be agreement that public comment should always be welcomed via e-mail through the website; that oral public comment would generally not be taken; but that the committee should retain the flexibility to invite public participation and attendance at particular meetings. Meeting summaries and formal committee documents would be published to the website and emailed to interested members of the public when requested.

E. Generally, the committee asked for revisions to the ground rules to make them less dictatorial and framed positively rather than negatively. The group agreed to allow revisiting the ground rules when the county hires a professional facilitator for the project.

II. Agricultural vision statement: the committee felt generally comfortable with the vision statement, which was initially presented at the November meeting and revised by the Agricultural Technical Committee based on Steering Committee comments. The statement is not intended to include forest lands. Various forest land scenarios can be incorporated into the four initial alternative futures with input from the Steering Committee and the technical committees.

III. Ecological goal statement: the committee reviewed this statement for the first time, and several members made comments about ways to incorporate the four different concepts contained within the statement into one sentence. Staff will work with interested committee members and the Ecosystem Technical Committee to draft a new version responsive to the committee's request.

IV. Climate change projections: UW's John Lombard provided an initial briefing on how staff intend to incorporate climate change projections into the models. Staff will attend a conference of local climate researchers in February, and should have more information then. Some discussion ensued over whether the models should use 50-year or 100-year projections, but the group reached no decisions.

The meeting concluded at 3:04 p.m.