

Sumas Watershed Improvement District

Minutes for: September 11, 2018 Meeting, 1 - 3 pm

Ag Central 204 Hawley Street Lynden, WA 98264

Terry Lenssen Andy Enfield Keith Boon
 Rod Perry Brad Rader

David Haggith Henry Bierlink Fred Likkel
 Javier Sampedro Steve Jilk Paula Harris
 Mark Ewbank

x = present

o = absent with notice

t = teleconference

I. Consent Agenda

- a. Review and Approval of June 12 Minutes
- b. Financial Report and payment of bills – *see financial report*

Terry moved to approve the Consent Agenda, Keith seconded, motion passed unanimously.

II. Ag Water Board

- a. AWB/Tribal meetings – Nooksacks have responded positively to the invitation to meet sent in July. No response from Lummi yet. We will plan to conduct these meetings before the end of October.
- b. Foster Task Force pilot program
 - Meeting with Ecology - August 30th – advance all potential projects (10) - Dale and Chuck are meeting with the potential project owners to get a better sense of the costs. A grant application will be prepared by mid-October to cover the costs for as many projects as we can develop. We plan to garner support from the Planning Unit caucuses and the Watershed Management Board.
- c. Watershed Management Board and Planning Unit update
 - 6091 work deadlines this fall – ag projects are likely to be high priorities - (conversions, augmentation, efficiencies) – How much help should farmers be providing to help solve rural water users’ issues? There is a tension there as we don’t want to give up any water rights or credits generated by installing stream enhancement projects. But there is an opportunity to help projects get done that would require law changes currently inhibited by *Foster* as well. And with the support of the Water Management Board and Planning Unit a grant application to get these projects done would be rated quite highly.
 - Does Ag want to state positions on amount of water allowed for exempt wells (5,000 gpd in law, 3,000 in 6091), fees (\$500 in 6091), and meter requirements? There was ambivalence on the fees and amount and skepticism on how meters could be a made a useful requirement. Voluntary metering would be our position.
- d. Key partner discussion needed – issues include:
 - Farmers shut off from water – Hans Wolfisburg’s situation explained and discussed.
 - water bank/exchange – PUD partnership – The PUD, Birch Bay Water and Sewer, Bill Clarke, Chuck Lindsay, and RH2 discussed initiating a water bank proposal. This is partially built on the NORTH WHATCOM COUNTY REGIONAL WATER SUPPLY FEASIBILITY STUDY done for BBWS and the increasing need to help farmers like Hans deal with their water supply issues. The question of how much service should be supplied by the WID and how much should be each farmers’ initiative was discussed. There was a consensus to have the WIDs do the preparatory work but leave the final negotiations over water contracts to individual farmers.
 - Timing of gage recalculations – AWB wrote USGS to protest the timing of the River gage recalculations. In July the flow was well over the minimum and the

interruptible water users began irrigating only to find that USGS recalculated the Ferndale gage and lowered the flow 25% which was under the minimum. As a result, these farmers had to shut off again and have not been able to use their river rights since. Discussion with USGS and Ecology should take place this fall.

- September meeting with Ecology, PUD, Birch Bay Water, County, *others?* – A discussion with all of our partners this fall bringing all the issues together is being considered. The Tribal meetings would be the priority followed by this meeting.

III. Drainage/Habitat

- a. Ditch maintenance
 - Gas Plant - Keith reported that the work will be done in later September.
 - Pangborn Ditch – Brad will check with Joel on what remains to be done.
 - Van Dyken culvert – Terry reported that Lane Stremmer was working on it.
- b. 5-year programmatic permit – completed and submitted- Brad is checking on its status.

IV. Water Quality

- a. Monitoring Results – “it’s great” reported David. The idea of presenting the data to the farmers at the October meeting was discussed. We will shoot for a 11:30 board meeting on October 9th followed by a hosted lunch from 12:30 to 1:30.
- b. DNA source tracking project report – the state Conservation Commission awarded the WCD with \$200k to 10 build the source library for DNA of a large range of potential contributors to local fecal coliform levels, and 2) to conduct monitoring in several county “hot spots” where improved identification of sources would help lead to clean-up.

V. Education/Communications

- a. Website - www.sumaswid.com
- b. WID specific E-Newsletter remains an idea but not acted on yet.
- c. WFF – REAL campaign – Fred reported that several stories illustrating farmer’s environmental protection efforts have been and are being developed.
- d. Whatcom Working Lands grant – Henry reported for Chris Elder of County Planning concerning the recent \$1.3 million Regional Conservation Partnership grant the County received to strengthen the Purchase of Development Right program. Partners in this project are the WCD, the Whatcom Land Trust, and AWB which will be relied upon to give direction to where the program best helps agriculture and water management. This is federal dollars which are matched with the County Natural Resources Fund dollars to make \$2.6 million available for conservation easements.

VI. FLIP discussion – Paula Harris/Mark Ewbank

- a. Update on FLIP process and opportunities for farmers - Overview of Lower Nooksack River integrated floodplain management planning effort. Reference planning process flow chart for anyone who may want more detail about the project road map.
- b. Identify locations of observed problems (flooding, viable land use, habitat) and opportunities to improve on such problems, with as much geographic specificity as possible. The County brought large hard copy maps to take notes on. Farmers gathered to provide them feedback.

VII. Adjournment/Next Meetings

October 9 – 11:30 at Bob’s Sumas

Respectfully submitted by Henry Bierlink, Ag Water Board

Approved by _____