

SFNR Watershed Group Meeting
May 31, 2017
Meeting Summary

Participants: Jim Abernathy, Val Lloyd, Theresa Sygitowicz, Harry Patz, Brandon Larsen, Dominic Moreri, Jeff Margolis, Cheryl Costomiris, Jamie Huson, Ian Smith, Emily Pederson, Chris Elder, Rand Jack, Gabe Epperson, LeRoy Harkness, Sean D’Agnolo

Guests: Jason Hatch, Oliver Grah

Facilitator: Erin Suda

Notetaker: Mardi Solomon

Overview: Sixteen members of the SFNR Watershed Group and two guests, Oliver Grah and Jason Hatch, met to complete the process of drafting long range goals and principles for the group, and to review the draft Watershed Conservation Plan. The goals for the meeting were:

- To identify areas of agreement and disagreement on remaining long range goals and principles
- To gather feedback on the SFNR Watershed Conservation Plan
- To confirm next steps for transitioning the Watershed Group as a self-organizing effort

Goal of the Process:

- To develop a framework for talking about conservation and restoration efforts in the South Fork and engage in watershed planning.

Agenda:

1. Welcome, Ground Rules, and Introductions
 2. Report on Ad Hoc Planning Meeting for the Watershed Group Future
 3. Long-Range Goals and Principles
 4. Feedback on Watershed Conservation Plan
 5. Next Steps for Finalizing Watershed Conservation Plan
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1. Welcome, Ground Rules, and Introductions

2. Report on Ad Hoc Planning Meeting for the Watershed Group Future

An Ad Hoc Planning Meeting was held on Wed. May 24. The group discussed possible structures and strategies for continuing the Watershed Planning group. Minutes of that meeting are attached. Another meeting will be held; Erin will let people know when that is scheduled, and anyone who would like to attend is welcome.

3. Long-Range Goals and Principles

The Goals & Principles agreed upon by this group will be used to communicate both within the group and to the public. This is a foundation for moving forward.

Process: There are two Goals and one Principle the group has not yet agreed upon (with a 75% majority vote). Some input was gathered on worksheets prior to this meeting. The current draft versions are:

- Goal 1 - Our Recreation: Ensure that activities in the Valley contribute positively to the health and safety of our watershed and our community.
- Goal 2 – Our Fish: Recover salmon populations and biodiversity by restoring natural watershed processes.
- Principle 1 - Respect for the ability of knowledgeable local residents to manage land and water resources wisely.

Participants divided into break-out groups. Each group focused on drafting new language for one of these. After five minutes, small groups were blended to create three medium size groups, who then prepared a draft to share with the whole group. The whole then discussed and voted on a final statement.

Goal 1 – Recreation:

The break-out group added some clarifying points to the goal statement. Following discussion with the whole group, the final version was approved (Yes=14)

Ensure through public regulation, education, and community engagement that recreational activities in the Valley contribute positively to the health and safety of our Watershed and protect property rights and community values.

Goal 2 – Fishing:

The breakout group proposed a revised goal statement: *Improve/Increase salmon populations in the Watershed*. There was a lot of discussion about whether this goal should focus exclusively on salmon, or should refer to the ecosystem more broadly. There also was concern about making sure the goal was stated in terms that could be measured over time and would reflect genuine habitat improvement rather than just increasing numbers of salmon (which could be accomplished easily by adding hatchery fish to the river). The final version was approved (yes=13):

Improve the South Fork ecosystem to increase and support the salmon population.

Principle 1:

The break-out group proposed the following revision and it was approved following a brief discussion (yes=14):

Consider the knowledge of local residents relevant to wise management of land and water resources.

4. Feedback on Watershed Conservation Plan

The main objective of the Watershed Conservation Plan is to focus on fish/habitat. The tribe drafted the plan and recommended actions, incorporating ideas offered through the entire community engagement process, and the discussions at the Watershed Group. The draft was shared with the group about a month ago, and has been available on the website with a survey for people to share their feedback, which was included in this evening's packet for the Group's consideration. A survey was also distributed at this meeting, to enable people to share thoughts in writing, along with group discussion.

Jason Hatch attended this meeting to address any questions regarding his work with Washington Water Trust, which is a non-profit that provides information and helps people make decisions about their water rights and irrigation efficiency, as a confidential, no-cost, non-regulatory technical support. They have developed and managed sustainable water allocation systems – water banks/water exchanges – and currently manage a mitigation exchange in Sequim.

Questions/Suggestions:

- Discussion about limitations of the scope of the plan, such as more about decline of species and impact of chemicals on environment.
- Page 132 has a number of topics that community members are interested in and concerned about for future/additional planning
- Question about fish passage barriers, and how to best address channelization
- Comment that Hirst decision may be changing, so in the final draft, double check status
- Restatement that this is not a legal document, it is a technical report, bringing together information, and recommendations for voluntary action.

5. Next Steps for Finalizing Watershed Conservation Plan

The tribe will continue to collect comments on the website until June 17. Oliver explained that the tribe will use a comment/response action matrix to create a public record of all comments and what action was taken to address the comment. Once the comment period has ended, the tribe will draft a revised version of the Plan. After that, the idea is to present the Plan and recommended actions at a community meeting. It is then up to individual residents, organizations, and the Watershed Group as a whole, to determine what recommendations from the Plan they would like to pursue. Oliver reiterated that this is a voluntary process, not a regulatory or legal one. Once the tribe has submitted a plan to the BIA, then the tribe has met their grant terms.

6. Wrap up

Much appreciation was offered for everyone's time and contribution to the discussion. The ad-hoc Planning Group (currently composed of Jeff Margolis, Teresa Sygatowicz, Erin Suda, Holly O'Neil, Ian Smith, Dominic Mocerri, Val Lloyd, Cindy Fabbri, and Jim Abernathy) will meet again to help organize next steps. All participants in this Watershed Group will be informed of when the next meeting is to be held, and are welcome to attend.