

SFNR Watershed Group Meeting

March 29, 2017

Meeting Summary

Participants: Galen Smith, Theresa Sygitowicz, Doug Couvelier, Bernie Stochila, Bill Baroch, Harry Patz, Cindy Fabbri, Brandon Larsen, Elvin Kalsbeek, Chris Hatch, Kelly DeKriek, Dominic Moreri, Matthew Thuney, Cheryl Costomiris, Ross Cline, Steve Powers, Sean D'Agnolo, Jamie Huson, Tom Smith, Val Lloyd, John Stephens, Lawson Curtis, Emily Pederson, Chris Elder; Jim Abernathy & Tricia Stevens (arrived after voting)

Presenter: Oliver Grah

Guest: Alan Friedlob, Project Neighborly

Facilitators: Lesley Rigg and Erin Suda

Notetaker: Mardi Solomon

Overview:

Meeting participants included 26 resident landowners, one presenter - Oliver Grah, and one guest – Alan Friedlob there to take pictures for Project Neighborly. The goals of this meeting were:

- To hear about, and give initial feedback on the Watershed Conservation Plan
- To test for agreement of the final draft of community long range goals and planning principles
- To determine next steps

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. **Test for agreement on *Goals and Principles***
 3. **Discuss next steps for the Watershed Group**
 4. **Watershed Conservation Plan Presentation by Oliver Grah**
 5. **Finish worksheets, wrap up; confirm/adjust topic for next meeting**
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1. Welcome, Ground Rules, and Introductions

Alan Friedlob asked to take photos of the group for Project Neighborly. Theresa S. and Harry P. said that they want to see photos and any text that is written about the group before it is used anywhere.

2. Test for agreement on *Goals and Principles*, revised from our last meeting

The group reviewed the *Long-Term Goals & Watershed Planning Principles* that were revised with input from the March 8 meeting. Participants were given red, yellow, and green cards to indicate their level of agreement: green (G) = agree; yellow (Y) = some hesitation, red (R) = disagree. 75% green will be a super majority to move forward on an item.

Goals:

- Our Families: Keep the rural way of life and protect it for our children. (20 G, 2 Y = APPROVED)

- Our Farms: Maintain & protect productive agricultural lands and promote long-term agricultural economic viability (21 G, 1 Y = APPROVED)
- Our Fish: Recover salmon populations and biodiversity by restoring natural watershed processes. (12 G, 7 Y, 2 R= NEEDS MORE DISCUSSION)
- Our Forests: Maintain and protect the forestland base and promote a sustainable forest industry with a skilled and steady local workforce. (17 G, 4 Y = APPROVED)
- Our Recreation: Ensure that activities in the valley contribute positively to the health and safety of our watershed and our community. (10 G, 10 Y, 1 R = NEEDS MORE DISCUSSION)

Principles:

Passed four of the five draft planning principles at the last meeting:

- Communication, transparency, and trust between landowners, residents, agencies, and other stakeholders in the Watershed. (APPROVED 3/8)
- Voluntary agreements between landowners and community partners, with incentives for landowner's efforts to improve watershed conditions. (APPROVED)
- Shared understanding and open dialogue around data, science, resource management, and the changing climate conditions that affect our watershed. (APPROVED 3/8)
- Public education around how farmers, foresters, fishers, and other businesses are continually improving their practices to protect and improve water quality. (APPROVED 3/8).

One principle remaining: "Respect for the ability of knowledgeable local residents to manage land and water resources wisely." Based on feedback from 3/8, this was revised to move "knowledgeable" before "local residents." The group re-voted. (9 G, 12 Y = NEEDS MORE DISCUSSION).

The group discussed how these statements would be used. Noted that these are broad statements of areas of agreement, which will serve as touchstones for deeper discussion about what these look like in practice.

3. Discuss next steps for the Watershed Group

At the last meeting there were people who were interested in continuing to meet. This could take various forms. Everyone reviewed handout "Future Scenarios for the Watershed Group" which was offered as examples.

Activity: Easel paper around the room listed topics that came from the group's feedback sheets completed in previous meetings.

Instructions: If you have a special interest in one of the group topics, put a sticky note with your name on that paper. Add a star by your name if you have expertise in the topic area and could bring leadership to the group.

Results (in order from topics with most people interested to least):

- Agriculture (Achieving our goal): Chris H. ★, Chris E., Elvin K., Tricia S., Emily P., Sean D., Ross C., John S., Galen S., Steve P., Kelly D.

- Water Rights: Jim A., Dominic M., Sean D., Elvin K., Emily P., Ross C., Kelly D., Galen S., Cindy F., Chris H.
- Tubers/Water recreation: Matthew T., Jeff M., Dominic M., Emily P., Kelly D., Val L., Tricia S., Jim A.
- Strategy for public education & outreach: Tom S. ★, Val L., Brandon L., Cheryl C., Bill B., Cindy F.
- Forestry (Working toward our goal): Tom S. ★, Chris H. ★, Dominic M., Chris E., Matthew T., Jim A.
- Wildlife: Chris E., Brandon L., Harry P., Bill B., Jamie H.
- Tribal Treaty Rights: Chris H., Doug C., John S., Bill B., Tricia S.
- Pioneer history & management techniques: Chris H. ★, Doug C., Matthew T., Elvin K.
- Habitat Restoration: Bill B., Cindy F., Val L., Steve P.
- Flood Management: Chris H. ★, Ross C., Kelly D., Galen S.
- More in-depth on water quality (temperature, sediment): Emily P., Theresa S., Doug C.
- More on Log Jams: Brandon L., Elvin K., Emily P.
- Railroad/Highway impacts: John S., Steve P., Sean D.
- Elk Habitat: Doug C. ★, Matthew T., Harry P.
- Emergency Preparedness – Fire: Tom S. ★, Elvin K., Bill B.
- Beaver re-introduction & re-location: Theresa S., Tom S., Dominic M.
- Funding for Conservation: Chris H., Val L.
- Salmon Harvest & Hatcheries: Jamie H., Cindy F.
- Wetlands Restoration: Jamie H., Cheryl C.
- Climate Change: Cindy F.
- More on water contamination, conservation, etc.: Val L.
- Upper watershed hydrology (Susan’s study): Tom S.
- What do we mean by “rural lifestyle”: Cheryl C.
- Things residents can do now to make a difference (low-cost, easy things): Val L.
- WRIA and how our SFNR planning efforts can be leveraged: Theresa S. ★
- Manure Lagoon Management

4. Watershed Conservation Plan

Showed Short video – The Hyporheic Zone: <https://vimeo.com/194274475>

Presentation by Oliver Grah: Introduction to Scope and Context of the Watershed Conservation Plan

In this presentation Oliver shared the context and the primary strategies that will be offered in the Watershed Conservation Plan, which hopefully will be ready for the Watershed Group to review at the end of April. Initial questions and comments included:

Question: When were in-stream flow levels set?

Answer: ~1985

Question: Have they re-evaluated the flow levels due to climate change?

Answer: Oliver has posed that question to the Dept. of Ecology. The current way the state manages water rights assumes a static environment and doesn’t account for climate change. Now is time for the State to start looking at how they manage water rights considering climate change. It will be more expensive to deal with it in the future.

Comment: there has been a huge reduction in salmon returning to the Nooksack River. We are evaluating the condition of watershed and aiming to support recovery of fish, as well maintaining clean water for irrigation

and other needs. The Watershed Conservation Plan will be distributed widely for review by WRIA 1, interest groups, public, etc.

Comment: Thought this was a Watershed Conservation Plan but it seems that Oliver presented a Salmon Recovery Habitat Plan.

Response: The central theme of the Watershed Conservation Plan is on water quality and quantity, and yes, salmon recovery is a priority for the Tribe, and will be reflected in this document. The Conservation plan will have a lot of technical information, and also will discuss the concerns and opportunities that have come out of the Watershed Group. It is important to bear in mind that the Watershed Conservation Plan isn't the end. For example, we know recreation is an issue for this community, but obviously there is a lot more discussion, research, and planning needed on this topic. The Watershed Group might want to seek funding to assess the problem and come up with a summer recreation management plan.

Question: The Tribe had funding and was making this plan and wanted to have a group in the community to get feedback, is that right?

Answer: In original grant documents, it said we wanted a robust public engagement process. We said we wanted to create a plan on behalf of the whole community. We want to include community values, concerns, issues, & opportunities. That's the purpose of this group. The hope is to draft the Conservation plan for review, finalize it, and then have Watershed Group go into the future and if they are interested, to develop a broader Community Watershed Plan. We will continue to support this process to the extent we can, depending on grant funding.

Question: In your presentation you talked about smaller patch cuts being an alternative to clear cuts. There would be a visual advantage. Should also throw "select cut" into the discussion. Need to change government contractual requirements about cutting within a certain period of time. Can we make sure that select cut be part of the conversation?

Answer: Yes. In California, all the cutting is selective. But the argument against it is that clear cuts have less impact on rivers than select cuts. It's because the roads make the biggest impact on the river. With clear cuts you use the road and then restore it when done rather than leaving it open as you do in select cutting. There is a question about whether costs should be born by the public after impacts happen in the future, or by the forest industry acting now to prepare for impacts of future climate change.

Comment: You used 2015 as an example to base models on.

Answer: Purpose of using 2015 is that if you plot a hydrograph for 2015 on top of predictions for 2075, they are remarkably similar. Climate change in the future won't resemble the current average. This is a good water year. We can expect to see these in the future as well. They will occur less frequently but in greater magnitude with much higher than average snowpack and run off. Prediction is that extreme events like 2015 (dry) and 2017 (wet) will be more frequent in the future. Resource management often focuses on extreme events.

Question: Part of the grant you applied for said that one of the criteria is for community outreach. That's the reason we are having these meetings. You said you and staff are writing the plan. Confused about when we are having input. Which plan?

Answer: We are aiming for the draft Watershed Conservation Plan to be released for comment at the end of April, and then having two weeks for review before we meet again. After receiving feedback from the Watershed Group and other stakeholders, we will prepare the final document. Watershed Group will have

input on the Conservation Plan and hope they won't stop there but will use the Plan as a resource to create a Community Watershed Plan and move forward.

Comment: We thought we were going to help develop this plan, not put an addendum in. You want to be able to say that we have had input into the plan.

Answer: The bulk of it will be the technical research on the watershed. It will include input from the Watershed Group and also the public engagement that happened before this group.

Question: Would you insert "A" in front of "Watershed Conservation Plan" recognizing much more work needs to be done?

Answer: We will consider it.

Question: What regulatory impact do you think this plan will have?

Answer: Zero. It's all voluntary. Nobody told us to facilitate this group or do public engagement. We have major problems in our watershed that aren't dealt with by regulations.

Comment: I've learned a lot through this process. Think more people need to learn a lot about it. We are all still sitting around this table. There has been a good effort toward getting input. Thanks to all who have had something to do with it.

Question: Does the plan have to be done before the end of the year?

Answer: There is a strong likelihood the timeline can be extended.

Question: Are you going to refrain from presenting this to any entity (WRIA, County Council) until the Watershed Group has signed off on it?

Answer: No. We will put the plan out for review to anyone who wants to review it. The Watershed Group does not need to "sign off" or endorse the Watershed Conservation Plan, but we definitely want the Watershed Group to review it carefully and give feedback, so that it can be a more useful document for everyone.

5. Finish worksheets, wrap up; confirm/adjust topic for next meeting (10 min)

We talked about having another meeting to discuss the draft plan and share feedback together.

Question: Why would we meet again if it doesn't make a difference if we disagree with the plan? Is the tribe going to say we put this plan together and say we have the backing of the Watershed Group?

Answer: This is not a legislative or controlling group. The group's backing is not required. The idea of endorsement was presented as an option, but it isn't required.

Comment: Think it would be good to meet and to form a body to meet quarterly.

Comment: I don't agree with Oliver's statement that this was a "community driven process."

Answer: By “community driven” I mean that we have a good inventory of issues, concerns, and opportunities identified by the community. The recommendations outlined in the Plan will be voluntary. The Conservation Plan will hopefully be useful for this Watershed Group, and the community at large.

Comment: My perception is that this is a beginning point. In the future there will be a lot of changes (population, water quality, climate). This is a place where we as a community start to discuss that. The more we are involved and educated, the more we can participate in the process as we go on.

Question: Who is willing to come to a 5th meeting to review the plan once it's done?

Answer: Most people raised their hands.

Agreement to have a meeting for two weeks from whenever the Conservation Plan goes out to the group for review, on a Wed. evening.

General agreement that we should also have a community meeting to share the final document, once it is completed.

INPUT WORKSHEET SFNR Watershed Group Meeting 3.29.17

1. WATERSHED GROUP COMMUNITY GOALS and PLANNING PRINCIPLES: What additional questions, comments or suggestions do you have about the document or our process?

- Goals-What about “Ecosystems”? These foals are very focused, we are missing a goal that says we want a healthy, holistic Ecosystem. Social/Economic/Ecosystem
- There was much unclarity on how the community watershed group was interacting with the watershed planning group (plan writers)
- Would have appreciated explanation of process at the outlet-it was a cause of great confusion and middle the conversation from the beginning.
- Bring it on so we can see it-I’m curious to see how much we all appreciate about it.
- The process of creating a “Community Watershed Plan” was poorly conveyed to the members of this group. Endorsement of the actual plan was portrayed as the purpose of these meetings...and it’s not.
- This should have been the first meeting.
- Goals and principals have been too broad or with too many ideas within a goal or principles.
- Break down goals so they are more specific.
- Galen’s comment was right on-there is knowledge here at the table to deal with the issues that have been raised....
- This is a good starting point, bringing us together, it’s our responsibility to continue the work.

2. FEEDBACK ON WATERSHED CONSERVATION PLAN

A. Any comments on the hyporheic zone video?

- ✓ Is this video/link available?
- ✓ Excellent info.
- ✓ It was okay. I did learn something.
- ✓ Informative!
- ✓ Awesome, bacteria rules.
- ✓ Interesting, I didn’t know what the hyporheic zone was.
- ✓ Very informative, more short videos like this would be great-it’s easier to understand.
- ✓ Great
- ✓ Short and informative, that’s helpful.
- ✓ Familiar with the concept!
- ✓ Good video. I learned something.
- ✓ The graphics were great! I learned a lot!

B. What questions or comments do you have about climate change in the South Fork?

- ✓ It’s going to be bad.
- ✓ Sediment? How much or less will the impact be and what can be done to decrease the sediment?
- ✓ What exactly is “water banking” as a strategy to prepare for climate change?

- ✓ I see no real way to build up or possibly even save the fall chinook run until we can maintain a viable snow pack on the Twin Sisters. I honestly don't believe addressing habitat will help at all. Get nets out of the river!!
- ✓ When did Climate not change? How do we have both drier & wetter weather all in the same time period? It's like you have your cake and eat it to.
- ✓ Changes have been observed however modeling is a hard sell.
- ✓ How reliable are models?
- ✓ Effect on geology-if snowpack continues to decline, will likelihood of landslides increase?

C. What questions or feedback would you like to offer on the concepts presented for the Watershed Conservation Plan?

- ✓ Did not get much info.
- ✓ Will you continue getting feedback?
- ✓ Why would we endorse a plan that we had no input in. The purpose of this group has never been properly established. The lack of transparency by the tribe has pushed the community to not support this plan.
- ✓ What are they afraid of?!
- ✓ Appreciate the opportunity for public input.
- ✓ I think that with mention of "The Plan" as a tech document, mention that such a document is helpful as a tool. Such a tool can aid SFNR Watershed Group in receiving additional funds in the future from other agencies. Meaning that such a "plan" could be a prerequisite to obtaining more funds.
- ✓ Yes! Like Val Said. Keep it going! There's a lot more ground to cover. *I do think Oliver's assertion that issues raised need scientific study is a little off point-it seems like ongoing conversation and work by this group could solve a lot of these issues as a community w/o expensive scientific input. Granted on the conservation issue it is very helpful.
- ✓ We need a 30 day review period...not 2 weeks.
- ✓ Awaiting report on findings and opportunity to offer additional input.
- ✓ They conveyed intention of joining the "s. fork watershed group" was very poorly portrayed.
- ✓ I was under the understanding that the watershed group would help or would write a watershed plan. Not have the tribe write the plan. I think the tribe is using the watershed group and will say "we have the watershed backing of the watershed group." I am extremely disappointed with the process and feel like I have been used. I feel the facilitators became pro plan instead of just moving the meeting along.

3. Do you think there should be a community meeting to present the final draft of the Watershed Conservation Plan? Circle one: YES / NO / UNSURE

Total

Yes.....15

No.....0
 Unsure.....2

- ❖ The watershed group should have veto rights on the plan.
- ❖ Maybe more than 1 so everyone gets a chance to view this & comment on this needs more time.
- ❖ There may be neighbors that are interested enough to attend one community meetings that couldn't attend the many planning meetings.

4. What was best about this evening's meeting? What could have been improved?

- I think a 2-week comment period is too short. Can you consider a month?
- Erin does a great job keeping the mtg. moving forward/better attendance.
- The diversity of people at the table is amazing!
- Very productive. A lot of diverse voices heard.
- There was more open discussion. Good!
- Watershed video. I realize we are trying to address H2O quality and quantity to help protect salmon. I think we should also be addressing the take of the depleted stocks. It might be more productive and less costly to restrict the harvest of any of the threatened stocks. This includes sports, non-tribal fisheries and commercial fisheries. The tribes have the hammer to.
- People talking, expressing their angst, appreciation etc.
- When there was no questions.
- More information needed from Oliver Grah.
- The video, more info from Oliver's presentation.
- Too many interruptions.
- Forest practices rules are not well understood!
- I enjoy people coming together for the good of the watershed. Would it be possible to continue this work w/ppl who are interested in the same goal w/o so much opposition? Time wasted over the letter "A".

Other Comments:

Quite often a plan such as the one we are developing together is a prerequisite to apply for future funding.

Why not branch out and create a NON-PROFIT GROUP which will help us gain funding for the projects we are concerned about.

When were the min. instream flows set by state law? Are they regularly updated due to climate change? Hydromodule graph, is this report published anywhere?

What is the tribe going to do w/the conservation plan after it is final? If the Watershed group can simply dissolve, it seems like this plan is basically just a study of the watershed, not necessarily a plan.

Will the tribe apply for future grants based on the "hot topics" indicated in the "plan"?