

SFNR Watershed Group Meeting
Jan. 25, 2017
Meeting Summary

Overview

This was the first meeting of the SFNR Watershed Group. Thirty-five residents and landowner representatives gathered to develop a framework for talking about conservation and restoration efforts in the South Fork, and how the community can be involved in watershed planning. The purpose of this initial meeting (the first of four) was to share why we are gathering together, what participants' hopes are for this process, and to evaluate the summary of the community input gathered far. A summary of the written input (from the worksheets distributed in the meeting) is attached. The meeting was recorded (with permission of the participants) for airing on the local South Fork radio station KAVZ 102.5 LPFM, and will also be available via the sfnooksack.com website.

Participants

Dominic Mocerri, Steve Powers, Elvin Kalsbeek, Kelly DeKriek, Jamie Huson, Jim Abernathy, Matthew Thuney, Harry Patz, LeRoy Harkness, Tom Smith, Bernie Strachila, Brett Boulton, Jerry Peterson, Val Lloyd, Lawson Curtis, John Stevens, Doug Couvelier, Emily Peterson, Amy Margolis, Cindy Fabbri, Bill Baroch, Rand Jack, Gabe Epperson, Charlie Burleigh, Tricia Stevens, Oliver Grah, Galen Smith, Chris Hatch, Dan Cox, Ian Smith, Eric Davis, Jeff Margolis, Theresa Sygitowicz (arrived late), Chris Elder (arrived late), Cheryl Costomiris (arrived late)

Facilitators: Erin Suda & Lesley Rigg

Notetaker: Mardi Solomon

Agenda:

- 1. Welcome, Introductions, and Ground Rules**
- 2. Review of the Community Input to date**
- 3. Wrap up**

1. Welcome, Introductions, and Ground Rules

The facilitators opened the meeting with an overview of the Reason We Are Talking about the Watershed, the Ground Rules, the Process, and our Basic Assumptions.

WHY ARE WE TALKING ABOUT THE WATERSHED?

- We have a water quality problem
- It is predicted to get worse with climate change
- It is important to have enough water for fish, farms, and people – and share it fairly
- It is important for the community to have a voice about our watershed

GROUND RULES:

- Arrive on time and be prepared
- Participate, speak up and share info
- Don't monopolize time
- Raise hand to be recognized to speak
- Respect everyone's ideas
- Avoid disruptions
- Be open to new ideas and thinking
- Avoid repeating
- Try to think win/win
- Be concise and stay on topic

BASIC ASSUMPTIONS:

- It is important that we can openly discuss issues
- Everyone needs to know that their needs will be respected
- Our time is valuable

Participants went around the room and each shared a little bit about themselves and their interest in participating. Each person shared:

- *Name, associations*
- *How long have you lived here/owned property here, and what part of the valley?*
- *What are your hopes for this process?*

2. Review of the Community Input to date

The participants used worksheets to jot down some thoughts, in response to the following questions, and then had discussion in small groups:

- *How well does the Summary (on Page 30) reflect our community's values and goals?*
- *Which specific topics would benefit from further discussion?*
- *Where do you think our community has the biggest differences of opinion?*

Each small group shared with the whole group:

- Key issue is water – There are water rights ag people are threatened to lose. Some think people are abusing water rights. Some are abusing river with litter. Use & abuse of water is something we all have opinions about. There are some solutions. Everyone will have to give up a little for the long-term solutions to work. Hope this group can contribute to calm dialogue about real issues and help one side understand what other side is dealing with.
- The summary was comprehensive, although community-based emergency preparedness wasn't mentioned. Recreation is a topic needing further discussion, including proper access to the river. Differences of opinion exist about water use and sharing water with all the different interests. There are also issues of trust between groups/individuals within the South Fork

community, and some have questions about this process being open enough. There may have been mistakes made, but now everyone is here together and appreciation is due to the people who made this happen. Hope we can build trust and move forward.

- The summary did a good job. In terms of interest groups, would like to include tribes' interests and mineral interests on the list. Important to emphasize the economies of different industries and what they bring to watershed. It would be a useful exercise for group to review existing regulatory requirements that affect development and use in the watershed.
- When specialized terms are used, make sure everyone understands the context in which we're using them. It would be helpful to identify what we're talking about with each term.
- There are many interests represented on the list and all can't be served 100%. Task is to reach compromises. There are sub-communities within the larger community with different interests.
- The summary is missing autos & highways. Tremendous filth comes off roads & cars and goes into ditches (bioswales). Would be good to do something about that like catch basins to filter water before it goes into ditch and then the river. It's poisoning the river. Recreation is a kettle of worms that needs greater attention. So many organizations and the public come into play. When trying to develop jobs, we need compromises. There is a sense of coming late to the table and a need to build trust, but have to be happy that the Watershed Group is here now.
- The summary was comprehensive of goals. The list is long and complicated, and it would be good to narrow it down. Making it more specific would also make it more attainable. Trust and transparency are important. It may be helpful if planning team members could cycle through these meetings.
- Thought that the summary list was comprehensive, but wondering how the list was developed. Who made it up and how will the Watershed Group interact with the Planning Team? The Planning Group people all seem to have an environmental bent, and there are few ordinary landowners included. The impact of railroads was left out. Is there an opportunity to include someone from railroad in the Watershed Group? Trust is the bottom line. Forestry issues and landslide potential are interests. The biggest differences are around land use and resource protections and how these come together.
- Appreciate the summary. Everyone would benefit from public education on many of the areas mentioned in it. Replace "life in the valley" with "sustainability and adaptability" [referring to some specific text within the packet]. What's up with the railroad? Not all flooding is bad. Redefining terms: Need to talk about regulation, over-regulation, de-regulation and find common ground.
- Must address recreational use in the valley as a whole, not just on the river (e.g., new park at Acme). What will stop 4-wheel drives from going through the creek? There are both positive and negative impacts from recreation. Water rights and land use are major questions. Trust – what happens to info this group provides to the Planning Team? What will they do with it? They aren't elected officials, and have no legal right to act on it. There are 35 of us. Are we all spending our time and not getting anything out of it?
- Steep slope logging is a big question. Interested in hearing more about small forest maintenance and preservation. There were doubts expressed about how this group originated and whether our work will have an impact. A participant gave the summary a 4 out of 10. Questions about the origins, goals, and accountability of the group. Where is this info going?

3. Wrap Up

- The facilitators explained that the notes from this meeting will be distributed to all attendees, and posted on the website. There is a longer list of people who have been involved in some way and who want to be informed (300+ people). People who are in the Watershed Group may find those communications repetitive, and can unsubscribe to that bigger list if desired.
- People still have questions about the process. It will be helpful if we don't have to grapple with who we are as a group and what we do at every meeting, so that we can use our time to talk about the issues in our watershed. There is also value in diverse people coming together to find common ground. The facilitator noted - If don't feel engaged by this process, or don't think it is worthwhile, then you don't need to be a part of the Watershed Group. If you think it has value, then please try to come to at least the next three meetings.
- Questions about the Planning Team were raised. The Planning Team was initiated by people with a common interest in watershed restoration, and that the primary objective of the Planning Team has been to create an inclusive process for community engagement in that process. There has been a ton of outreach, and that has led to the creation of this Watershed Group. It was suggested that a representative from agriculture, forestry, and mining also serve on the Planning Team.
- A member of the South Fork Valley Community Assoc. invited everyone to the current film series showing "Sometimes a Great Notion." Next one is "The Breach" about fish. Doing Project Neighborly. All on same page, looking at engagement.

Closing

Participants gave input worksheets to facilitator.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, February 8th, 2017

**SFNR Watershed Group
Meeting 1.25.17**

RESULTS OF THE INPUT WORKSHEETS

- Part 1** **Responses shown by the number of time an issue was raised, related to the first three questions (REVIEWING COMMUNITY INPUT TO DATE)**
- Part 2** **Individual responses, grouped by question**
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PART 1

Responses shown by the number of times an issue was raised, relative to the first three questions (REVIEWING COMMUNITY INPUT TO DATE)

1. How well does the Summary (on Page 30) reflect our community's values and goals? Any changes? Additions?

- 8-Looks Good
- 5 -Railroad and Highway Concerns (water pollution)
- 4-Sustainability/Adaptability
- 4-Build on Community Relationships, Value Input (Relieve Underlying Tension)
- 3-Education through promoting resource management
- 2-Emergency Preparedness
- 2-Tribes Interest & Representation
- 2-ID and Prioritize Goals/Values
- 1-Logging, need to add DNR and Weyerhaeuser to Watershed Group
- 1-Protect Water Rights
- 1-Protect Watershed and Surrounding Properties by increasing regulations
- 1-Resource Protection (Minerals)
- 1-Salmon Harvest is Missing
- 1-Wildlife and the Damage Caused by Wildlife

2. Which specific topics would benefit from further discussion?

- 7-Tubers/Water Recreation
- 5-Regulation/Over-Regulation
- 4-Water Rights
- 3-Water Quality & Quantity
- 3-Forest Land Protection

- 2-Agriculture
- 2-Collaboration of all Parties Except Railroad
- 2-Education
- 2-Flood Management
- 2-Goal Setting and Achievement
- 2-Public Access
- 2-Salmon Protection/Recovery
- 1-Use of Information
- 1-Watershed
- 1-Clearer Definition of Terms

3. Where do you think our community has the biggest differences of opinion?

- 2-Clarity/Purpose of Meeting & Agenda
- 2-Community Common Ground
- 2-Land Management
- 2-Water Management
- 1-Land Trust
- 1-Recreation
- 1-Respecting the Watershed Groups Input

PART 2

Individual responses, grouped by question

REVIEWING COMMUNITY INPUT TO DATE (question 1-3)

1. How well does the Summary (on Page 30) reflect our community's values and goals? Any changes? Additions?

- Looks good
- Great! Looking for win-win solutions
- P. 30 does not seem to take Road and Highway runoff as a matter that impacts water quality. Ditches -> Bio Swale. Catch Basins
- Need to maintain water use practices that protect domestic water supplies from contamination, such as pollution from heavy metals, fecal coliform, etc. -pesticides. Topics that are listed are too broad -too many.
- Ongoing community-based input and management. Build community. ID Long-term and short-term goals. Consider how to support all ecosystem services and consider sustainable futures. Build community capacity. Pollution, transportation/road impacts on river.
- How would you prioritize values?
- How was the list developed very well -Add wildlife and damage from wildlife, Railroad. Broad general topics without specifics what is the interaction between.

- Pretty well but doesn't convey the power of the underlying tensions that ultimately must be addressed.
- Tension, liberty vs. consensus.
- The summary is very well stated, and as a community member I concur on the stated values and goals. –sustainability/adaptability –flooding is not all bad; cleansing, nutrients...
- Very good summary. It is much too long to be practical for achieving real goals. Short and long term.
- Tribes interest. Add bullet items –Maintain and protect mineral resources –promote responsible resource management to provide sustainable future reserves for this community.
- It's a good summary
- Building a framework would best be done by developing a real sense of community and friendship. In the 1950s-1970s residents of the valley knew each other. That hasn't happened for years. Develop a public respect of private lands. Make sure the private water rights are protected.
- Community based emergency preparedness -Road and Railroad impact
- Watershed definition. Don't have it in front of me but it looks good I think.
- ? Is keeping concepts possible or is (Sustainability & adaptation) better-5 and 8 add education as component-9Flooding is not all bad
- Okay, railroad? Road impact (traffic)
- Use best available science -Key players not in this process (DNR & Weyerhaeuser)
- Tribal representation! Mineral
- Sounds good –Emergency preparedness
- Missing “harvest” of salmon,
- Need to address protecting the watershed and surrounding properties by stricter regulations or elimination of STEEP SCOPE LOGGING –Provide educational opportunities for us small forest growers –Steep scope logging practices –Info regarding small forest maintenance

2. Which specific topics would benefit from further discussion?

- Watershed protection, restoration, preservation, clean up
- Tubers-good for local economy, public nuisance, environmentally damaging
- Improving public access for recreation. DNR –Public Works –WDFW Tribes-WCPR and Public
- Water rights! What are they? How do we find the limits of these rights?
- How different parties can work together. Landowners, County, State, RR, Tribe, Forestry, Fishery. No one from the Rail Road!
- Forestry/landslide potential. How will all entities work together? Concern about how decisions will be made. Include forest land owners in this process.
- Flood management, water rights –how much water is needed? Water quality-> what are the current conditions and sources of contamination/impairment –quantified. Accommodating all the differences of opinions.
- Reducing flood risk and increase flood storage measures; -such as areas that are blocked by hwy 9/ BNSF Railway (pg. 25)-there are methods to be employed to assist

water flow and drainage. –River Recreation-Community/public education – overregulation

- How all of this information is going to be used? Recreational use of the river
- How to narrow down to specific actions that achieve specific goals. Written minutes (and more thorough explanation of) what transpired prior to this meeting. Would planning team members all be in attendance to one of these meetings?
- Existing regulatory framework/permitting requirements. Emphasize economies of the different industries in the watershed.
- More than just a framework for dialogue, actually HAVE the dialogue
- Ballets (bullets?) # 4,5,6,7,8,9
- Recreation access as well as management.
- Forestry legal st(?) -options/opportunities available to support practice that exceed legal minimums
- Over regulation-appreciate summary-adding education of the public (could be added in May)-maybe sustainability and adaptability could replace concepts-keeping way of life -Further discussion: not all flooding is bad-flood management. –Concept of regulation/over regulation
- Tubers? (too many, too rude, drunkenness) they must disturb the salmon
- Improve public access and management of public use and land –Protect and maintain the agriculture –Recover salmon population –Water rights
- Water rights and availability
- Use of terms, what is meant by them e.g. watershed planning=salmon recovery?
- Steep slope logging practices –Info regarding small forest maintenance

3. Where do you think our community has the biggest differences of opinion?

- Misunderstanding of meeting, purpose. This is not a secret behind closed doors –not a conspiracy. Decisions will be made with all attendees in mind- because of their vital input, knowledge and needs.
- When we focus only on singular agendas we tend to polarize, -especially the issue of water regulation and usage.
- Land Trust think they need to control and take care of our valley. Not needed
- Recreation
- How each party can find common ground and what will carry more weight.
- Not sure –probably competing land uses and resource protection.
- How to reconcile self-interest and community interest; short time interest and long term interests
- How to manage floods. Economy/jobs. Water quality/quantity.
- Special interest groups vs. community members. –Will this groups’ process and input be valued, respected, considered and utilized effectively.
- Land management. Forestry
- Not sure. We all seem to value similar topics. Gov’t trust
- How resource lands should be managed.
- “My valley” not “our valley”
- Forestry related issues, public access.
- Trust
- Forestry land use-Priorities across the board-Perceived vs. real threats

- Some of us are weary, some curious...1-Do we all think the process has the potential to be valuable, 2-Regulation
- Water use & general views on how land/resources are used
- Regulation-funding-rights
- Between forestry and fish interests sharing water for all uses
- These issues require more time to answer than allowed at the meeting
- Policies are dividing us, we need to unite as a community AND individuals and learn how to communicate freely. We are the “government”

OVERALL FEEDBACK AND QUESTIONS (questions 4-7)

4. What questions or suggestions do you have about the Project?

- When will the original organizers of this process attend these meetings?
- Why doesn't the planning team have any landowner/ industry representatives? These affected parties need ownership and input in this process for it to succeed.
- How was the entire project started and why? Why is the...
- Move to a common ground as soon as reasonable.
- Are we late, right on or ahead? Why is transplanting of such a concern to some? Is there exclusion? What's up w/BNSF
- Seems like a lot of different things to some agreement about. Love the comprehensiveness just concerned it's too much. More than for meeting needed it seems.
- Is it really going to have an impact?
- More information about the overall purpose(s) of grants, process etc. need to be addressed; transparency
- Origins of project add who is it accountable to?

5. What questions or suggestions do you have about the Watershed Group process?

- Who summarizes the comments?
- Permit process to float on river may be Parks Department controlled. Maybe permitted parking
- Who inspired/started this process (individuals were mentioned)? What is the intended use of the document produced from this process?
- Trust= Being herded. Coming late to the table
- Concerning the Nooksack watershed planning team, p. 32= all appear to be people who are working for some form of governmental, tribal, NCO agency – i.e. –Not farmers, loggers, or resident landowners making a living here.
- Will we get contact info (emails) for each other?
- How is our input going to be used?
- How will the group reach consensus on final recommendation?
- Make sure any person or organization who would or could benefit financially from any portion of the project must not be on any committee.
- Explain where the money comes from and share the grant application materials.

- We need stories! Stories about how we each have changes that promote sustainability of lifestyles, livelihood's, environment. There will be some common ground found by that, I bet!
- Give everyone a chance to be heard, limit the time for those who can't stop talking
- Is the information going to be used adequately?
- See 4
- Can we be kept apprised of who our discussions & findings will be reported to and how?

6. What would you like to make sure we prioritize for discussion at our next meeting?

- Availability of conclusions
- River Access –restriction that is
- Answers/solutions to our questions and concerns at next meeting.
- Clarify how results of this process will be used
- Explain the origins of group and what happens with the final report (briefly) then move on to things we can agree on, create steps we can agree on.
- Salmon, water rights, regulation/over regulation
- Find out the reasons this is happening
- Regulation-funding-action
- Steep slope logging –effect of railroads in valley

7. What did you like best about this evening's meeting? How could it have been improved?

- Done well –Great to see such diversity
- 1) The opportunity to meet and engage. 2) No suggestions; first meetings are always lengthy and there are always more questions.
- Well organized and facilitators did a good job keeping discussion on time.
- That it happened, it will take time to open up.
- Good facilitation! Respect was good among the group. Keep up the good work.
- Vibes by 7:45-a calmness did happen, Thank you!
- Seeing a diverse group in this meeting
- The diversity of the group
- Getting to meet new people & hearing other points of view.