



SKAGIT COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

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Skagit Voluntary Stewardship Program Watershed Advisory Group

May 20, 2024, 8:00-10:00 am

Meeting Notes

Watershed Group Members in attendance: Brian Lipscomb, Emmett Wild, Jeff McGowan, Bill Dewey, Shannon Rupert, Terry Sapp, Maggie Taylor

Other attendees: Nathan White (Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group); Kara Rowe (Western WA Agricultural Association), Ryan Gelwicks (Skagit Conservation District); Rebecca Rising, Jenn Johnson, Karen DuBose, Emily Derenne, and Leanne Ingman (Skagit County).

Here is a summary of the outcome.

We successfully reviewed all 13 projects on the agenda - thanks to our project presenters for having thorough descriptions and answers to questions. Due to the time needed for project review, we did little discussion of other items, simply stating that we will review operating procedures in a future meeting, and making note that I would send out a request for a June meeting via email (see below).

After all projects were reviewed, we returned to each to vote. Majority vote moved a project forward. Votes from those who had to leave the meeting at 10:00 (as planned) were collected via email, but these votes did not change the outcome of the decision made in the meeting. All projects, with the exception of the Livestock Pipeline, were approved to move forward at the amount requested. The Livestock Pipeline was approved to move forward at 50% of the requested amount.

Comments expressed:

- The cost of the waste storage facilities was perceived as too high by some. This was also brought up again at voting, with several Watershed Group members making note of this reservation, despite voting "yes." The cost of concrete was cited as a main reason why these projects are expensive.
- Along with the concern about cost of the projects, it was brought up that not all producers would have access to these funds, and if every producer were funded for a project, the cost would be exceedingly high.
- It was brought up that these waste management projects would be helpful in addressing the bacteria issue in the Samish basin, and be a benefit to shellfish producers.
- There was concern that the primary focus of Skagit VSP (protection / enhancement of Habitat Conservation Areas) is not being addressed with the waste management projects, and it was suggested that we could in the future set a percentage of funds aside to be used for specifically riparian projects.

For follow-up:

- Look into whether the agreement with Clear Valley included that they would plant along the riparian corridor
- Determine whether the livestock pipeline can move forward with less funding.