

# South Lynden Watershed Improvement District

## Minutes for: September 11, 2018 Meeting, 3pm – 5pm

Ag Central 204 Hawley Street Lynden, WA 98264

Ed Blok                       Jeff De Jong                       Landon Van Dyk  
 Rod Vande Hoef                       Rolf Haugen

Henry Bierlink                       Meg Harris                       Fred Likkel  
 Frank Corey                       Steve Jilk                       Harold Van Berkum  
 David Haggith                       Dan Noteboom                       Jake De Hoog  
 Paula Harris                       Mark Ewbank                       Sherm Polinder

*x = present*

*o = absent with notice*

*t = teleconference*

### I. 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.

### II. Consent Agenda

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

Rod moved approval of the Consent Agenda, Ed seconded, motion carried unanimously.

### III. 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 30<sup>th</sup> – 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.
- e. Gravel pit study – PUD contract with AESI – Steve noted the work was underway and a draft report was expected by the end of September. The sites the PUD focused on were two sites around Keefe Lake, Lake Terrell, Judson Lake, the Kamm wetlands, and the Everson gravel pits. The Scott wetlands between Hannegan and Bylsma were not in this study but the methods and criteria for evaluation employed here might be applied to that site later.

#### **IV. Drainage/Habitat**

- a. Ditch maintenance
- Thiel Rd at Elder ditch – no action
  - Blok’s project on Guide – Jeff moved to approve the contract between Blok’s Evergreen Dairy and the SLWID once Attachment A (the project description) was fully developed and attached, Rod seconded, motion carried unanimously.
  - Landon suggested we adopt a policy for how agreements between the SLWID and landowners wishing to implement projects under our HPA would be approved. This would alleviate the concern of waiting to move forward until the WID board meets in the fall. A draft policy will be recommended to the Board at the October meeting.

#### **V. Water Quality**

- a. Monitoring Results – David reported May results were good. The exception was the Mead Ave site which had returned to very high levels after 18 months of seemingly being fixed. Ed moved to authorize David to prepare a letter from the SLWID to County Health and Public Works alerting them to our concerns. It will make clear that this is a big concern for farmers. Especially in the Scott but even beyond that. Farmers don’t like taking the blame for water quality problems that are not ours and out of our control. David was advised to cc the WCD and the WSDA. Jeff seconded the motion which passed unanimously.
- b. ZAP unit locations, installation, O & M, reporting – the Bertrand site was installed this summer. Calibrations are still being done.
- c. DNA source tracking project report – Meg reported the state Conservation Commission had awarded the WCD with \$200k to 1) 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.
- d. Portage Bay/Drayton Harbor Shellfish Protection District – Meg noted that the intensive spring marine sampling was pointing towards potential reopening of the beds for the spring

closure period (April – June). There are no assurances from Health yet but the data looks good enough to justify this opening. The Fall closure remains in place.

## **VI. Education/Communications**

- a. Website - [www.southlyndenwid.com](http://www.southlyndenwid.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 about 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

## **VII. Adjournment/Next Meetings**

October 9

Respectfully submitted by Henry Bierlink, Ag Water Board

**Approved by** \_\_\_\_\_