

Laurel Watershed Improvement District

Minutes for: September 10, 2018 Meeting, 10 am – 12:30

Ag Central 204 Hawley Street Lynden, WA 98264

<u> o </u> Leroy Plagerman	<u> o </u> Roger Blok	<u> x </u> Jon Maberry
<u> x </u> Rich Appel	<u> x </u> Mike Boxx	
<u> x </u> Henry Bierlink	<u> x </u> Fred Likkel	<u> x </u> Hank Kastner
<u> x </u> Baldev Sangha	<u> x </u> Meg Harris	<u> x </u> Frank Corey
<u> x </u> Dave Kratzig	<u> x </u> Eric Sundstrom	<u> x </u> Paula Harris
<u> x </u> Chris Elder	<u> x </u> Bob McWhoter	<u> x </u> Mark Ewbank

x = present o = absent with notice t = teleconference

I. Consent Agenda

- a. Review and Approval of June 11 Minutes
- b. Financial Report and payment of bills – *see financial report*
 - Rich moved approval of the June 11 minutes, Jon seconded, motion carried unanimously.
 - Jon moved approval of the Financial Report, Rich seconded, motion carried unanimously.

II. Ag Water Board

- a. AWB/Tribal meetings – Nooksacks have responded positively to the invitation to meet sent in July. No response from Lummis yet. We will plan to conduct these meetings before the end of October.
- b. Foster Task Force pilot program
 - Meeting with Ecology - August 30th – 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.

III. Drainage/Habitat

- a. Ditch maintenance – Ten Mile @ Chasteen Rd – \$3k approved, costs may exceed according to Ted Huizinga. The Ten Mile Group has been asked if they could provide some funds. They will be considering the request shortly. Frank was under the impression that the work window may close by the end of September due to recent rains and fish beginning to migrate upstream. Ted is not able to do the work until mid-October. The landowners were advised to look into options for doing the work themselves or other contractors if they intended to complete the work this year. WID Commissioners are exploring options to help them. Any work should be done with Frank and Joel well aware of the procedures and work done following the plan developed for the project.
- b. Four – Mile project – Fred had talked to the 4-Mile Commissioners who did not feel they needed more \$\$\$ at this time. They are monitoring the grow back of the trees and will do some additional mitigation work as needed.

IV. Water Quality

- a. Monitoring Results – May reports looked pretty good.
- b. Ten Mile Project report – some high samples in the lower ends of Deer and Ten Mile in the summer. Likely associated with septic systems.
- 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.

V. Education/Communications

- a. Website - www.laurelwid.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 – Chris Elder of County Planning explained 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.

VI. FLIP discussion – Paula Harris/Mark Ewbank

- a. House on Ten Mile Road – Fred asked about the potential of the County buying a vacant property that was affected by Ten Mile Creek and an obstacle to maintaining drainage in the area. Paula indicated it was a potential and the board encouraged them to keep pursuing the idea.
- b. 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.
- c. 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.

VII. Adjournment/Next Meetings

October 8

Respectfully submitted by Henry Bierlink, Ag Water Board

Approved by _____