

# Ag Water Board

## Minutes of Meeting December 18, 2019, 1 pm

Ag Water Board office, 204 Hawley Street, Lynden

<u>AWB Board:</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Andy Enfield	<input type="checkbox"/> Marty Maberry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Scott Bedlington
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mike Boxx	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jeff De Jong	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kevin Te Velde
<u>Alternates:</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Vern Vande Garde	<input type="checkbox"/> Terry Lenssen	<input type="checkbox"/> Greg Ebe
	<input type="checkbox"/> Rich Appel	<input type="checkbox"/> Landon Van Dyk	<input type="checkbox"/> Rod Tjoelker
	<input type="checkbox"/> Jon Maberry	<input type="checkbox"/> Brad Rader	<input type="checkbox"/> Keith Boon
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rod Vande Hoef	<input type="checkbox"/> Rolf Haugen	<input type="checkbox"/> Larry Stap
	<input type="checkbox"/> Ed Blok	<input type="checkbox"/> Pete Vlas	<input type="checkbox"/> Harmon Brar
<u>Others:</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fred Likkel	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alan Chapman	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Henry Bierlink
	<input type="checkbox"/> Bill Clarke	<input type="checkbox"/> David Haggith	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Steve Jilk
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gary Stoyka	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meg Harris	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Randy Honcoop
	<input type="checkbox"/> Loren Vander Yacht	<input type="checkbox"/> Nicole Embertson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chris Elder

*x = present                      o = absent with notice                      t = teleconference*

### I. Review & Approve September 18 Minutes

Jeff moved to approve the September minutes and the financial reports, Mike seconded, motion passed unanimously.

### II. Financial/Administrative

- A. Financial Reports – Balance Sheet and PL Budget report were examined. Scott noted that as grants begin to reimburse some of our staff and contractor time we will leave the funds in the AWB account. When planning future annual budgets we are hoping that a healthy surplus in the AWB accounts will lessen the AWB demand on WIDs allowing them to either reduce assessments or make use of more project dollars.
- B. Ecology Grant - \$150k for 2 years expected to be signed before the end of the year.
  - i. Develop Project Lists – surface to ground and augmentation potential sites in the three pilot areas of the Regional Water Supply Plan.
  - ii. Progress toward implementing 2 conversions, 1 augmentation project.

### III. Water Quantity/Supply

- A. Bill Clarke Report
  - i. Nooksack Rule – January 8<sup>th</sup> Public Hearing in Lynden. Some flexibility allowing us to not be hindered by yearround closures, Foster, and other legal and policy hurdles. Bill is providing a letter for the AWB to contribute to the public hearing.
  - ii. Foster pilot meeting – The Task Force will now report to the 2021 Legislature. Bill was not sure the Task Force would just alert the Legislature to the issues or prepare actual fix language for theme to consider.
  - iii. Review of potential adjudication locations – Ecology has hired Robin McPherson who is meeting with stakeholders in the numerous areas being considered for future adjudications. Our opposition to adjudications was reiterated. The groundwork for cooperation that has been laid would be wasted if everyone had to invest in legal representation. Rep. Shewmake was discussed as someone who needs to hear ag voices cautioning support for adjudication.

- B. Regional Water Supply Planning/Drainage Based Management
  - i. Pilots identified - South Fork Nooksack River, Bertrand-Schneider Creek, and Drayton Harbor – first meeting was held Monday. Fred and Henry felt that it was a slow start. Tribal participation was spotty, tension between more planning and prioritizing action items was clear.
  - ii. Data gathering: Identification of data and gaps, plan to fill data gaps, and data synthesis. The group identified issues within each pilot and then listed available data sources relevant to these issues.
  - iii. Water supply solutions: Identification of solutions, pilot projects, and implementation plan. This will hopefully begin in January after summaries of the issues and data sources are distributed. The goal is to have parties suggest tangible projects to address these issues by late January. These ideas will be circulated and expanded leading to potential applications for grants that would fund trying them.
  - iv. AWB agenda – We advanced an idea that follows from the Lummi Settlement Negotiation offer in 2015. Our work group would identify where, when, and how much water is needed for fish in these drainages. We would put the numerous tools that have been developed to use to provide the needed water, PROVIDED, that ag gets its issues addressed as well. Water supply, quality, drainage, and flood management need to be provided so we have a clear path to a sustainable future here.
  - v. South Fork – representation of the farmers in the South Fork valley remains a concern. Members of the Water Supply committee will meet with farmers in the valley in January to outline their options and get their feedback. Joining an existing WID seems to be the most efficient option.
- C. County water conservation projects
  - i. WCD – voluntary agricultural water use efficiency program is just getting under way.
  - ii. RH2 to prepare a report regarding the possibility of setting up a water bank/exchange, or using Ecology’s Trust Water Rights Program, to address agriculture’s concerns about relinquishment of water rights that could result from implementing water efficiency measures. The report is about to be provided in early January.
- D. Streamflow Restoration Grant – applications due in March - funds for creating “net ecological benefit” – emphasis on streamflows – we intend to apply to complete more conversions and augmentation projects that are identified in the DBM discussions. The County is gathering potential applicants for these funds.
- E. Drought Response Plan – adopted by the Bureau of Reclamation – a grant opportunity for more funding of water banks, transfers, etc. Henry explained that we occasionally are criticized for chasing money. We don’t go after grant dollars just to perpetuate current staffing but to take away hurdles delaying actions. We often find both laws and lack of funding as the excuses for inaction. Grants help address some of these concerns.

#### IV. Water Quality/Drainage

- A. Letters to farmers re high fall fecal counts – Fred noted the rains came early this year making the educational efforts by the WIDs, WCD, and County a bit late. Meg alerted the board to more resources to track water quality data. Signing up for the PIC (Pollution Identification and Correction) [newsletter](#) is encouraged.

- B. DNA – Fred updated the board on the status of the DNA work. A meeting with Kent Oostra will occur in early 2020 to better understand what next steps the WIDs could take to move this along towards making it a tool we could have confidence in.
- C. Drainage projects – Fred called attention to two projects in the Sumas WID – Pangborn Ditch and the area south of the Jones Rd. gas plant. Both were partnerships between the WID, DID, and landowners.
- D. Update on Floodplains by Design discussions and potential projects – Reach 2 (Ferndale to Guide Bridge) is the focus in early 2020. Fred is helping to organize a tour of potential Fish, Farms, and Flood projects. \$600k is available. There is also support for AWB and landowner involvement in this process. \$25k is also available for WFF to prepare videos calling attention to the successes of this program.

V. Communication/Education

- A. Media Relations report – Fred distributed a report outlining the activities of both WFF and Save Family Farmers.
- B. REAL campaign – several videos have been developed with lots of great feedback. Dillon is unveiling a weekly podcast promoting accurate ag information. [RealFoodRealPeople.org](http://RealFoodRealPeople.org)
- C. January Newsletter – WID reports are ready. Gerald will work with Scott on a President’s Message.

VI. New Business

- A. Fred called attention to the leadership Scott has provided as the AWB President over the past years. The Board concurred that he has provided needed and consisted service. Thanks Scott!

VII. Adjournment - Next Meeting – March 18

Respectfully submitted by Henry Bierlink, Ag Water Board

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