

Ag Water Board

Minutes of Board Meeting June 19, 2019, 1 pm

Ag Water Board office, 204 Hawley Street, Lynden

<u>AWB Board:</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Andy Enfield	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Marty Maberry	<input type="checkbox"/> Scott Bedlington
	<input type="checkbox"/> Mike Boxx	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jeff De Jong	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kevin Te Velde
<u>Alternates:</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> Vern Vande Garde	<input type="checkbox"/> Terry Lenssen	<input checked="" 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 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"/> Cal Bratt	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Henry Bierlink
	<input type="checkbox"/> t Bill Clarke	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> David Haggith	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Steve Jilk
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gary Stoyka	<input type="checkbox"/> Paula Harris	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dillon Honcoop
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Loren Vander Yacht	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Heather Good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nicole Embertson
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tom Perkow	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chris Elder	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alan Chapman
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mike Murphy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Carol Frazey	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aneka Sweeney

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

Marty chaired the meeting in Scott's absence.

- I. Review & Approve March 20 Minutes – Jeff moved approval, Kevin seconded, motion carried unanimously.
- II. Financial/Administrative – Henry reviewed the Balance Sheet and Profit and Loss/Budget reports in Rod's absence. We are building a Legal Fund balance as directed by the board. Henry invited questions on any of the items. Reports were received for information.
- III. Water Quantity/Supply
 - A. County proposal for water conservation – Heather Good presented two proposals developed by the County in response to the feedback on water efficiency she received at our March meeting.
 - i. Agricultural Water Conservation and Relinquishment Prevention – developed by RH2 – looking at exploring potential means of promoting agricultural water conservation and minimizing the risk of relinquishment of the water rights associated with water savings that result from the increased efficiency of water use.
 - ii. Development of an Agricultural Water Use Efficiencies and Conservation Program – provided by the Whatcom Conservation District - explore the current state of agricultural water use efficiencies with farmers and partners, identify information and technology gaps, catalog current funding sources and organizations, outline and conduct focused outreach and education events, and provide a framework for a long-term, comprehensive program. Nicole outlined the program and responded to questions.

Heather and Gary invited comments on each of the proposals. They hope to get them implemented in the next few weeks.

B. Bill Clarke Report

- i. Nooksack Rule – amending the Nooksack Rule – see comments on the proposed rule @ <http://ws.ecology.commentinput.com/comment/extra?start=301&id=GFRjc> Bill noted Ecology plans to issue the formal draft in the fall and that they implied that our suggested changes would be addressed. Once the proposal is out it would be helpful to build support with other water users in the Nooksack.
- ii. Areas for water right adjudications – Bill reported the Legislature provided Ecology with \$500k to explore future candidates for water right adjudications. That report is due to the 2021 Legislature which may decide to fund new adjudications. Ecology is working off a long list of requests and they anticipate more soon. The Nooksack Tribal request was filed last month. Bill reiterated that Nooksack would not be a good candidate because there is a lot already happening that would be hindered by an adjudication and there are some questions surrounding tribal rights that would complicate an adjudication.
- iii. Potential 2020 legislative agenda – likely won't have a report from the Foster Task Force so there aren't many projects that we'd advance that wouldn't be hindered by Foster. Bill mentioned an example of mitigation sequencing on the Lewis River in 2007. This allowed for habitat offsets. We should also rely on the Drainage Based Management process to ferret out examples of "net ecological benefit" that we could advance in future legislative sessions.

C. Watershed Management Board and Planning Unit update

- i. Water Management Board
 1. Water Supply Plan – facilitated by PUD – Steve ran a draft scope of work by the Management Team recently. Tribal response was concern over the criteria used to select the pilot areas and their lack of staff time to commit to moving forward in the pilots. It will be reconsidered in July.
 2. Drainage Based Management process to build Water Supply Plan basin by basin – Henry noted that we envision drainage based management as the process that will be used to develop the Water Supply Plan. The pilots being considered in both the WSP and DBM have been Drayton and Bertrand.
 3. Drayton and Bertrand as pilots – hopefully initiated in September. Henry asked the board how firm we might be on these two pilots. There is work already initiated in Drayton with the BBWS Deep Aquifer project and the PUD's augmentation project on California Creek. Bertrand has been actively developing water management tools and has more data than most areas. But there is not a pressing concern from the Bertrand WID. Should we be open to allowing the tribes to inserting selection criteria for the pilots that might point us in another direction? Likely an area with more River focus. The board was open to whatever might be necessary to get the Water Supply pilots moving.

- ii. Planning Unit
 - 1. updating Management Plan and the structure diagram indicating the role for the Planning Unit in water management implementation.
 - 2. self-education opportunities – making a list of speakers and topics to provide PU members more context of the issues surrounding water management. Steve will be presenting the Drought Recovery Plan later this month.
 - iii. Water Weeks Forum – Henry outlined the purpose and tentative agenda for an evening educational opportunity during Water Weeks in late September. Kevin moved to have AWB help to sponsor this event, Jeff seconded, motion carried unanimously.
- D. Streamflow Restoration Grant application – waiting for contracts for higher rated projects to be completed in July, expecting some funding for fall. Henry asked the board to prioritize how we might use these funds. Paying for needed involvement in meaningful water supply planning was mentioned.
 - E. Drought declaration – grant opportunity that may mesh well with the Agricultural Water Conservation and Relinquishment Prevention project that RH2 has developed. <https://ecology.wa.gov/About-us/How-we-operate/Grants-loans/Find-a-grant-or-loan/Drought-emergency-grants-2019>

IV. Water Quality/Drainage

- A. Letters to farmers re high fall fecal counts – Fred anticipates each WID should be sending these letters in early fall.
- B. Drainage projects – County and WDFW met with all WIDs about projects, most issues along county roads are in much better shape.
- C. Update on Floodplains by Design discussions and potential projects - Fred outlined the status of the proposed flood mgt project on ag lands. It is funded for \$500k and we proposed several areas on the River to consider. However, we have also made it clear that farmer participation is on a two-way street. We will give but we also need to have our needs addressed. These are primarily in sediment management and water rights.
 - i. Sediment management looked to be advancing with a bill reaching the governor that would foster a discussion over sediment management. But this was line item vetoed.
 - ii. Water rights discussions have been in neutral for months even though the drainage based management task in the Water Management’s 5-year workplan had this process planned to be underway last fall.

Fred canceled a planned tour of projects set for May 31st because of these setbacks. That led to a meeting with Paula and the Nooksacks which began to renew our partnership with them on these matters.

V. Communication/Education

- A. Media Relations report – Fred provided an overview of work in several areas:

Labor

On Labor Issues, we continuing to fight battles on two fronts. Fortunately, both those fronts are occurring in Eastern Washington. We believe this move is in part because of our public efforts here to point out the untruths spoken by our local activists. First, Community 2

Community has moved their protests efforts to a farm in Eastern Washington. Many of the same tactics used over her are being used there. Second, United Farm Workers is also been filing lawsuits against dairies in Eastern Washington over supposed labor violations. On both of these issues we are coordinating with the Eastern Washington Family Farmers affiliate.

Dairy Litigation Prevention

We continue to have discussions with EPA over their fraudulent nitrate study conducted in 2013 that has caused so much trouble for the dairy industry. We have moved this battle to the national level and are currently in discussions with national EPA headquarters as well as state legislators on this issue. The local region 10 leadership has been delaying the needed action, so we have been forced to make this move. We are getting sympathetic hearings on this, and will be planning a major media push on this soon.

Portage Bay and water quality

The Portage Bay Partnership continues to give us great opportunities to show the public how engaged farmers are even three years later. Recently the head of the Northwest Indians Fisheries Commission on local TV held up the PBP as a model for others to use. Water Quality also continues to improve in Portage and Drayton, and we will be continuing to note that when possible. We will also be reminding our farmers this fall that we still need more improvements in October-December.

Orca and salmon recovery

We are continuing to monitor this and engage where possible. Activists are using this as a hammer to get through pet projects that will provide little, if any help for the salmon.

Upcoming

- Skagit mandatory buffer effort through Puget Sound Partnership--will likely engage
- Continuing push in EWFF dairy pollution issues, septic, GWMA plans
- Continued efforts to support the EWFF movement. Starting to get strong support for our efforts. WE just hired a staff person!

B. AWB newsletter – due out later this month

C. Social Media - This includes our website and social media channels. Between Whatcom, Skagit, Yakima Family Farmers and Save Family Farming we manage 6 websites and 10 social media channels including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube. In the past year there were over 350,000 views on our web pages and over 65 million impressions of our social media posts, thanks to our number of social media followers increasing nearly six-fold. We produce and publish about 20-30 videos per year which greatly helps our social media reach. This outreach is the most important part of our public communication and is remarkably cost effective. As a relatively small number of farmers are active users of digital channels, we want to make sure all supporters understand our impact is closely related to effective use of these channels.

VI. Adjournment - Next Meeting – September 18

Respectfully submitted by Henry Bierlink, Ag Water Board

Approved by _____