

# Salmon Recovery Funding Board

## Individual Comment Form



<b>Lead Entity:</b>	Skagit Watershed Council
<b>Project Number:</b>	15-1174
<b>Project Name:</b>	Goodell Creek Restoration Feasibility
<b>Project Sponsor:</b>	Upper Skagit Tribe
<b>Grant Manager:</b>	Marc Duboiski

	Date	Status <sup>1</sup>
Post-Application	7/14/15	POC
Final	11/4/15	Conditioned

### PROJECT SUMMARY *(for Review Panel reference only)*

This feasibility study would develop a plan to improve salmonid habitat conditions on Goodell Creek alluvial fan, which has been confined and straightened by levees and isolated from its floodplain. A variety of actively used infrastructure now exists in the floodplain. Restoration of the alluvial fan would restore natural process by removing levees and constructing at least one new channel and bridge for State Road 20, while balancing the need to protect certain infrastructure. The result would be improved channel form, riparian engagement and floodplain reconnection, which would benefit Chinook, Steelhead and other salmonids.

\*\*\*The project was rescoped to be a feasibility study to identify approaches to restoration of the lower section of Goodell Creek.

### FINAL REVIEW PANEL COMMENTS

**Date:** 11/4/15

**Final Project Status:** Conditioned

**Review Panel Member(s):** Full Panel Review

- 1. If the project is a POC, please identify the SRFB criteria used to determine the status of the project:**
- 2. If the project is Conditioned, the following language will be added to the project agreement:**

The Panel recognizes the efforts of the project sponsor to be responsive to the information requests, as well as to gather supporting evidence with respect to multiple partner support for the project concept. The project is conditioned with the following requirements:

1. The feasibility study will include specific details on the results of the investigation into the potential for Federal Highway grant funding.
2. The feasibility study will include collection of current information about fish use/presence/distribution in Goodell Creek to further inform the potential fish benefit of this project. This information will include data on juvenile and adult life stages.
3. The feasibility study will include specific information on the full costs of project approaches through implementation so that cost/benefit evaluations can be made.

- 3. Other comments:**

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<sup>1</sup> CLEAR: Cleared to proceed; CONDITIONED: Cleared to proceed with a condition; NMI: Needs More Information; POC: Project of Concern; NOTEWORTHY: Exemplary Project

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## POST-APPLICATION REVIEW PANEL COMMENTS

Date: July 14, 2015

Project Status: POC

Review Panel Member(s): Full Review Panel

**1. If the project is a POC, identify the SRFB criteria used to determine the status of the project:**

The SRFB criteria used to determine the status of the project were:

#3. The project is dependent on other key conditions or processes being addressed first.

#9. It is unlikely that the project will achieve its stated goals and objectives.

#17. There are significant constraints to the implementation of the projects following the completion of the planning project.

Successful restoration of natural fluvial process on the Goodall Creek alluvial fan will require significant alterations to Highway 20, the NPS group camp site and probably SCL's electrical transmission line. The revised proposal honestly acknowledges that currently there is no "leverage" for implementing these actions, but that the objective of the proposed feasibility study is to provide useful data and analysis in the event that future circumstances might change. The thoughtful response to the preapplication comments admits that at best, "a ... restoration plan would allow maintenance and mitigation planners to better respond to an avulsion event."

Without any commitment by NPS, SCL or WSDOT to fund and carryout the necessary (and expensive) mitigation of the constraints of their respective infrastructure, there is no certainty that the proposed feasibility study will ever lead to actual implementation of the envisioned restoration work.

**2. If the project is a POC, identify the changes that would make this a technically sound project:**

**3. If the project is Conditioned, the following language will be added to the project agreement:**

**4. General comments:**



### SPONSOR RESPONSE INSTRUCTIONS:

If your project is not cleared (i.e. has a status of NMI, Conditioned, or POC) you must update your proposal, PRISM questions, or attachments as necessary to address the review panel's comments. Use track changes when updating your proposal. Fill out the section at the end of your project proposal to document how you responded to comments.

## DRAFT APPLICATION / SITE VISIT REVIEW PANEL COMMENTS

Date: 4/28/15

Project Site Visit?

Yes  No

Review Panel Member(s): Slocum and O'Neal

**1. Recommended improvements to make this a technically sound project according to the SRFB's criteria.**

The Review Panel identified concerns about this project regarding the certainty of its success based on critical uncertainties that could affect project implementation and effectiveness. Major questions need to be resolved regarding the design and funding approach for the crossings under the highway (cost of two bridges), potential for sediment transport issues connected to the landslide upstream, and the use of the area by fish species. The instability of the upstream landslide debris, which will probably be moving through the site over the next several decades, makes the sustainability of any engineering fix doubtful. Additionally, lack of current financial support from WSDOT indicates that the cost to benefit ratio for the SRFB may not be realized for this project. The fact that the existing SR 20 bridge isn't on WSDOT's chronic deficiency list makes WSDOT's motivation to engage in this

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project (let alone help pay for it) doubtful. It seems that the primary benefit of the proposed alternative is to provide a fix for potential migration/avulsion through the Goodell Creek campground. These questions will need to be addressed in more detail before moving into the preliminary design phase of the project.

There are additional concerns about the proposed approach to focus the flow into a secondary channel with respect to limitation of natural processes in floodplain development. The Review Panel has concerns that confinement of that channel may be necessary to ensure that the crossing under Highway 20 remains functional. Additional confinement of that channel as part of the current design seems inconsistent with restoration of natural processes.

Information on the expected type and amounts of habitat to be gained from the project would help with the understanding of benefits to salmon. The documentation of expected fish benefit from this project, as proposed, was unclear at this stage; although bull trout use has been documented as has Chinook juvenile use (as of 2009) upstream of the landslide. Steelhead were not documented in previous surveys.

An option to re-scope the project may be to focus initial efforts on doing a smaller-scale, discrete project to improve the connectivity of the wetland on the left bank. The benefits and certainty of the rest of the proposed design is just too speculative at this point to invest a lot of SRFB funding into based on the evidence presented for fish benefit, the potential risk of impact from the landslide upstream, and the potential cost for replacement of bridges on Highway 20.

### 2. Missing Pre-application information.

### 3. General Comments:

The review panel appreciated the effort of the project sponsor in bringing this project forward based on the updated information about the importance of tributary habitat to steelhead and Chinook in the Skagit basin. We also recognize the efforts to date on the part of the sponsor to bring interested parties together and gather information about the project. It will be interesting to evaluate the eventual fish benefit of the Illabot Creek road crossing project to see if the high cost of this kind of project is worth it.

### Staff Comments:



### SPONSOR RESPONSE INSTRUCTIONS:

Revise your project proposals using “track changes” and update any relevant PRISM questions and attachments. Fill out the section at the end of your project proposal to document how you responded to comments.