

UPPER COLUMBIA SALMON RECOVERY BOARD
DRAFT MEETING (Webinar) SUMMARY
December 10, 2020

Board Members Present:

Chair, Chelan County: Doug England; **Vice-Chair, Douglas County:** Marc Straub; **Okanogan County:** Andy Hover; **Yakama Nation:** Shannon Adams; **Colville Confederated Tribes:** Chuck Brushwood

Staff Present: Melody Kreimes, Sarah Walker, Greer Maier, Pete Teigen, Caitlin Vanderpool, Ryan Niemeyer, Nicole Jordan, Alicia Meier

Others Present: **Ruckelshaus Center:** Molly Stenovec, Phyllis Schilman, Chris Page, Maggie Counihan; **Methow Restoration Council:** John Crandall; **U.S. House of Representatives 8th District:** Representative Kim Schrier, Kelli Scott, Jennifer Cash; **Bureau of Reclamation:** Steve Kolk; **Chelan County:** Bob Bugert,

The virtual meeting was called to order at 9:08 AM by Vice Chair Marc Straub as Chair Doug England was running a few minutes late and asked for the meeting to be started without him.

Welcome and Introductions

Vice Chair Straub welcomed everyone to the meeting and did a roll call on who was present via telephone and webinar.

1. Regular Business

Vice Chair Straub asked for comments or revisions to the September 24, 2020 UCSRB meeting summary. No comments or revisions were offered, and the minutes were approved.

Chuck Brushwood made a motion to approve the September 24, 2020 UCSRB meeting summary. Commissioner Andy Hover seconded the motion and all approved.

2. Ruckelshaus Center Regional Evaluation of Process for Salmon Recovery Plan Implementation

Molly Stenovec introduced herself and the Ruckelshaus Center team (Phyllis, Chris and Maggie) on the webinar that would be asking the full Board questions as a follow up to each Board members individual interview. Molly gave a brief update on the status of the number of individual interviews completed to date (40) out of 50. Interviews will continue through early or mid January. The Ruckelshaus team is conducting interviews with Board members, Implementation Team, Regional Technical Team, Watershed Action Team, Citizens Advisory Committee members, funders, and sponsors. The full Board was asked the following questions:

- What is your ideal vision of the role and functions of the directors?
- Region has made significant progress on the smaller/easier projects now projects are becoming more complex, multi-year projects and expensive. Do you feel the organization is nimble enough and structured appropriately to handle these larger issues? Do you feel the structure you have now will allow that level of integration?
- Anything you would change about the structure of the board?

3. Lead Entity Updates

Pete Teigen gave an update on the position open on the Chelan County Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC). The Committee is made up of 7 community members and it has been experiencing turnover lately due to long standing members stepping down. Two CAC nominations Leah Hemberry and Pierre

Dawson were presented to the Chelan County Commissioners at their November 2, 2020 hearing and both were approved with Leah Hemberry being the first choice and Pierre Dawson as a backup in the case Leah is unable to fill the position.

Andy Hover made a motion to approve the Chelan County CAC nominations, Leah Hemberry as the first choice and Pierre Dawson as the second choice. Marc Straub seconded the motion and all approved.

Pete then gave a brief update on changes to the SRFB Monitoring Funding for 2021. Changes include: removing the 10% cap and instead setting aside \$300,000 to be divided across all regions and RCO aligned the monitoring schedule with other project types (restoration, protection, assessment). Once manual 18 comes out modification to the regional process may be needed. However, these changes will not affect our selection process. Melody noted that the Region of Councils has been communicating this collaboratively since the money can be shared to other organizations from other regions.

4. 2019 Implementation Schedule and Annual Report

Greer Maier gave an overview why UCSRB prepares the Implementation Schedule, annual tracking and reporting. The schedule and report allows UCSRB to report on how money spent in the region results in progress toward recovery for NOAA, partners, and funders. UCSRB produces a report and Implementation Schedule each fall with input from the Watershed Action Teams (WAT) to develop an implementation schedule to make sure information is accurate and up to date. Projects are tracked through the Salmon Recover Portal (SRP) by RCO, partners, and sponsors for all projects touching salmon regardless of funding source are tracked in this database.

Some of the highlights from the 2019 Annual Report are:

- Spring Chinook lowest return since 1999 with 445 natural origin.
- Steelhead one of the lowest returns on record 439 natural origin.
- Snow and Flow snowpack in 2018/2019 was lower than average. Stream flows were lower and flow timing occurred earlier in the year.
- Ocean conditions for 2019 were average to below average.
- Harvest, fisheries continued to be restricted due to low abundances of Columbia River salmon and steelhead.
- Hydropower survival rates based on PIT tagged hatchery-origin spring Chinook estimated survival from release sites in the Upper Columbia to Bonneville Dal to be in the range of 40% and PIT-tagged hatchery steelhead in the range of 20%.
- Hatcheries in the Upper Columbia released a total of 832,902 steelhead smolts.
- Partners completed 18 projects across all four major subbasins for a total budget of \$7.9M. Of these projects 12 were restoration, 3 protection, 2 design and 1 monitoring. Since 1998 there have been 510 projects completed in the region.
- In 2019 there have been 93 acres of habitat protected, 4.3 miles of stream treatment, 12 barriers removed, 41 miles opened, 0.55 miles of new side channel, and 7.1 acres of floodplain reconnected.
- Look at implementation through species: recommendations to how many projects are benefiting spring chinook. Still look at implementing projects that target spring Chinook.
- Close to 80% of projects were prioritized as high or moderate in the Biological Strategy.

Marc Straub made a motion to approve the 2020 Implementation Schedule and Submittal to NOAA. Andy Hover seconded the motion and all approved.

Chuck Brushwood made a motion to approve the 2019 Annual Report. Shannon Adams seconded the motion and all approved.

5. Discussion with US Representative Schrier

Representative Kim Schrier joined us to talk about the collaborative work the UCSRB has been doing successfully and wanting to support the work we are doing in salmon habitat recovery. Rep. Schrier discussed key legislation that she is advocating for that focuses on salmon and steelhead, aquatic ecosystem restoration, passage and critical habitats: the value of the Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery Fund to Upper Columbia and continues to advocate for funding.

- Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery Fund
- Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) work with Rick Larsen on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
- Legacy Road and Trails program work on decommission a backlog of Forest Service roads
- Introduced the *Repairing Existing Public Land by Adding Necessary Trees Act* or the Replant Act.
- Support for the *Great American Outdoors Act* (GAOA) ensures funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Follow up: Potential opportunity to meet with Rep. Schrier and other delegates if we are unable to travel to Washington D.C this coming year to discuss in more detail key legislation to help UCSRB with our work.

6. RTT Prioritization & Regional Implementation

John Crandall and Greer reviewed the process on the recently RTT approved Prioritization results. The objective is to provide a consistent, repeatable, systematic, and well-documented approach for prioritizing restoration and protection actions and locations for restoration and protection. Looking to get the most affective use of funding with the greatest biological benefit for recovery. They have come a long way in 10 years and the lessons learned are:

- Scale matters (subwatershed may be too large)
- Ecological concerns are general
- Species specific needs are important
- Limiting factors and life stages are important
- Feasibility has to be considered

Step 1 (HUC 12 Prioritization) is complete. This step scored and ranked each HUC 12 by species for restoration and protection. These are identified as “Tier 1” watersheds.

Step 2 (Reach Prioritization). Step 2 brings in information from different Reach Assessments (RA’s), level II surveys, and other data (from NorWeST, CHaMP, and DOE – water quality and flow) specific to the reaches. This is a multi-phase step that steps down from the HUC 12 to prioritize life stages, by looking at habitat quality, limiting factors, barriers, and actions to address those factors. Next steps are working on bull trout and Okanogan steelhead protection, compile updated data, Update tool and review/adopt revised outputs, and finally adaptive management. Prioritization results are summarized in spreadsheets, maps, and future prioritization portal. The results from Step 2 has given us a database of 1,780 unique actions in 167 reaches by subbasin, species, action category, and location.

Greer then discussed the status of the Data Portal that BPA funded to access information and data of prioritized actions within specific areas. Partners and sponsors can look at each priority watershed for projects and see habitats, life stages, and reaches.

7. UCSRB Integrated Recovery Approach

Melody reviewed the Integrated Recovery Approach and that now all the All-H background summaries have been completed the Board can identify issues that they might like to weigh in on as priorities or to give staff direction to have meaningful discussions with organizations or sponsors. Board members discussed:

- Look for commonalities of Board members and prioritize those.
- Pick the projects we can make progress on and build upon some success to take on more complex issues.
- Important to have it be manageable and have a strategy in place.
- Potential items:
 - Hatchery-habitat opportunities/Challenges (e.g. spawning near acclimation sites).
 - Take and inventory on acclimation sites and see if they are not being used and why? Be financially clear on why some did not work.
 - Habitat Topics: Alluvial storage to increase late summer instream flows.
 - Hatchery: Use of hatcheries in preventing extinction of UC spring Chinook.
 - Through some work with partners their may be some smaller projects within some of these big ideas.

Key Partners Best Forums in Which to Engage Them in Future Discussions

- Board members may have to step in to get buy in from organization or to start the conversation.
- How we get to the next step: talking to partners to determine what could work as future focus.
- Staff to talk with Board members

Action Item: Staff will make a list of recommended initiatives that would be most feasible and have the most buy in from partners. Ideas on the who, what and how.

8. Finance & Operations

Melody gave an update on the November 18, 2020 Finance Committee (FC) made up of Chuck Brushwood, Andy Hover and Melody. The Board suggested at the September Board meeting that it would like the FC to meet quarterly to review the budget. The FC looked at the Budget to Actuals and discussed unexpended expenses and possible ways to reallocate unspent dollars. The FC recommended sending the RCO swept projections with a list of potential projects to reallocate unspent dollars to the full Board at its December 10th meeting for further discussion.

Caitlin Vanderpool outlined the financial reports. Key points are the Budget to Actual show our outreach contracts an partner contracts are underspent and we are communicating with them on what is remaining, travel costs are under budget, vehicle lease and insurance is under budget as we returned a vehicle early, indirect expenses are low as we are working from home. Our total budget is at 28% expended for the year. Next Caitlin reviewed the Income & Expense report for our grants:

- Department of Ecology (OCR) grant is 34% expended and 67% completed. Contract period is from 10/1/2019 to 9/30/2021.
- Bonneville Environmental Fund (BEF) grant is 31% expended and 60% completed. Contract period is from 9/1/2019 to 9/30/2021.
- NCWFHC DNR grant is 51% expended and 60% completed. Contract period is from 3/1/2020 to 6/30/2021.
- Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO)
 - RCO Lead Entity outreach contract underspent. The grant is 46% expended and 71% completed. Contract period is from 9/1/2020 to 6/30/2020
 - RCO Admin grant is 54% expended and 71% complete. Contract period is from 9/1/2020 to 6/30/2021.
 - Funds may be reallocated
- Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) grant received additional funding for Step 2 Prioritization. The grant is 63% expended and 73% completed. Contract period is from 12/1/2019 to 11/30/2020.
- Yakama Nation (YN) grant is on track to receiving final invoice on the contract. It is 88% expended and 92% completed. Contract period is from 12/1/2019 to 11/30/2020.

Caitlin presented a Board budget with items that we do not have contracts for that could potentially be reallocated totaling approximately \$43,270:

- Insurance for vehicle return, cleaning maintenance, Washington D.C trip, vehicle lease, and meeting expenses.
- Board members were in agreement that the Washington D.C. trip should be cancelled.
- Melody provided a list of funding needs if eligible revenue is reallocated:
 - Snow2Flow build out for shapefile interface (makes it easier for OWNF to use S2F) - \$21,700.
 - Accounting consultation/outsourcing - \$1,500
 - 3Sherpas, integrating featured project portion on our website - \$1,000
 - Support for project sponsors to obtain drone footage for virtual site tours
 - Any smallish reach assessments/level 2 surveys
 - Work with Aspect Consulting for Floodplain project
 - Steering Committee and Outreach chairs establish reservoir of seed funding that outreach work group could draw from (webinars, video, etc.) - \$1,000 - \$2,000
 - All-H outreach needs depending on outcomes of 12/10/20 Board discussion
 - Implementation of any Ruckelshaus Center findings from regional evaluation

Andy Hover made a motion to approve a budget reallocation of \$24,200 to Snow2Flow, accounting consultation, and 3Sherpas. The remaining \$19,070 will be discussed with partners for additional projects then revisited at the February 25, 2021 Board meeting. Marc Straub seconded the motion and all approved.

Alicia Meier gave an update on Contract Updates and Approvals by Executive Committee

- AyrWav Audio: This is the consultant contract for our podcast series - River's Reach, the contract was amended from \$700 to \$2,000.
- Confluence Environmental Company: This consultant contract is for EDT data products and support in prioritization. This is a no-cost extension from October 31, 2020 to March 31, 2021.

- BPA Cooperative Agreement: This is the FY2021 income contract in the amount of \$135,935 with a performance period of 12/1/2020 to 11/30/2021. Funds WAT, MRC, IT, and RTT, updating UCSRB-BPA programmatic project solicitation process and work on action prioritization tool.
- Lead Entity Partner Outreach Contracts: are funded from the RCO income contract with a contract period through June 2021. Note that the CCNRD, OCD, CF, and Okanogan Land Trust are FY20 contracts that were extended to 6/30/21 due to COVID. Instead of having 2 contracts with these partners we combined the FY20 contract by rolling it over into the FY21 contract and having a new not to exceed total.
 - Chelan County Natural Resource Department (CCNRD) - adding \$32,500 for FY21 to the unspent rolled over FY20 contract. The new not to exceed total for CCNRD is \$62,058 for.
 - Okanogan Conservation District (OCD) - adding \$5,000 new outreach tasks in Okanogan County for FY21 to the unspent rolled over FY20 contract. The new not to exceed total is \$14,080.
 - Cascade Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group (CF) - adding \$15,490 for Okanogan and Chelan County outreach for FY21 to the unspent rolled over FY20 contract. For a new not to exceed total of \$25,470.
 - Okanogan Land Trust - No additional FY21 tasks. This is a no cost extension to June 30, 2021. Unspent budget rolled over from FY20 contract of \$8,438.
 - Trout Unlimited (TU) - Contract is for \$13,110. This is for the coordination of outreach and community engagement in Okanogan and Chelan County.
 - Methow Salmon Recovery Foundation (MSRF) - new contract for \$7,488. MSRF will create the Methow State of Hatcheries Pamphlet.
 - Cascade Conservation District (CCD) - Contract is for \$8,400 for subbasin outreach, expanded county wide newsletter and a salmon recovery focused webinar series.
 - Okanogan County - Board support Contract for \$5,000.

9. Public Questions and Comments

There were no public questions or comments.

10. Annual Business Meeting

Chair England transitioned the Chelan County representation to Commissioner Bob Bugert as Commissioner England will be retiring the end the year. Members thanked Commissioner England for his work with the UCSRB and welcomed Chair Bugert into the new role. Melody shared the schedule of 2021 Board Meetings and Chair Bugert stated he may have a conflict with the September 23, 2021 meeting date.

Marc Straub made a motion to approve the proposed 2021 Board meeting dates. Shannon Adams seconded the motion and all approved.

11. Wrap-up and Adjourn Meeting

Chair Bugert thanked everyone for attending the UCSRB virtual meeting and adjourned the meeting. at 12:43 pm.