



REGIONAL TECHNICAL TEAM MEETING FINAL NOVEMBER MEETING SUMMARY

Date: Wednesday, 11 November 2021

Time: 9:00 AM to 11:15 AM

Location: Webinar

Members Present: Steve Fortney, John Crandall, Tom Kahler, Kate Terrell, Catherine Willard, Joe Lange, Carlos Polivka, Keely Murdoch, Brandon Rogers, John Arterburn, and Tracy Hillman (Chair)

Others Present: Tracy Bowerman/UCSRB, Ryan Niemeyer/UCSRB, Melody Kreimes/UCSRB, Jason Lundgren/CF, Steve Kolk/USBR, Jeff Jorgensen/NOAA, Robert Warren/BEF, Mark Ingman/CCD, Kristen Kirkby/CF, Ameer Bahr/RCO, Jamie Cleveland/BPA, and Brian Maloney/CCNRD

Tracy Hillman welcomed everyone to the meeting. RTT members reviewed and approved the draft agenda. There were no changes to the agenda. The October meeting summary was approved as drafted. Members reviewed actions items and gave updates.

Action Item Updates:

- The sponsor (CCNRD) of the two Nason Creek Design Review projects has agreed to have additional RTT review. Details are in the works.
- RTT members approved Tracy Bowerman and Ryan Niemeyer as members of the MaDMC.
- Ryan Niemeyer will follow up with John Arterburn regarding substrate sampling in the Methow River basin. This will also be discussed within the Prioritization Work Group.
- Tracy Hillman and Greer Maier reached out to Robby Fonner (NMFS) and received his resume. Robby is interested in the social/economic work but would like to be a member of the RTT to justify his involvement.
- Tracy Bowerman reported to WDFW the recommendation by the RTT to maintain the existing priority watershed for FBRB. She will report back to the WATs next week and inform the UCSRB at their December meeting.
- Ryan Niemeyer will update the RTT on his revisions to the reach-based ecosystem indicators.

Agenda Items for December Meeting:

- Review of Cascade Fisheries' Merritt Oxbow 80% design.
- Review and approve MaDMC data gaps.

UCSRB Updates

UCSRB Staff Update

Melody Kreimes updated the RTT on staff transitions with the UCSRB. Melody is leaving the UCSRB but is not in a big hurry. She is not leaving for any internal reason; she is just making some life changes. Her goal is to ensure a smooth transition to a new Director.

Sociologist/Economist: Integrating Social Science in Salmon Recovery

Melody Kreimes explained that integrating social science into salmon conservation in the region was an area of growth identified by the Ruckelshaus evaluation but perhaps we have not laid out a clear path for how integrating social science into existing well-oiled machinery could help. People are grappling with what this could look like and there were some concerns from the UCSRB during their recent meeting on 4 November. Some key questions the region is grappling with are: What is the role of the human element in salmon recovery (the 5th H)? What do we need to do to better understand the human element? Does the concept of a social scientist participating in the regional process dovetail with what the RTT is looking for? Melody and Robert Warren from BEF recently spoke with Sarah Breslow, an anthropologist at UW, about processes and strategies.

Following on the recommendation of the Ruckelshaus evaluation, the RTT has been looking for an economist/sociologist to provide expertise in Upper Columbia issues. Robby Fonner (NMFS) said he would want to be a member of the RTT. This would allow him to justify his involvement. An economist could help with Step 3 of the Prioritization Strategy (evaluating feasibility), provide input to help the CACs with evaluating SRFB applications, and provide input to the IT. However, there has been some uncertainty within the RTT about how to move forward with including an economist/sociologist in the process.

Comments from RTT members about this process:

- Brandon Rogers suggested the RTT pause and let the UCSRB process catch up, so the RTT does not get ahead of the process.
- John Arterburn said he has struggled with the Ruckelshaus document and the examples provided and was concerned that the role of an economist could distract from the primary effort of the RTT.
- Steve Fortney thought the idea of including a social scientist in regional efforts is valuable and liked the idea of building more of a restoration economy but is not sure how this could be realized. The RTT might not be the best group for a sociologist/economist.
- Kate Terrell agreed it would be beneficial to have a social scientist as part of the process but struggles with how this person would fit with the RTT. They might fit better with the Implementation Team.
- Joe Lange agreed and wondered how this type of position would fit with the RTT. He thought the person would fit better with the CAC and UCSRB.
- Tom Kahler agrees that the RTT should let the UCSRB process catch up. He's interested in where Commissioner Hover took the conversation during the UCSRB meeting—people on the land need a voice and buy in—but he is not exactly sure how to implement that approach.
- Carlos Polivka has not been in touch with Jeff Kline recently but last they spoke Jeff did not feel a need to be an RTT member. Jeff could lend his expertise when needed.
- Keely Murdoch agreed that a social scientist could be very useful but was not sure where that person would plug into the process.
- John Crandall suggested this person could make a big impact with all-H rather than just focusing on habitat.
- Steve Fortney suggested that there could be other metrics that can be used to assign social/economic value to individual projects. A sociologist/economist could help with establishing different metrics.

Tracy Hillman summarized the conversation: The RTT agrees that there is value in a sociologist/economist working in the Upper Columbia. Their skills would benefit and contribute to the prioritization strategy and evaluation of proposed habitat actions. However, the RTT may not be the best venue for this person. Their skills may better align with the UCSRB, IT, and CAC.

Melody said this is a conversation the UCSRB will continue to have. She was grateful to hear what the RTT might hope to get from social science integration (economics, landowner willingness, etc.). Tracy Bowerman asked if folks thought there was value in pursuing a science communication workshop or similar workshop. The RTT might not be the target audience, but this should benefit sponsors. Mark Ingman suggested there is value in assessing which types of projects are supported by the public. The RTT sees value in a science communication workshop.

Action Items:

- Carlos Polivka and Tracy Hillman will reach out to Jeff Kline and Robby Fonner, respectively, to let them know the status of the process and to tell them that Melody Kreimes will work with them directly as the process moves forward.

SRFB Grant Round Debrief

Tracy Bowerman asked the RTT for feedback regarding the SRFB grant-round debrief meeting. Several RTT members indicated that it is important to hold a joint debrief meeting with the CAC, RTT, and project sponsors. There is value in these conversations and generally increases time for the RTT, CAC, and project sponsors to interact. The UCSRB should continue to reach out and include all groups. This is a valuable process.

Action Items:

- Dave Hecker will reach out to Tracy Hillman to identify agenda items for the debrief meeting. UCSRB staff will organize a joint SRFB grant-round debrief meeting with sponsors, RTT, and CAC.

MaDMC

A MaDMC Meeting will be held Thursday, 18 November 2021 from 1:00-4:00 pm to review data gaps.

Intrinsic Potential Layer from NOAA

Tracy Bowerman sent out the newest DRAFT Intrinsic Potential model from NOAA, located here: <https://arcg.is/1mvenP>

The following changes have been made from the previous IP layer:

- The new IP layer is based on **rearing** (previous layer was based on **spawning**)

The inputs came from NOAA's processing of NHD and BRAT data ([BRAT \(riverscapes.xyz\)](https://brat.riverscapes.xyz))

- The model uses the following attributes to predict IP (all of these must be >0 to be suitable habitat):
 - Gradrate = Gradient, derived from DEMs (highest weighting in determining IP)
 - Flowrate = modeled summer low flow (from BRAT model; note that Damon Holzer is waiting for BRAT to process Okanogan to finish up that portion of the IP layer)
 - Blockrate = 0 if there's a natural barrier downstream blocking access.
 - Preciprate = Precipitation from the NWFSC data (divided the weighted by precip by the flow accum to get a mean precip value above each stream segment. This is a coarse

metric used to trim the very dry watersheds that do not generate enough surface flow to support salmonids. What it misses is where groundwater may provide enough input to generate flow.)

Based on email responses from those that looked at the IP layer, it appears that there are some issues inherent with how the model was developed that we should address, most prominently:

- 1) Spatial extents for both species are too far upstream in many locations and include stream reaches that are extremely small and/or intermittent/dewatered.
- 2) There are locations where there are known distributions that the IP does not identify.
- 3) There are known barriers that were not included in the IP layer.

Two primary questions for the group:

1. Should *O. mykiss* habitat be considered steelhead IP?
2. How should we view known natural barriers?

The RTT generally recommends moving forward with making a comprehensive layer and then clip down using info on extent of anadromy (Steelhead) and natural barriers. Having the “everything is possible” layer will allow use of the IP layer to evaluate available habitat if natural barriers were to become passable.

John Crandall asked how do we loop bull trout into the analysis? Currently, this layer is from NOAA, so there are no bull trout data included in the approach. ***Maybe we should circle back to what RTT wants to do about bull trout IP?***

Action Items:

- RTT members will review the IP layers and send their comments to Tracy Bowerman by 19 November 2021.
- Tracy Bowerman will follow up with individuals who gave feedback to try to identify where there might be discrepancies between model and known IP.

RTT Document Review

Operating Procedures

Based on feedback from the group, Tracy Hillman made minor edits to the RTT Operating Procedures document. Regarding RTT Membership, the document states that membership on the RTT shall be determined in consultation with the UCSRB chairperson. The RTT agreed to strike this from the Operating Procedures. This has not been done in the past. On the other hand, the RTT Chair will be chosen in consultation with the UCSRB, because that position involves some level of UCSRB funding.

Decision:

- ***RTT members approved the latest draft of the RTT Operating Procedures.***

Reach Assessment Indicator Tables

Before the meeting, Ryan Niemeyer provided the RTT with the reach-based ecosystem indicators (REI) tables, which were updated based on RTT input during the last meeting. Ryan said he went back through the last ten reach assessments and compiled them as a summary of general guidelines for reach assessment indicators.

The RTT thanked Ryan for updating the tables and noted that the layout of the table may be easier to read if the pathways and indicators were placed in columns rather than rows. This would also make the tables consistent with the PFC tables in the Prioritization Strategy document.

There was some discussion about pools and the concern that the quality of pools differs depending on stream size. The current tables indicate that pool frequency varies with stream size, but pool quality does not. One suggestion is to remove pool quality from the tables. John Crandall agreed to explore this further and provide a recommendation to the RTT.

Action items:

- John Crandall will review the pool description in the REI tables and provide a recommendation on how to improve the description for scoring pools.
- Ryan Niemeyer will update the REI tables based on input from the RTT.

The next RTT meeting will be Wednesday, 8 December 2021.