

UPPER COLUMBIA SALMON RECOVERY BOARD
DRAFT MEETING (Webinar) SUMMARY
December 9, 2021

Board Members Present:

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

Staff Present: Melody Kreimes, Tracy Bowerman, Ryan Niemeyer, Nicole Jordan, Dave Hecker, Sarah Walker, Alicia Meier

Others Present:

Bureau of Reclamation: Steve Kolk; **Cascadia Conservation District:** Ryan Williams; **Chelan County Natural Resource Department:** Mike Kaputa; **NOAA:** Justin Yeager; **Regional Director North Central Washington:** Brock Hoenes, **Representative Schrier Staff:** Kelli Scott; **Community Member:** David Ortman

The virtual meeting was called to order at 9:03 am by Chair Bob Bugert.

Welcome and Introductions

Chair Bugert welcomed everyone to the meeting and did a roll call on who was present via telephone and webinar. Chair Bugert reviewed the draft agenda for today's meeting.

Andy Hover made a motion to approve the December 9, 2021 agenda. Chuck Brushwood seconded the motion and all approved.

1. Regular Business

Chair Bugert asked for comments or revisions to the November 4, 2021 UCSRB meeting summary. No comments or revisions were offered, and the summary was approved.

Commissioner Marc Straub made a motion to approve the November 4, 2021 UCSRB meeting summary as presented. Shannon Adams seconded the motion and all approved.

2. 2020 Implementation Schedule and Annual Report

Tracy Bowerman presented the 2020 Draft Annual Report completed by Greer Maier. This report details the money spent within the Upper Columbia and results in progress toward recovery for NOAA, partners, and funders. UCSRB produces a report and Implementation Schedule each fall to communicate the work done to protect and restore habitat. Salmon numbers for 2020 are below the recovery target for our region at 50% of the 10-year average for natural origin spring Chinook and 40% of the 10-year average for natural origin steelhead. Factors contributing to the low numbers include fair to poor ocean conditions for 2020 and the past several years.

All-H highlights in the report include

- **Harvest** - Restrictions to fisheries for 2020 due to low abundances of Columbia River salmon and steelhead.
- **Hydrosystem** - Juvenile survival from release sites to Bonneville Dam was average for ocean migrating spring Chinook and steelhead.
- **Hatcheries** – Released 2.7 million spring Chinook and 800,000 steelhead in 2020. Balance between hatchery and wild fish management practices showed a higher proportion of natural influence.

- **Habitat** – 9 projects were completed across 4 subbasins with a total budget of \$3.3 million. COVID affected the number of projects completed in 2020 and was down from the previous year. In total, 38 acres of habitat were protected, 1 mile of stream treated, 1 barrier was removed, 0.2 miles of stream opened, 6 acres of floodplain reconnected in 2020 in priority AU's.

Per the *Recovery Plan*, UCSRB is now only required to submit Annual Report to NOAA every 4 years. Tracy and Melody discussed and would like to continue reporting annually with the implementation schedule instead of moving to a 4-year report, as it would be more difficult to draft a 4-year report. The annual report will be added to the UCSRB website and a link will be sent to NOAA for submission of the report.

Commissioner Andy Hover made a motion to approve the Annual Report and Implementation Schedule to submit to NOAA. Shannon Adams seconded the motion and all approved.

Melody invited Justin Yeager with NOAA to participate in the discussion of a potential letter requesting more strategic input from NOAA on salmon recovery. Justin explained the current budget constraints having an impact on backfilling vacant positions. NOAA will no longer have positions like Lynn Hatcher filled. Justin is willing to help out where he can, but NOAA's top priority is regulatory work-load (reviewing and writing biological opinions). Some items in the draft letter would be addressed by NW Fisheries Science Center. The Board and NOAA discuss how best to engage NOAA on key items and how UCSRB might help address NOAA staff capacity limitations.

Next Steps:

- *Tracy and Melody to meet with Justin to discuss key integrated recovery and how to open the doors with NW Fisheries Science Center conversations.*
- *Hold off on a letter to NOAA. Start the conversation with NOAA and possibly consider a trip/virtual meeting with the Portland NOAA office. Infrastructure money, build back better funding that might help with staffing issues.*
- *Melody and Bob to follow up on this topic*

3. Lead Entity Update

Dave Hecker reviewed the timeline for the upcoming 2022 SRFB Grant round. Key dates include:

- Kick-Off February 9, 2022
- Site visit requested dates May 9-13, 2022
- Final proposals deadline May 27, 2022

Dave discussed the 2021 -2023 biennium Targeted Investment program, which has \$3.7 million available. The goal of the program for this biennium is to fund habitat restoration that benefits priority orca prey and will follow the 2022 SRFB schedule. RTT scoring and CAC ranking will be used by the UC region to select a single UC project by the June 27, 2022 deadline. This June 27th deadline is a week earlier than previous SRFB grant rounds, which gives us a shorter turn around with RTT scoring and CAC ranking. SRFB will select one project for the state to fund in September.

Commissioner Marc Straub made a motion to approve the Targeted Investment process as presented. Chuck Brushwood seconded the motion and all approved.

4. Watershed Program

Ryan Niemeyer gave an overview of the Watershed Program being developed by UCSRB to help meet the long-term objectives of the *Upper Columbia Spring Chinook Salmon and Steelhead Recovery Plan*. The goals of the watershed program are the long-term objectives of the *Recovery Plan*:

- Protect areas with natural ecosystems processes
- Maintain suitable stream flows
- Protect and restore water quality
- Protect and restore off-channel and riparian habitat
- Reduce sediment recruitment

Approach to accomplishing these goals is to look at Tier 1 Restoration Areas, most are in USFS or bordering USFS land. Strategic approach is to work with the USFS in the following avenues:

- Engage as a stakeholder with the USFS
- Provide targeted comments to USFS (for projects in priority reaches).
- Help sponsors and partners implement priority actions (know the watershed actions that would have the biggest impacts).
- Clarify watershed actions and feasibility with WATs.
- Amplify the need for ridgetop to river restoration across the subbasins. Need to have watershed subbasin approach for salmon recovery

Next Steps:

- Starting 2022 identify existing efforts and bottlenecks to implement high priority actions.
- End of 2022 develop a strategy to address bottlenecks to implement high priority actions.
- Ask Kristin Bail to come to February Board Meeting
- Melody, Bob and Shannon to talk after this meeting and discuss agenda item for February. Possibly a virtual DC meeting. Include Robert Wagner lobbyist for timber counties through the US.
- Report back from Ryan at next Board meeting on status.

Ryan then gave a brief update on the completion of the Snow2Flow shape file. There was a soft launch last month with USFS and the final launch is scheduled for January or February of 2022. The Snow2Flow tool is located on the [UCSRB website](#).

5. Break

6. Finance & Operations

Melody reviewed the Fiscal Year 2022 amended budget, which included:

- additional funding from BPA with a \$75,000 tech contract, most of the funding will go towards contracting.
- Salaries are lower, changing of staffing with different comp rates due to benefits ~ \$16,000
- Snow2Flow is higher but this is due to contract extensions, covered by funding rolling over into this budget year.
- Triangle Associates budget for \$5,000 (Greer Maier's time to transition Science Manager position)
- Rent was a little higher with the new JDSA location
- Dues and Subscriptions correction to \$2,440 not (\$12,400)
- JDSA construction remodel \$6,999
- Total budget amended to \$1,160.52 still balanced

Commissioner Andy Hover made a motion to approve the FY2022 Amended Budget as presented. Commissioner Marc Straub seconded the motion and all approved.

Melody next reviewed the budget to actuals report showing we have expended 29% of our revenue for FY22 compared to being 42% through the budget year ending June 30, 2022. A few highlights from the budget to actual report are expenses are down as we await invoices for outreach from MSRF and CCNRD. Travel and training continue to be underspent. Staff has been encouraged to look for virtual trainings however, the travel budget including travel to Washington DC will likely not be expended due to COVID. The Finance Committee asked for staff ideas for reallocating \$30,000. Reallocation ideas include a staff retreat (\$2,000-\$5,000), salaries for two Executive Directors with expected overlap with transition (\$5,000 two weeks at full time), increase GIS capacity (\$4,000), Douglas County outreach to orchardist (\$5,000-\$10,000), new building signage (\$1,500).

The Board discussed these options for reallocating the travel budget and would like to wait on a staff retreat with the transition to the new Executive Director. Commissioner Marc Straub would like to hold off on the Douglas County outreach item until he meets with Foster Creek.

Commissioner Andy Hover made a motion to Amend the FY22 Budget reallocating the travel budget to include two weeks of salary for transition of Executive Director and signage for new office. Commissioner Marc Straub seconded the motion and all approved,

Alicia Meier updated the Board on the new BPA Programmatic Habitat Admin Contract. This is a new income contract that is slightly higher than last year for \$159,961 with a period from 12/1/21 to 11/30/22. This would include travel for Tracy Hillman, RTT Chair.

Commissioner Marc Straub made a motion to approve the BPA Programmatic Habitat Admin Contract. Chuck Brushwood seconded the motion and all approved.

7. Public Questions and Comments

There were no public comments.

8. Annual Business Meeting

Melody reviewed the 2022 Board meeting schedule dates and discussed leaving the locations as "TBD" as we plan on holding virtual meetings until in-person meetings resumed.

Commissioner Andy Hover made a motion to approve the 2022 UCSRB Board meeting schedule. Shannon Adams seconded the motion and all approved.

The Personnel Manual revisions were discussed by Melody. Revisions to Group health and related benefits from Washington State Health Care Authority included staff eligible for benefits cannot decline or waive dental, Long-Term Disability, or basic life insurance only medical. Other revisions include removing language on COBRA notification as PEBB policy requires COBRA eligibility. The work schedule under *Compensation Policies* was revised to account for the new COVID work environment to reflect typical office hours with more flexible schedules and alternative work locations.

Chuck Brushwood made a motion to approve the revisions as presented in the UCSRB Personnel Manual. Commissioner Marc Straub seconded the motion and all approved.

Accounting Policies and Procedures Manual Updates

Melody discussed the addition of the operating reserve policy to the Accounting Manual. This was presented to and revised by the Finance Committee, which is recommending the Board approve this new policy. The goal of the operating reserve is to build up a 3-month reserve (\$150,000) to cover unforeseen expenses that cannot be covered by the current annual budget. This reserve will have to be funded by non-grant monies, as most of UCSRB's grants are reimbursable only. The policy includes a process for staff management and tracking of the operating reserve, and for board approval to use funds. If approved, the current budget line called "Operating Reserve" will be renamed "Contingency Fund" and will continue to be used to cover additional expenses that fall within an existing annual budget.

Commissioner Marc Straub made a motion to approve the addition of the Operating Reserve Policy as presented in the UCSRB Accounting Policies and Procedures Manual. Commissioner Andy Hover seconded the motion and all approved.

9. Executive Session

Commissioner Andy Hover made a motion to approve a 3% wage increase for the Executive Director starting December 1, 2021. Commissioner Marc Straub seconded the motion and all approved.

10. Wrap-up and Adjourn Meeting

Chair Bugert thanked everyone for attending the UCSRB virtual meeting and adjourned the meeting at 12:30 pm. Next Board meeting will be Thursday February 24, 2022.