

December 7, 2023

UCSRB Board of Directors Mtg. Summary

Douglas County Transportation & Land Services Building – East Wenatchee, WA

9:00 am to 2:00 pm



Formal Approvals

Item	Action-Decision
Agenda for December 7, 2023 Board of Directors Meeting	Approved and posted online at: UCSRB Agenda
Summary for September 28, 2023 Board of Directors Meeting	Approved and posted online at: UCSRB Summary

PRESENT:

Board Members – Board Chair, Andy Hover – Okanogan County; Vice-Chair, Chuck Brushwood - Colville Confederated Tribes; Shannon Adams -Yakama Nation; Marc Straub - Douglas County; Shon Smith - Chelan County.

UCSRB Staff - Amanda Ward (present remotely), Ryan Niemeyer, Elaine Sivey, Ariel Edwards, Gabby Vermeire

Others - Brock Hoenes - Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife; Steve Kolk – Bureau of Reclamation; Joseph Lange – USDA, NRCS; Allen Miller – Rancher

Present remotely: Craig Nelson – Okanogan Conservation District; Jessica Goldberg – Methow Salmon Recovery Foundation; Rachel McClure – CD 8 Rep. Kim Schrier’s office

ABSENT:

1. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Andy Hover convened the Board Meeting at 9.00 am.

Participants were welcomed and introduced themselves. Amanda Ward introduced UCSRB’s new Lead Entity Coordinator Ariel Edwards.

2. Regular Business

The draft meeting agenda was reviewed. No corrections or additional items were noted.

Marc Straub made a motion to approve the December 7, 2023 agenda as presented. Chuck Brushwood seconded, and all approved.

The meeting summary from the September 28, 2023 Board of Directors meeting was reviewed. No corrections or updates were noted.

Shon Smith made a motion to approve the September 28th, 2023 Board of Directors meeting summary as presented. Mark Straub seconded the motion, and all approved.

3. Finance and Operations

UCSRB Budget Updates

Elaine Sivey presented budget updates to the Board.

Budget to Actual

Elaine reviewed budget vs. actual expenditures for all programs as of October 31, 2023.

Grant Activity

Elaine provided an update on current grants (BEF, BPA Admin, Colville Confederated Tribes, RCO Lead Entity, RCO admin, and Yakama Nation) through October 2023.

Operating Reserve Activity

Elaine reviewed the organization operating reserve activity for the period of July 1, 2023 through October 2023.

Statement of Financial Position

Elaine reviewed the UCSRB Statement of Financial Position as of October 31, 2023 compared to the same time in 2022. She noted that any larger differences in amounts were due to timing – many accounts receivable had not been recognized as such at the time the statement was generated compared to 2022.

State Auditor's Office Update:

Elaine Sivey updated the Board on the 2022 state audit and accountability review, which are still in process. The state audit found no substantive problems, and the drafted audit is currently in Olympia awaiting final approval.

The accountability review was still underway; the report indicated that, as a state-funded entity, the UCSRB cannot invest in the Community Foundation's Agency Advised Fund, which does not meet public depository requirements.

BPA Cooperative Agreement

Elaine reviewed the BPA Cooperative Agreement and the associated Designation of Michelle O'Malley as Contracting Officer's Representative.

Former USRB Program Manager Sarah Walker's position will ideally have a job offer extended by the end of the month; an interview is currently scheduled for next week.

BPA has requested that UCSRB return to using an overhead rate for indirect costs, rather than the current practice of directly billing them for indirect costs. This will require getting an overhead rate approved by the Interior Department.

The Board agreed that the organization should try to enhance the relationship with BPA and develop stronger deliverables for applying for BPA funding in the future.

Shon Smith made a motion to approve the BPA Cooperative Agreement as presented. Chuck Brushwood seconded the motion, and all approved.

4. Contract Updates

Amanda Ward advised that she worked with Shannon Adams to add an addendum to the Yakama Nation contract to fund work done on the Science Conference by Triangle Associates, a contractor. She noted that the total funding remained the same; the relevant cost was just reallocated.

Amanda had nothing new to report on the CCT FY24, RCO admin, or DNR contracts.

Amanda reported that while the Okanogan County Conservation District was still working on their scope of work within the LE contract, both the Okanogan County CD and the Chelan County CD were onboard with their LE Outreach contracts.

Mark Straub made a motion to approve the Lead Entity Outreach Contract, in an amount not to exceed \$25,000 for each CD, for signing as soon as it was approved by the Okanogan and Chelan County Conservation Districts. Shon Smith seconded the motion, and all approved.

5. Annual Business Meeting/ 2024 Meeting Dates

Schedule of 2024 Executive and Finance Committee and Board Meetings

Amanda Ward presented the Board with proposed 2024 meeting dates for Board and committee meetings. The Board agreed to leave the dates as tentative until committee assignments were made at the February Board meeting, at which point they could officially approve the meeting dates.

The Board agreed to continue using the Douglas County Transportation building for Board meetings.

Chair Andy Hover asked if the Board would like to discuss a Board/planning retreat during this meeting or save it for a future meeting; the Board determined they did not want to consider a retreat at this time.

6. UCSRB Program Updates

LE update – 2024 Grant Round

Ryan Niemeyer and Ariel Edwards updated the Board on the 2024 Lead Entity Grant round. Ryan advised that the annual report was progressing, and could be presented at February's Board meeting.

Ryan updated the board on RTT project scoring guidelines within the new framework for grading riparian projects.

Follow up: Make sure robust project cataloguing system is in place (per recommendation by Chair Hover).

Enloe Dam

Ryan reported on the status of a proposed project to remove the Enloe Dam after attending an informational meeting on the project held on October 24, 2023. The project is currently undergoing a feasibility assessment, which will assess alternatives to removing the dam, ecological and health risks, and other factors. Issues include potential toxins within the sediment. The next step following a favorable feasibility study would be putting the project through the NEPA process.

Implementation Team Update

Ryan Niemeyer presented on findings from the December 5th IT meeting. The meeting was attended by representatives from several of the 24 entities identified in the IT bylaws. There were not enough members present to meet a quorum so the group could not make any official recommendations. Ryan advised that overall, participants in the meeting wished for the IT to receive more leadership and guidance from UCSRB, specifically how to designate entity representatives and make the IT a working body again. Participants also generally agreed that the IT should serve as an upper-level advisory body to the UCSRB, to help identify any problems or concerns with implementation of the Recovery Plan.

The Board discussed the IT and agreed that, if it were to move forward, the IT would need to hold a meeting attended by all listed members who wanted to remain part of the group. Amanda Ward would provide the group with UCSRB leadership in the meantime.

2024 Science Conference Update

Gabby Vermeire updated the Board on the 2024 Upper Columbia Science Conference. As Amanda Ward had mentioned previously, an amendment had been added to the YN contract to fund contracted Triangle Associates assistance with the Conference planning. The program for the Conference has been finalized and abstract authors notified. The social scheduled for the first evening (January 24th) of the Conference will include a raffle of items donated by local businesses.

Chief Joseph Dam

Vice chair Chuck Brushwood of CCT presented on an agreement between the Federal government and Northwest tribes that is part of a larger settlement pertaining to a decades-long lawsuit, which has the potential to put windfall funding into salmon reintroduction above Chief Joseph Dam. The lawsuit was initiated by Spokane and Coeur D'Alene tribes against the federal government. The Upper Columbia Settlement between the government and three tribes would result in BPA committing approximately \$2 million over 20 years to fund phase 2 of the implementation plan.

Vice chair Brushwood noted that commitment of the funding is outside the BPA fish and wildlife program, and theoretically would not affect their existing fish and wildlife commitments. In terms of viability, the plan to reintroduce salmonids above Chief Joseph Dam, tag-and-release data shows some adult salmon collected at Chief Joseph Dam originated as juveniles upstream of the dam.

7. Strategic Plan – Draft of Plan Summary

Amanda Ward presented the Board with the draft text of the Strategic Plan to be posted on the organization website. She noted that the Board would only be approving the wording of the Plan, not the design aspect, which would be decided at a later time.

Shannon Adams proposed amending the section of the Strategic Plan titled “Our Long Range Vision” to omit the language “because habitat restoration alone will not achieve recovery” so that the last section of the section reads: The UCSRB also aims to support and integrate recovery efforts across all management sectors including habitat, harvest, hatcheries, and hydropower.” An informal consensus on the language was reached, with the finalized Plan including artwork to be presented at a later time.

8. Lake Roosevelt Northern Pike Suppression and Monitoring Program

Holly McLellan from CCT presented on the issue of Northern Pike in the Upper Columbia and efforts to cause a decline in their populations. Researchers are monitoring Northern Pike through DNA sampling across regions and acoustic tagging within watersheds contributing to help bring down Pike numbers enabling extermination of fish before they spawn. Public outreach that encourages harvest instead of catch-and-release fishing. Holly reported that CCT has spent over \$4 million suppressing Northern Pike. So far, efforts have been successful in preventing Northern Pike from moving further downstream.

9. Hardened stream crossings

Joe Lang – USDA/NRCS

Joe Lang presented to the Board on his experience with the permitting for hardened stream crossings (low level crossings), the different types of crossings, and their usefulness in preserving salmon habitat while allowing ranchers to provide water for their cattle.

Joe reported that he had only been involved with a half-dozen low-level crossing permitting in his experience, most of which occurred over 20 years ago. In general, risk to fish habitat has limited the feasibility of constructing low-level crossings.

Craig Nelson, Okanogan Conservation District

Craig Nelson noted that, in his experience, the number of hardened crossing projects have decreased in the last 20 years. Many that were needed/permittable have already been built. He also noted that hardened access points act like hardened crossings but only partially transect a stream, which allows livestock to access water.

Allen Miller, Douglas County rancher

Allen Miller described how he had built hardened crossings on his property in the years before permitting became too burdensome. Crossings were used both for livestock and for access for maintenance and firefighting vehicles to certain parts of the property.

10. Public comment

No public comment.

11. Wrap-Up and Adjourn Meeting

Chair Hover thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

Meeting adjourned – 2:15 pm

The next scheduled Board meeting is February 22, 2024.