

Working to restore viable and sustainable populations of salmon, steelhead and other at-risk species through collaborative, economically sensitive efforts, combined resources, and wise resource management of the Upper Columbia Region.



## Meeting Summary Implementation Team Meeting

Sunny Slope Fire District 1  
206 Easy Street, Wenatchee, WA  
Tuesday, December 4th, 2018  
10:00 AM to 3:00 PM

**Members Present:** Paul Wagner/CCT, Robes Parrish/FWS, Kate Terrell/FWS, Katy Pfannenstien/FWS, Jason Lundgren/CCFEG, Amy Martin/OCD, Char Shumaker/Okanogan County, Jennifer Molesworth/BOR, Chris Johnson/MSRF, Jessica Goldberg/MSRF, Allison Lutes/CCNRD, Ken Muir/CCD, Steve Kolk/BOR, Amanda Barg/WDFW, Casey Baldwin/CCT, Brandon Rogers/YN, Melody Kreimes/UCSRB, Sarah Walker/UCSRB, Greer Maier/UCSRB, Crystal Elliott/TU (phone), Jamie Cleveland/BPA (phone)

Sarah Walker convened the meeting at 10 am and walked participants through introductions. The group reviewed and adopted the agenda with one amendment and approved the Sept. IT Meeting Summary.

### UCSRB Updates

#### UCSRB Online Data and Information

Greer Maier, UCSRB, presented the ArcGIS Online data portal for spatial data on the UCSRB Website. She also talked about the Map Portal that is under development to explore data. It will have links to spawning, distribution, barrier, etc. maps, which is especially good for folks if they don't have GIS. Greer can also create webmaps for folks based on certain criteria. There will also be a way to quickly download an image of the data/map. Greer is looking for feedback re: types of information that IT members would like access to or have posted. Participants asked about development of a project page/map available for general users, public on the UCSRB website, particularly because the Habitat Work Schedule is getting phased-out. Participants inquired about whether it would be possible to set up a way to click on a map location and have basic info (ESU, Species, lat long, etc.) populated in an application or form for use by sponsors to streamline their application development. YN will have webmap with data pertinent to Biological Strategy available on their site and that will be linked to on the ucsrb.org map portal.

#### Action Items:

- Greer will gather feedback from IT members re: data they would like to share or see on UCSRB data portal.

## 2018 Year in Review

Greer presented the year in review, including info on spring snowpack, runoff timing, flows; effects of federal project spill order on fish; outmigration/run timing for Chinook and steelhead adults, juveniles; changes in California vs. Stellar Sea Lion population daily abundance; projects completed in the region. Members found this presentation very informative.

- Greer will distribute the 2018 Year in Review presentation

## SRFB Process- 2018

Greer presented the final SRFB list and updated the group on a few changes that came in at the last moment. The Wenatchee EDT proposal was pulled because it was identified as a “Project of Concern” (POC). Because of that the Upper Methow Goat Creek was recommended to the state for full funding and Peshastin Mill-Larsen Reach Side Channel recommended for partial funding. Melody Kreimes/UCSRB will present the final list to the SRFB tomorrow in Olympia.

## October 401-404 meeting outcomes

The UCSRB convened a forum on wetland permitting (Sections 401/404 of Clean Water Act) on October 16<sup>th</sup>. There was good discussion among sponsors and USACE/Ecology representatives and good technical information that was presented. Ecology is exploring options to hold a wetlands rating system training locally for sponsors to help with permitting. Sarah asked members if they knew of local wetlands with public access/parking since that will be needed for a UC training. Other follow-up items/outcomes from the meeting included Ecology/USACE agreement to work on a monitoring plan template for sponsors, and the request for engagement by IT members to work with Ecology to develop “common language” for discussing anticipated environmental lift, improvements in function from proposed restoration projects. One take-away from the forum was that wetland permitting can be prohibitive in some instances because of mitigation and monitoring requirements. The group again raised the issue that monitoring is required but few sources of funds are available for this purpose, and the timing/expiration of funds that are available also presents an ongoing challenge for any long-term monitoring.

There was extensive discussion about how DOE interprets state laws and policies across regions and how that affects projects and implementation of the Recovery Plan. It was highlighted that additional follow-up discussion at the state level about interpretation of the laws that are in place may be needed. Some members thought that unified messaging from the IT about restoration project permitting challenges to elevate discussion would be more effective than single people or entities trying to make additional headway on this topic. Melody noted the Council of Regions could be a good forum to discuss this.

### **Action Items:**

- Sarah will follow-up with IT members that suggested options for wetland rating training sites and continue coordination with Ecology and the IT on items resulting from the October meeting.

## BPA Targeted

Sarah updated the IT on the project list that resulted from the recent UC Habitat Programmatic Targeted solicitation for 2019/2020 project funding from BPA. A total of 6 projects were submitted. Three of the projects were outside the Targeted areas specified for the Wenatchee and Methow; one of these had been submitted during a previous Targeted solicitation and is currently “provisional”. There was

discussion about how the 3 proposals that fell outside of the Targeted areas will be treated. Sarah reported the RTT Chair had asked the RTT to score all projects at their December meeting; however, the BPA-UCSRБ review in January will screen the six proposals using the eligibility-review criteria provided to sponsors. The group recognized the need for additional RTT discussion about future solicitations and whether the RTT will score projects that fall outside of Targeted criteria.

## Regional Prioritization

Brandon Rogers/RTT & YN started by mentioning that the region has an existing prioritization document --the Biological Strategy-- and the current process will be used to update that document. The prioritization process is based on the RTT's Habitat Action Prioritization Strategy and the RTT is currently working to prioritize Assessment Units (expected in January 2019). There was a meeting after the last MRC/Methow WAT meeting to looking at cross-walking the EDT results and the Ecological Concerns (similar to what was done in the Okanogan in 2017 to update the Biological Strategy). The exercise was challenging and highlighted the need for additional QA/QC of the EDT results in the Methow. The model seemed to be missing instream flow and riparian issues in many areas and produced the result of habitat diversity, which can be tied to multiple ECs.

The discussion finished with dialogue about the role of the IT in the final stages of prioritization (feasibility and project identification). That step is outlined in the Habitat Action Prioritization Strategy (Step 3). The group discussed possible roles for the IT/ WATs such engagement on a subbasin-level review of the RTT's revised prioritization before discussions about project feasibility and ensuring the role of WATs is consistent across region. Members noted it would be good to have The IT discussed what tasks they may want to tackle to pre-load the process in preparation of what the RTT will provide in the Biological Strategy. Several ideas that were generated related to generating "opportunity" lists tied to activity types (generated from Reach Assessments and/or EDT), generating criteria (e.g., Upper Methow Reach Assessment criteria).

One topic of discussion was the Okanogan and the lack of reach assessments in that subbasin. EDT is being used because it has the appropriate information to prioritize projects. Most work in the Okanogan is in tributaries and a reach assessment is not appropriate for those size streams.

### **Action Items:**

- UCSRB will look into convening a discussion (IT/RTT?) about the issue of reach assessments in the Okanogan and whether EDT could be an appropriate stand-in for the Okanogan
- UCSRB will work with RTT on whether it is worthwhile to populate and "opportunity" list tied to reach assessments activity types
- UCSRB will add the following agenda items to the March IT meeting: Prioritization Step 3 criteria; [www.ucsrб.org](http://www.ucsrб.org) data, map, and data explorer page vetting and review.

## Fish Barrier Prioritization

### Fish Barrier Removal Board

Casey Baldwin, CCT, provided a presentation on the Brian Abbott Fish Barrier Removal Board (FBRB). Background on what the FBRB does and how it considers things is provided by the legislature in HB 2251. There are two pathways for funding from the FBRB- the coordinated pathway and the watershed pathway. The FBRB is concerned with the order of when barriers are addressed- especially under the

watershed pathway, which works from the bottom barrier (as defined by WDFW criteria) to the top. The current priority watershed for the Upper Columbia and 2019-2021 biennium is the Okanogan, with Johnson Creek barriers as the target. Greer Maier, UCSRB, and Casey described the process by which the Okanogan was chosen by the region (UCSRB with input from the WATs and RTT) as a priority and the rationale for selecting it. Casey reviewed the status of the barriers in Johnson Creek and the various projects that have been funded under the coordinated pathway. In total 2017-2019- 13 projects (\$19M), 2019-2021- 82 projects (\$31M) (requested). Regional project rank was show; Johnson Creek, Chumstick, and Mill Creek barriers are in the top 30 for the state, which means they are likely to be funded.

If the current proposed barriers in Johnson Creek are funded and addressed, then the region will convene a conversation about whether to address further upstream barriers in Jonson Creek or to move to a new watershed in 2021-2023. The regional process for that discussion will look like the 2014/2015 process, with the UCSRB starting work with the RTT and WATs on the topic in the next 6-9 months. Casey reminded everyone that the coordinated pathway is still open to all barriers in the region. Sponsors raised the issues with the restrictions on the coordinated pathway process. There was extensive discussion about the coordinated pathway and some of the challenges that have come up in Squilchuck Creek. In some cases, it helps to work upstream of fish to make the permitting easier (e.g., work in an upstream to downstream order).

Greer presented the UCSRB Regional Barrier Prioritization Strategy that the RTT adopted this fall. The strategy is available at [www.ucsrb.org](http://www.ucsrb.org) with links to the most recent map and table results. The RTT approved a tiering methodology at their November meeting and that has been added to the report. A subgroup of the RTT also met last week to discuss whether to tier groups of barriers under the “Should be Addressed as a Complex” tier. The group focused their discussion on Eagle Creek and Mission Creek, which had many barriers at the top of the list in terms of total score and tier. There were not any decisions about these two watersheds, but it was a useful conversation and it was recognized that there is a need for further conversation with the full RTT at their December meeting. One key piece of information may be the Assessment Unit (AU) prioritization, to show where these watersheds fall out.

## IT Survey Results

Sarah presented the results of the IT survey, which 15 members responded to. The answers from the members indicate where the IT might want to focus in the future. Generally the IT meetings have not been fully meeting the Operating Principle tasks laid out for the group. Sarah laid out several questions to the group about where they want to focus. There was some conversation about funding coordination and what that looks like at the IT. Sponsors mentioned that they use the IT to bring forward issues that are preventing them from implementing projects or challenging them. Both pre and post construction discussion would be helpful. Some members mentioned that they like the sharing of new and relevant science and information. There was discussion about how to better compartmentalize agenda topics among the WATs, IT, and RTT to reduce or eliminate topic overlap and better utilize participants’ time at meetings. Members offered ideas about rotating the meeting venue within the region, meeting for less time and/or more frequently, and how the IT agenda could be structured in the future to align with either an “advisory-group discussion” purpose or “information sharing” need, because it could be hard to do both at a meeting. Meeting participants agreed that as a first step, UCSRB staff should initiate process to update IT representative/alternate list in the Operating Principles.

***Action Items:***

- Sarah will include the results of the IT survey with the meeting summary, initiate an Operating Protocols review with the IT, and follow-up at the next meeting.