



REGIONAL TECHNICAL TEAM MEETING OCTOBER MEETING SUMMARY

Date: Wednesday, October 14, 2020

Time: 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM

Location: Webinar

Members Present: John Arterburn, Jeremy Cram, Steve Fortney, Brandon Rogers, Catherine Willard, Kate Terrell, and Tracy Hillman (Chair).

Others Present: Greer Maier/UCSRB, Ryan Niemeyer/UCSRB, Sarah Walker/UCSRB, Steve Kolk/BOR, Jeff Jorgensen/NOAA, Kristen Kirkby/CF, Mike Kaputa/CCNRD, Pollyanna Lind/Interfluve, Robert Warren/BEF, Madeleine Eckmann/YN, MarySutton Carruthers/CCD, and Ken Muir/CCD.

Tracy Hillman welcomed everyone to the meeting and participants introduced themselves.

Members present reviewed and approved the draft agenda. The September meeting summary was reviewed, and Tracy reviewed the action items. Carry-over action items (if any) are listed below. The September meeting summary was approved.

Carry-over action items:

- None

UCSRB Updates

Bull Trout Core Team Meetings

Erin Kuttel (erin_brittonkuttel@fws.gov) has schedule the Upper Columbia bull trout core team meetings for 20 November and 11 December. RTT members can email Erin or Greer Maier (greer.maier@ucsr.org) if they would like to participate. The Prioritization Work Group (PWG) is aiming to complete Step 2 for bull trout in time for the workshop. This will help identify potential threats to bull trout populations.

SRFB Contract Language

Tracy Hillman, Greer Maier, and Pete Teigen worked with Marc Duboiski/RCO to develop contract language for SRFB projects funded this year and in future years. The language states, "At completion of project and prior to final RCO reimbursement, project sponsor will present completed project results at an Upper Columbia Regional Technical Team (RTT) meeting AND upload any data and reports to the Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board (UCSRB) website." This was an action item from the September RTT meeting.

Monitoring and Data Management Committee (MaDMC)

Greer Maier/MaDMC co-chair updated the RTT on the future plans for a MaDMC meeting sometime this winter. With Step 2 of prioritization wrapping up, there are new data gaps that have been identified. There will be an update to the regional data gaps list at the end of the year. RTT members with additional agenda items for this meeting should email Greer Maier (greer.maier@ucsr.org).

Yakama Nation Wolf Creek Reach Assessment

Madeleine Eckmann/YN gave a brief introduction to the Wolf Creek Reach Assessment. The Yakama Nation completed this reach assessment to fill data gaps in this high priority area and help inform planning underway at the Methow Ranger District (USFS). Wolf Creek is an important tributary to the Methow River with use by bull trout, spring Chinook, and steelhead. Spring Chinook and steelhead spawn in the stream. Bull trout also spawn further upstream in Wolf Creek. Pollyanna Lind/Interfluve presented the results of the reach assessment (prior to the meeting, Tracy Hillman provided RTT members a link to the draft report). There were multiple habitat impairments and project opportunities identified in the reach assessment and Pollyanna presented those project opportunities and their relative priority in the reach based on cost/benefit.

The RTT had several questions and comments. Most were about effects from irrigation, historic impacts, and geomorphic potential.

Action Items:

- RTT members will review the draft Wolf Creek Reach Assessment and provide their comments to Tracy Hillman by 2 November. Tracy will then compile the comments and send them to the Yakama Nation.

Prioritization

RTT Prioritization Review Package

Greer Maier and Tracy Hillman provided an update on the status of Prioritization. The prioritization tool has been updated based on feedback provided during the September and October watershed workshops and the October PWG meeting. The Wenatchee, Entiat, and Methow watershed workgroups met in the past month and reviewed the results of Step 2. The PWG also met earlier this month and made some key decisions about the tool. The tool and results have now been updated based on these changes and the updated spreadsheet of results has been uploaded to the www.ucsr.org website and can be viewed and downloaded through this link: <https://www.ucsr.org/prioritization-products/>.

Greer Maier walked through the contents of the Step 2 workbook. This should help RTT members navigate through the results. RTT members can filter the reaches and habitat attribute scores to show the resulting priority reaches and habitat impairments. Habitat scores are based on the REI terminology (from Reach Assessments) where “1=unacceptable,” “3=at-risk”, and “5=adequate.” There is a python script that implements these filters automatically and the resulting habitat actions are shown in the first two tabs of the workbook. The first tab shows actions tied to “unacceptable” habitat impairments and the second tab shows actions tied to both “unacceptable” and “at-risk” habitat impairments. These actions are tied to habitat impairments through the crosswalk shown in the tab labeled “Attribute Action Crosswalk.”

Tracy provided an overview of what the RTT needs to review. This includes (1) the mechanics of the model including the filters (Tracy noted this has been presented to the RTT in the past), (2) review the

data in the prioritization tool and identify whether any specific habitat attribute scores need to be updated based on more recent information, (3) review the scoring rules for the filters, and (4) review the results, which are the action categories for each reach in the reach action tabs. RTT reviews need to be provided to Tracy and Greer by 2 November.

Tracy described the process by which RTT and other reviewers can update outdated or inaccurate habitat data in the model. Individuals need to provide (1) the reach in which data are inaccurate or outdated, (2) the proposed habitat score changes, and (3) the information or data that justify a change in habitat scores. This means the reviewer should not simply provide the RTT with raw data or a data report, but rather identify specific reaches in need of updating, clearly describe which habitat attributes need to change, and provide the specific data that justify the change. The RTT will then review the proposed changes and decide if the changes are warranted.

Tracy said the goal is to seek RTT approval on the tool and prioritization results for spring Chinook and steelhead in the Wenatchee, Entiat, and Methow subbasins during the 11 November meeting.

Proposed Schedule for Updating the Prioritization Tool

Tracy proposed that the RTT update information used in Step 1 of the prioritization tool every 3 to 5 years. Updates to information used in Step 2 should be updated annually. RTT members present agreed with the frequency for updating the tool.

Update to Biological Strategy

Tracy briefly shared that the prioritization tool will be used to update the biological strategy. Rather than provide an extensive appendix to the biological strategy (e.g., Appendix D in the current document), the goal is to provide links to GIS maps that contain prioritization results. This will greatly reduce the size of the document. Tracy said he will work on updating the document next year.

Update to RTT Evaluation Criteria

Tracy said he has received some questions from project sponsors asking whether the RTT will change their criteria for evaluating proposals now that they have developed a prioritization tool. Tracy indicated that the prioritization tool is intended to inform the evaluation criteria, not replace them. There should be only minor tweaks to the evaluation criteria. For example, scoring rules for at least one criterion (Is the project sited within a priority AU?) will be modified to reflect the three levels of priority (i.e., high, moderate, or low). The previous scoring rules used seven priority levels (potential scores ranged from 1 to 7). During development of the prioritization tool, the PWG and RTT agreed that using seven levels was too fine a scale for this criterion. Tracy will make proposed changes to the scoring rule and ask the RTT for their review before the end of this year.

Next Steps

RTT members will provide feedback on the prioritization tool and results by 2 November. Greer will try to schedule a PWG meeting before the next RTT meeting to review and address comments. Next steps also include modeling bull trout (this should be relatively easy as the tool already contains bull trout data), Okanogan steelhead prioritization (this will be based on EDT results, which are currently being generated by Eric Doyle), and modeling protection actions.

Action Items:

- RTT members will review the results of Step 2 and submit comments to Greer Maier and Tracy Hillman by 2 November 2020.
- RTT will approve prioritization results for spring Chinook and steelhead in the Wenatchee, Entiat, and Methow subbasins during their 11 November meeting.
- Tracy Hillman will update the scoring rules for AUs in the Upper Columbia Evaluation Criteria.

Next Meeting

The next RTT meeting will be 11 November 2020.

Agenda Items for Future Meetings:

- Columbia River Treaty: Shane Bickford
- River Health: Joe Wheaton
- Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) Model: BPA and Cramer Fish Sciences
- Entiat Floodplain Analysis Results: Paul Powers
- Use of Remote Sensing in Monitoring: Phil Roni