

UPPER COLUMBIA SALMON RECOVERY BOARD
DRAFT MEETING (Webinar) SUMMARY
September 24, 2020

Board Members Present:

Chair, Chelan County: Doug England

Vice-Chair, Douglas County: Marc Straub

Okanogan County: Andy Hover

Yakama Nation: Shannon Adams

Colville Confederated Tribes: Chuck Brushwood

Staff Present: Melody Kreimes, Sarah Walker, Greer Maier, Pete Teigen, Caitlin Vanderpool, Ryan Niemeyer, Nicole Jordan, Alicia Meier

Others Present: BioAnalysts, Inc.: Tracy Hillman; **Bonneville Power Administration (BPA):** Joe Connor; **Bureau of Reclamation:** Steve Kolk; **Chelan County:** Bob Bugert, Ron Walter (retired); **Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission:** Paul Ward; **D. Rohr & Associates, Inc.:** Dennis Rohr; **Douglas County Public Utility Department (DPUD):** Tom Kahler; **Okanogan County:** Char Schumacher; **OWNFS:** Kristin Bail; **Washington Department of Ecology:** Ingrid Ekstrom; **Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW):** Graham Simon; **Yakama Nation:** Lee Carlson (retired)

The virtual meeting was called to order at 9:00 AM by Chair Doug England.

Welcome and Introductions

Chair England welcomed everyone to the meeting and did a roll call to ensure a quorum was present via telephone and webinar.

1. Regular Business

Chair England asked for comments or revisions to the June 25, 2020 UCSRB meeting summary. No comments or revisions were offered, and the minutes were approved.

Chuck Brushwood made a motion to approve the June 25, 2020 UCSRB meeting summary. Marc Straub seconded the motion and all approved.

2. Yakama Nation Representation Transition

Lee Carlson and Paul Ward were honored for their contributions to fostering collaboration to restoring salmon, steelhead and other at-risk species “through collaborative, economically-sensitive efforts.” Lee and Paul each received the Ester Stefaniw Memorial Award for their two decades of service to restore salmon habitat through collaboration, mentorship, funding, and integrity.

Chair England welcomed Shannon Adams the new Yakama Nation representative to the UCSRB, replacing Paul Ward. Board members introduced themselves and described the importance of the local/tribal collaboration in recovery, the Board’s commitment to consensus on all decisions and the value of the five entities working together on barriers to recovery. The UCSRB staff introduced themselves and encouraged Shannon to reach out to any staff for support as needed.

Melody Kreimes discussed the new Directors' Handbook that Nicole created, and Alicia helped compile so that all documents related to our organization were readily available for Directors. This will be updated annually as officers change.

3. Financial Operations

Caitlin gave an update on UCSRB finance standing:

- Income & Expense Report: BPA and Yakama Nation contracts will be closing on November 30, 2020. At this time, each grant is underspent due to COVID slowing work in the beginning of the year. The RCO contract is also underspent and RCO will allow rollover of any unspent federal funds (the larger portion of the contract), though the state funded portion (the Lead Entity funds) will be swept on June 30, 2021 as that will be the end of the biennium.
- Budget to Actuals: Payroll is at 25% completion for the budget year. Partner outreach and consultant lower than the 25% expected (at 3%) due to COVID. Partner expenses are expected to increase as scopes of work were revised to accommodate COVID-required changes (virtual outreach, etc.). RTT expenses are at 118% because BPA allowed us to use unspent travel funds for RTT tasks. Website development and maintenance at 43% is also covered by additional funds from BPA. Notice trend of lower expenses due to staff working from home which has lowered office costs and travel. Melody noted that a majority of our budget is for personnel, approximately \$600,000, which will not change, things that could change are contractors, outreach, travel, supplies or office expenses.
- The June budget was approved based on revenue projections for contracts for which we now have firm numbers. The reduced revenue that we were projecting did not occur, with these contracts coming in closer to prior year amounts. Caitlin presented the revised budget with the firm contract amounts, and staff continue to maintain a balanced budget and follow accounting protocols for additional expenses. The Board discussed whether it would like to revise and approve the updated budget again and chose not to do so as long as it remained balanced. The Board did ask the Finance Committee to review the budget to actuals quarterly given the continual fluctuations expected due to reduced expenditures related to COVID,

Action Item: The Finance Committee to meet quarterly to review the budget to actuals.

- Melody reviewed the conflict of interest statements that each Board member signs annually and asked for them to each sign, scan and email those back to Alicia.
- Alicia Meier outlined the amended and new contracts approved by the Executive Committee.
Income Contracts Approved:
 1. Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) – Amended contract added \$93,440 for filling Step 2 Prioritization data gaps, map product development and Habitat Categorical Review: ISRP Review and Council Process. Contract extended from 11/30/2020 to 2/28/2021 for these new tasks.
 2. Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) – Amended contract which added the regular annual amount of \$435,000 for outreach, project development, habitat work schedule, regional organization. The contract period was not changed and runs through 9/30/2021.
 3. Bonneville Environmental foundation (BEF) - Amended contract from \$50,000 to \$100,000 and extended the contract period from 9/30/20 to 9/30/21. This contract is for the work plan for infrastructure evaluation and science integration for habitat prioritization.

Consultant Contracts Issued:

1. Ruckleshaus Center - Consultant contract for conducting the UC Regional Evaluation. Contract is for \$71,777 with a contract period through 3/30/2021. This contract is funded through our BEF income contract.
2. Aspect Consulting - Amended consultant contract for GIS work and mapping services. Contract was increased by \$77,100 (funded from BPA for Step 2 Prioritization). The amended contract amount is for \$101,100 with a contract period ending 6/30/2021.
3. BioAnalysts, Inc. - Consultant contract for facilitation by Tracy Hillman, Chair, of the Upper Columbia RTT. The contract is for \$25,500 and the contract period through 6/30/2021 for \$25,500. Funding comes from BPA income contract.
4. 3Sherpas - Consultant contract for website design and development. Contract is for \$5,000 and the period is through 6/30/2021. Funding comes from the BPA income contract.
5. Ayrwav Audio - Consultant contract for the development of a quarterly podcast series on salmon and steelhead recover and forest health restoration. The contract amount is \$700 and the contract period is through 6/30/2021. Funding comes from the RCO income contract.

4. Okanogan Wenatchee National Forest Update

Kristin Bail, OWNF Supervisor, informed the Board on FY21 changes. Starting September 14, 2020 all federal agencies will operate under new NEPA operations that will include page and time limits. These changes will significantly impact new NEPA work. The operations will require Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) to be completed in two years and Environmental Assessments (EA) to be completed in one year. Current reports take longer and OWNFS is looking for ways utilize contractors, expect increased contractor costs to complete work faster, update Forest Service directives, training of consulting partners, and do more careful and intentional planning.

Structural changes within their budget put new restrictions on shifting money around and it has become less flexible. Permanent positions will be covered under the new changes. The Great American Outdoors Act was passed; however, funds are not available until full appropriations are passed. Uncertain on what FY21 and FY22 funding will be until Congress passes appropriations.

OWNF has been working on filling vacant staff positions. Still looking to fill Natural Resource Staff Officer, Timber Management, and Presale Forester. The Tonasket Ranger District officially transfers to the Colville National Forest starting in October. This transfer will take one to two years for full boundary change.

How best to align aquatic work with OWNF program of work:

- Limitations on staff (currently 5 fish biologist vacancies) has hindered progress on the 5-Year Plan. Working on prioritizing work on the 5-Year Plan and looking at ways to be creative in accomplishing the workload. Would like to outsource aquatic work but looking for a way to make that work.
- Melody shared that the UCSRB has spent \$1 million in personnel to facilitate the NCW Forest Health Collaborative (NCWFHC) over the past eight years. How can UCSRB help NCWFHC better engage to increase the pace and scale of restoration, especially the salmon project sponsors who have resources, contractors, etc. to bring to OWNF to implement aquatic projects? Kristin Bail made the following points:
 1. To use all resources to invest in additional time with capacity constraints.
 2. Understanding parts and pieces of each project. NEPA, permitting, heritage section 106, engineering. Partners say they will be able to do a part but then FS spends hours on the

project. Learning from projects like UWPP that we can use in the future for better outcomes.

3. Action reviews: Track and document capacity FS staff is spending (gap analysis) partners can help partners be more impactful.

Ryan Neimeyer discussed the Snow2Flow tool and the need for engagement of OWNF SO and district staff on refinement of this tool so that it could be useful to OWNF staff. Kristin stated that OWNF and hydrologists have concerns re: the underpinnings of Snow2Flow tool, despite the involvement of PNW Research Station in its development. Also, increasing flow won't be a large purpose and need in EAs/EISs. OWNF is open to exploring how Snow2Flow could be utilized for data assessment to help inform EAs/EISs. She directed Ryan to explore with OWNF staff what it will take to pilot test it on the OWNF and how it could be used to inform existing NEPA planning. Melody clarified that this was always the intent, not that it replace current OWNF planning but support it.

Action Item: Follow up meeting with OWNF silviculturists, fish bios and hydrologists on Snow2Flow tool as a pre-NEPA tool.

5. BPA Programmatic Project Update

Joe Connor updated the Board on staffing changes at BPA. CEO, Elliot Mainzer, will be leaving BPA and will be replaced on an interim basis by John Harrison who has been with BPA for 29 years and has been working with Elliot as Chief Operating Manager for the past 5 years. BPA will continue its partnership on Upper Columbia Prioritization/Restoration and extended additional resources through February 28, 2021. BPA and UCSRB have supported 11 projects moving into FY21 which include design work, construction, support of feasibility to conceptual designs with a variety of partners and landscapes. BPA is looking forward to use of the pending, new UC prioritization to identify high priority projects it may fund.

Future Targeted Funding Solicitation:

- Period TBD: Possibly open throughout the year (10/1 to 5/31) instead of only one short period
- Capitalize on UC Prioritization, Biological Strategy update
- Continue to solicit Targeted Proposals: Selections based on available resources and portfolio of ongoing phased projects
- Create a multi-year pipeline of projects
- Continue to align w/BPA BiOp mitigation obligations
- Align w/BPA procurement policy timelines
- Promote cost-sharing and collaboration among regional funders

6. Draft Step 2 Prioritization Update

Tracy Hillman reviewed the process to get to the current Step 2 Prioritization results. Five years ago, the Upper Columbia Regional Technical Team (UCRTT) felt the Biological Strategy needed to be updated in order to better direct sponsors to highest priority projects located in the right place at the right time. From this came the *Habitat Action Prioritization Within the Upper Columbia River Basin* (UCRTT, 2019), which included these steps

- Step 1: Prioritization of Assessment Units (AU). Indicators for Step 1 include AU conditions, population integrity, habitat integrity, and future security.
- Step 2: Prioritization of Reaches Selection of Action Types. Indicators for Step 2 include life stage use and periodicity, geomorphic potential, habitat condition limiting factors/threats, and action types.

- Project Planning and Implementation: At some point, IT and WATs may want to consider the feasibility of implementing high priority action categories based on socio-economic factors such as landowner constraints, land use constraints, cost effectiveness, probability of success, regulator constraints, societal issues, public willingness, and partnership capacity.

The prioritization workgroup met September 15th and the Watershed Workgroups will be wrapping up on October 2nd. The RTT will complete these steps for steelhead and Chinook restoration in October or November. These steps for bull trout and for protection actions will be completed in the early part of 2021. The RTT and UCSRB will convene a fall workshop to review the new prioritization and how it can be used for identifying potential projects, how the RTT will use this for scoring and how funders may use the tool. This will also provide an opportunity for Q & A and initial feedback. The GIS based tool will be housed at ucsrb.org and can be refined as sponsor feedback is provided. It will be ready for use for the 2021 SRFB grant round.

7. UCSRB All-H Summary

Greer reviewed the goals of the UCSRB's Integrated Recovery Approach:

- Achieve recovery of Upper Columbia spring Chinook salmon and steelhead, which will require coordinated actions in each of the management sectors affecting salmon.
- Engage and collaborate with sector managers in finding and implementing solutions to identify issues.

Currently UCSRB is at the Integrated Recovery Approach Step 4: UCSRB Issue Focus. The UCSRB Directors are to identify any issues on which it would like to focus, engage and collaborate with partners moving forward, and possibly develop a workplan for UCSRB staff. A list of potential topics was presented by Greer and discussed by the Directors. These are topics on which it was thought the UCSRB could:

- Identify or support collaborative solutions to issue(s)
- Initiate discussion with sector managers to better understand uncertainties
- Consider various policy or funding instruments available to help address issue(s)
- Decide on other actions or that no action by UCSRB is warranted

The Directors asked for more time to consider which of these topics, or what other ones, might be priorities. Staff will send the list to Directors and be available for follow up discussions. The priority topics will then be compiled and presented for further discussion at the Dec. 10th UCSRB Directors meeting.

Action Item: December 10, 2020 Board of Directors Meeting continue discussion of priority Integrated Recovery topics and any action items for broader partner engagement.

8. Public Questions and Comments

There were no public questions or comments.

9. Wrap-up and Adjourn Meeting

Chair England thanked everyone for attending the UCSRB virtual meeting and adjourned the meeting at 12:12 pm.