REGIONAL TECHNICAL TEAM MEETING
FINAL APRIL MEETING SUMMARY

Date: Wednesday, 8 April 2026
Time: 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM
Location: Webinar

Members Present: Hans Smith (Yakama Nation), Steve Fortney (Gray & Osborne Inc.), John Arterburn (CTCR), John Crandall (Confluence Aquatics), and Tracy Hillman (BioAnalysts Inc., Chair).

Others Present: Ariel Edwards (UCSRB), Meghan Camp (UCSRB), Ryan Niemeyer (UCSRB), Steve Kolk (Bureau of Reclamation), Jeff Jorgensen (NOAA), Amee Bahr (RCO), Scott Bailey (CCNRD), Pollyanna Lind (Infer-Fluve), John Soden (Natural Systems Design), Laura Zanetto (Natural Systems Design), and Victoria Bohlen (BPA).

Tracy Hillman reviewed the April RTT meeting agenda, and the agenda was approved by all RTT members present. Tracy Hillman reviewed the February draft meeting notes and RTT members present approved the notes with an edit made by Steve Fortney. Action items were reviewed from the February meeting.

RTT & UCSRB Updates

SRFB Timeline Review

Ariel Edwards shared a brief overview of the 2026 SRFB timeline. At this time, we do not know the total funding available for our region. Ariel believes it will be a "normal" grant round, so there should be around $2 million available for our region. She added that we should know the amount available later this summer. Tracy reminded everyone that the tours are scheduled for 5 and 6 May.

Decisions:

- **None**

Action Items:

- **None**

Methow Twisp to Weeman Bridge Reach Assessment

Hans Smith introduced the reach assessment and provided some background. This is the final reach assessment of the pulse reach assessment work they have been doing. This was a re-assessment.

Pollyanne with Inter-Fluve presented the updated reach assessment. The assessment includes maps of geologic substrate, redds, and other important factors. The reach assessment also includes information on both past and planned projects, and they delineated habitat units on maps. The study area was

broking down into segments and reaches. The first segment (Reach 1) was near the town of Twisp. Segment 2 only includes Reach 2 and is upstream of Twisp. Segment 3 includes Reaches 3 through 5. There are more floodplains and large wood in this segment due to restoration, but the segment is confinement because of the highway and other structures that limit lateral migration. There appears to be plenty of alluvium; constraints need to be removed to reconnect the river with the floodplain. Segment 4 includes Reaches 6 and 7. Here, there are fewer levees, but bank armoring exists in many locations. The Bear Creek fan produces some natural confinement, but it is alluvium and would be a more dynamic system if human impacts were removed. Segment 5 is near Winthrop and includes Reach 8. There is some natural entrenchment in this segment due to adjacent terraces; however, entrenchment has likely been enhanced because of land uses. Segment 6 includes Reaches 9 and 10 and is upstream of Winthrop. Segment 7 includes Reach 11 and is along the confluence of Wolf Creek. Segment 8 is Lower Big Valley and includes Reaches 12 and 13. TIR flights indicate cold-water locations in this segment. This segment is much different than the downstream sections. Nevertheless, there remain major anthropogenic effects in this segment. There is a vegetated riparian corridor, but most of the trees are immature and the segment lacks large key pieces. Segment 9 includes Reaches 14 through 16. Bank armoring and levees exist in this segment, but it is less confined than other segments in the assessment area.

The reach assessment summarized habitat units and large wood across all reaches. The locations of large wood were identified within each reach. Comparison with past reach assessments showed some improvements in habitat metrics. Pollyanna noted that the data in this reach assessment pre-dates the implementation of enhancement actions on the Sugar Channels.

Pollyanna walked through all the proposed projects. There were 10 Tier 1 projects, 6 Tier 2 projects, and 9 Tier 3 projects. All but a few Tier 1 projects were upstream of the Wolf Creek fan. All Tier 3 projects were at or downstream of the Wolf Creek fan.

John Arterburn brought up the issue of diluting the cold-water benefits of groundwater and the effectiveness of groundwater galleries. John mentioned that he noticed the addition of perennial side channels and groundwater galleries and was concerned that those existing channels may become less suitable if the cold water in them is diluted. Pollyanna followed up that a suggestion does not necessarily mean it is ideal for that site.

John Arterburn also mentioned that in the maps it would be useful to distinguish between natural and constructed logjam by using different colors. He also mentioned that there needs to be a balance between the river system and the landscape. Ideally, he said, we want nature to take over. That is, large wood should be naturally recruited to the stream. Pollyanna mentioned they do provide a summary of wood recruitment potential in the assessment report.

John Crandall commented that a lot of the restoration treatments are wood and side channels. He asked whether boulder placement was considered. Pollyanna responded that they did identify places between Winthrop and Twisp without cover that could benefit from placement of large boulders. Originally, they were on the maps, but there was concern they were being used to “fill in a pool” instead of providing cover in the pools. Those areas are described in Appendix C.

John Crandall asked how they distinguished between natural and artificial (anthropogenic) entrenchment and how they measured trends in vertical channel stability. Pollyanna mentioned that natural confinement happens from bedrock, alluvial fans, and terraces. Anthropogenic factors also drive entrenchment and that is often due to removal of boulders and/or bank hardening. To identify vertical stability, they looked at the state of bars and whether they consist of well sorted substrate. They also look for other geomorphologic clues including whether material is being moved to downstream reaches.

Ryan Niemeyer mentioned that in Appendix B for Pools, the pool REI metrics worsened over time (i.e., went from Adequate to At Risk or Unacceptable). Pollyanna indicated that potentially it was a different hydrograph year and the pool metrics are different. Tracy Hillman noted that histograms showing shifts in habitat would be useful.

Decisions:

- **None**

Action Items:

- **Members will send written comments on the Methow Twisp to Weeman Bridge Reach Assessment to Tracy Hillman by Friday, 10 April 2026. Tracy will compile the comments and send them to Hans Smith and Inter-Fluve.**

Upper White Pine II Alternatives

Scott Bailey introduced the presentation on the Upper White Pine II alternatives. This project is set between RM 12 and 15. As with most Nason Creek reaches, the highway, railway, and powerlines are significant constraints to restoration work in Nason Creek. The Upper White Pine Phase I project was a successful floodplain and riparian project; however, there are some areas in which vegetation is not well established yet. Scott reminded everyone that a levee was removed to allow better floodplain connectivity and channel meandering was created. The reach assessment completed by the Yakama Nation and Inter-Fluve highlighted some additional treatments for this area. This included the removal of riprap on river-left, removal of the remaining levee, side channel construction and enhancement, placement of additional logs, and vegetation planting. The County is looking to develop a 15% design.

John Soden identified and described subsections in the project area. The first subsection is the Upper Meander, which has potential for additional wood and other actions. The second subsection is the Confined Reach. This is a challenging area because it is difficult to access and very confined. The third subsection is the Berm Reach, where some spoils still exist.

John Soden indicated that the first phase of the project improved floodplain connection, added ELJs and instream habitat, and included riparian plantings. He stated that the wetland mitigation site is functioning well and revegetation is working in most sites. During the December flooding event there was complete inundation in the wetland area. Even after flooding, the restoration site appears to be functioning as planned. The ELJs continue to provide margin habitat and bank stability but there remain opportunities to increase channel complexity. In addition, there is potential to add more conifers and kickstart riparian regeneration.

Laura Zanetto (NSD) then identified and discussed project alternatives. This included the removal of riprap on river left, removing the remaining levee, side channel creation on river left, adding instream ELJs and boulder clusters for complexity, and riparian plantings. There are several constraints that will affect the phase II project, such as minimizing impacts on the existing floodplain, avoiding impacts on the wetland mitigation site, avoiding risk to BNSF railway prism, inability to use helicopters, and steep slopes.

Alternative 1 (and other alternatives) avoid impacts on spawning habitat just downstream of RM 13.5. Boulder cluster and ELJ placements and floodplain connectivity are included in alternative 1. The other alternatives include some of the same elements as alternative 1 but are less intensive. For example, the last alternative includes no boulder clusters under the powerline corridor and no ELJs; boulder clusters would be placed only in the created meander.

Tracy Hillman asked whether adult and juvenile Chinook Salmon and steelhead are using the area restored under Phase I work. Scott responded that they have no data on fish use on the site. Tracy also asked about reconnecting the side channel on river right that is on the south side of the railway. Scott commented that there are lots of constraints including structures that would be inundated. In addition, the BPA powerline passes through there so there is high solar input.

Tracy commented that there is a tremendous amount of potential at this site and was disappointed that the full potential of the site could not be achieved during Phase I. He asked whether the constraints that impeded full restoration at his site can be overcome during Phase II. John Soden responded that those constraints are still there and the wetland would potentially be affected. Scott added that Ecology limits conversion of one wetland type to another. Scott also noted the constraint of unraveling what was established in 2018.

John Arterburn commented that it is good to evaluate additional restoration opportunities in this area. He said the past project converted a channelized bowling alley to something slightly better. He suggested that alternatives consider narrower and deeper channels. He also indicated that the first alternative or at least an alternative should be the maximum that could be done in this area.

Ryan Niemeyer asked whether the proposed large wood and/or boulders would allow for more floodplain inundation. John Soden said it is unlikely the large wood would divert water onto the floodplain. Tracy asked about flows into the alcoves. John Soden mentioned potentially getting flows through those alcoves.

Steve Fortney agreed that fish-use data in the area would be beneficial. He asked about concerns regarding no-net rise. Laura responded that they are not concerned about no-net rise. She said there is a single building that is far off from the channel, but there is concern about impacting the railway. Steve also asked about any geomorphic change. Scott noted that there has not been any change in habitat units.

Scott Bailey indicated that if there is any additional feedback from the RTT to please send it to him as soon as possible.

Decisions:

- **None**

Action Items:

- **None**

Meeting adjourned at 12:00 pm