

Fish Passage Barrier Removal Board – Meeting Notes

Date: November 18, 2014

Place: Governor Hotel, Olympia, Washington

Summary: Agenda items with formal action

Item	Formal Action
Meeting Notes	Approved meeting notes from October 2014

Summary: Follow-up actions

Item	Follow-up
Prepare next draft of request to regional salmon recovery boards that they identify focus areas; share initial draft with key boards to get feedback – in preparation for meeting with Council of Regions in December or January.	Julie will prepare next draft and circulate to FBRB by Monday, November 24.
A subcommittee of members was formed to further consider and develop criteria for evaluating projects.	Brian, Casey, and Paul agreed to work with Julie on this subcommittee. Meeting needs to be scheduled.
Develop a demonstration project for potential funding for this session	WDFW will send some examples out to FBRB members for further discussion.

Board Members/Alternates Present:

David Price, Chair (WDFW)	Chris Hanlon-Meyer, WDNR
Casey Baldwin, Colville Confederated Tribes	Brian Abbott, GSRO
Paul Wager, DOT	Carl Schroeder, AWC
Jonalee Squeochs, Yakama Indian Nation	
Julie Henning, WDFW	

Welcome/Introductions/Agenda Review

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. by facilitator Neil Aaland. Neil asked people around the table to introduce themselves, and then reviewed the agenda. Julie Henning explained that she will be remaining on the Board as the WDFW Alternate. A motion was made by Paul Wagner to approve the September meeting notes; Chris Hanlon-Meyer seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Comments: Nobody present wished to offer any comments.

Review Guiding Principles for identifying Focus Areas

The FBRB decided, at the last meeting, to meet with the regional Salmon Recovery Boards and ask them to identify focus areas. In preparation for a meeting with the Council of Regions in December or January, Julie drafted some guiding principles for her or David Price to use in this meeting. The goal is to be able to develop a proposal to share with the regions and get some initial feedback from them. She reviewed the proposal that was e-mailed out to the FBRB for today’s meeting – titled “Draft Request to salmon recovery regions to assist with determining focus are – November 14, 2014”.

There was a fair amount of discussion around the proposal. One of the issues is deciding how much guidance the FBRB provides. A concern is the regional boards may want to work in greater detail, and may want to get into matters such as criteria. Board members thought it would be too early to discuss criteria with regional boards, since the FBRB has only had basic discussions about that. Julie mentioned that Casey provided some additional language, which is shown on the draft under the dashed line.

The notion of preparing a “pilot” or “demonstration” proposal was raised. David said that is not part of the WDFW agency request package, but they are working on one that others might use if the question comes up. Julie thought it would be useful for all interested in this topic to have a proposal available for them to reference.

Paul Wagner pointed out that language for “correcting multiple barriers” rather than individual projects in the first paragraph might be limiting. Others agreed that this sentence should be revised; there may be times when just one barrier opens up many miles of stream habitat. Brian added that this is an aspiration, but sometimes might not be the best option. Neil summarized the discussion so far – that the emphasis should not be to favor multiple over single projects, but be open to both.

Paul commented that legislative direction is also about coordination.

The Board discussed whether this is a two-step process. First, identify the larger benefit to fish. Second, encourage multiple projects that could accomplish those benefits. Provide opportunities for bundling projects.

We expect that Puget Sound and the Coast may have the most difficulty with determining focus areas. The Puget Sound region tends to spread funding somewhat proportionately. The difficulty for this Board will be that we don’t want 27 focus areas to be proposed. If Puget Sound submits all 27 watersheds, that means the FBRB has to pick the focus watersheds. The regions shouldn’t want us to have to do that.

Paul pointed out that there are a lot of areas with incomplete information on barriers. Picking focus areas helps identify where more information is needed. One comment was made that inventory should be a separate track; identify where more information is needed. It was suggested that each region should be asked – where do you start [in correcting barriers]?

Discussion then focused around fish species. Casey suggested that anadromous versus listed species is an issue, and that topic should be added to the background section on the proposal. That language is from the legislation. However, this leaves out the coast, with no listed species – how does that fit in? Dave thought the coast is truly unique; what population benefits would accrue for fish? Paul pointed out that depressed stocks are also mentioned in the legislation.

Chris asked how the information being provided will be used and compared. The discussion focused on not scoring this information, but it will be used to provide information back to the regions on their priorities. For example, providing them with any information on barriers that the agencies have. It would then be an iterative process.

The Board discussed the legislative direction. In general, members think there is flexibility in the legislative language, and the focus should be on ESA recovery but also acknowledge that ensuring healthy stocks stay healthy is important (which would provide some room for coastal stocks).

A question was asked about the detailed questions listed under the dashed line. Chris suggested adding another section that talks about the next steps, and wonders whether these questions are more aimed at the next steps (after the focus areas are submitted). Dave wonders if the scale of the questions is at the population level; the questions are ones the regions should be asking, it’s already their job to ask these. The first two questions are useful, following ones are more VSP-type questions.

Additional discussion and comments¹ from members and alternates:

¹ In these meeting notes, the sections for each topic on questions and comments do not necessarily reflect consensus or a decision; they only reflect individual discussion point unless otherwise noted

- What is the path forward to a revised proposal? [Julie will send out a revised proposal on Monday November 24, and ask for feedback 1 week later. Then it will be provided to the regions. Note: it is important that comments be provided only to the preparer; using “reply all” contravenes the Open Public Meetings Act.]
- Do we want to know some of the answers right now to the questions listed under the dashed line? For example, do we want to know the current health of the stream, or issues related to ownership? [Perhaps not that level of detail, but some idea of how feasible correction would be is useful.]
- It’s valuable to ask if there’s any low-hanging fruit, but keep that separate from the systematic approach
- We are asking more for focus areas where many “groups” of projects can be obtained rather than a single barrier or a prioritized list of projects
- Certain regions may only have one focus area
- Some regions may want to switch focus areas after some period of funding – not be limited to staying in a given focus area
- Once the regions provide their focus areas, we need to accept those
- They don’t necessarily answer the questions to use, we’re not in the business of evaluating them
- Are irrigation dams on the east side of the state covered? [Yes, the legislation includes man-made barriers]
- Julie reminded the group that we might have more than one funding track – e.g. opportunistic
- We need to consider where people are willing and could make good progress
 - It’s valuable to include guidance that is not just natural resource related – e.g. consider whether it’s feasible

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Criteria for evaluation of project proposals

Julie handed out a revised draft of the proposal she prepared for the October meeting. The legislative principles were moved to the top. She then reviewed the table and potential criteria, and explained that the criteria originally came from Casey’s e-mail to Julie. She thinks it would be most productive if the group could talk about whether the categories listed were the right ones, are there additional ones. Then, it would be helpful to focus on each criteria and discuss them.

Brian asked about the technical assistance piece. Is it possible to provide technical assistance up front for potential applicants; help the regions put together the package? Dave agreed with the idea and noted that the best projects for SRFB and ESRP have up-front help, but WDFW hasn’t determined funding for this. The original fiscal note had some of that type of assistance built in.

Paul asked if this is intended to set up a new funding program, or whether it possible to merge with another program. Julie explained the FBRB is required to develop criteria, but the statute says any funding would go through RCO or the Transportation Improvement Board.

Additional comments and questions from members and alternates:

- A bullet should be added to habitat importance related to threatened and endangered species
- Lower barriers should be scheduled for fixing and have funding identified for upstream barriers to qualify
- Having a viable plan for lower barriers should be part of the proposal
- What about fish utilization – e.g. number of fish, number of species – what is the fish use in the system now?
- Juvenile use is also important
- Categories seem broadly appropriate
- Need to somehow get to habitat compared to cost; add “what’s the proposed budget” and what is the diversity of benefits (perhaps that should be its own category)

- Pull out “emergency situations” for now
- Casey noted the bullets he provided in the email to Julie were for regions, not for criteria
- We will later need to agree on what criteria to use and the weighting
- Carl said Paul had an interesting question - how does the Board value potential habitat gains from 1 project versus multiple projects

Julie asked for volunteers for a subcommittee to further work on this. Casey, Brian, and Paul volunteered.

Development of a Demonstration Project

The idea of developing a demonstration project came up at the previous meeting. The idea is to have some thinking on paper in case, during the session, a request is made for ways to advance progress on fish passage barrier removal. WDFW has some examples, the idea is using existing data to identify some barriers. Then, any seed money could be used to get a jump start. The idea would be to use a generic example, would not go to landowners at this point.

Comments and discussion:

- Could either do an example generic project, or get a real world example
- Paul liked the idea of using a project underway, talking about a real life idea
- Julie thought a stream could be found with just a couple of barriers, not too complex
- Brian thought we could use existing programs to find projects
- Dave is thinking they (WDFW) may send out some examples to the board

Summary/Next Steps

1. The next meeting in December has a short time frame; Dave is wondering about scheduling a shorter meeting, or a conference call. Casey said he was planning to call in anyway, so that works for him.
2. There was some discussion about FBRB meetings during the legislative session. Carl said it is harder to do meeting during that time, and suggested thinking about Monday mornings or Friday afternoons, as few legislative meetings or hearings are scheduled then.
3. Julie agreed to prepare the next draft of the request to salmon recovery regions, and get that out to FBRB members by Monday November 24th.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 2:40 p.m.

The next meeting of the Board will be Tuesday, December 16, 2014. This may be a shortened meeting held by conference call. Details to be determined.

Others present at meeting:

Neil Aaland, Facilitator	Marc McCalmon, WDFW
Alison Hart, WDFW	Bonnie Kim, Washington State Senate staff