

Fish Passage Barrier Removal Board – Meeting Notes

Date: June 18, 2019

Place: Association of Washington Cities, Olympia, Washington

Summary: Agenda items with formal action

| Item | Formal Action |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Meeting notes from April 2019 | Approved |
| Signage for projects | Approved as modified at meeting |

Summary: Follow-up actions

| Item | Follow-up |
|---|----------------------------------|
| Board strategy for both pathways (lessons learned and considering strategy) | Begin discussing at July meeting |
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Board Members/Alternates Present:

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|--------------------------|--|
| Carl Schroeder, AWC | Wendy Brown, RCO |
| Paul Wagner, DOT | Dave Caudill, RCO |
| John Foltz, COR | Jonalee Squeechs, Yakama Tribe (phone) |
| Tom Jameson, Chair, WDFW | Casey Baldwin, Colville Tribes |
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Others present at meeting:

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|---|--|
| Neil Aaland, Facilitator | Mike Kaputa, Chelan County |
| Rebecca Benjamin, N. Olympic Salmon Coal. | Matt Miskovic, KPFF |
| Wendy Brown, RCO | Aaron Peterson, Regional Fisheries Coalition |
| David Blue, Chinook Hab Restor Group | Gina Piazza, WDFW |
| Wendy Clark-Getzin, Jefferson County | Christy Rains, WDFW |
| Dave Collins, WDFW | Cade Roler, WDFW |
| Alison Hart, WDFW | Erik Schwartz, Mason County |
| Lynn Helbrecht, WDFW | George Wilhere, WDFW |
| Steve Helvey, GeoEngineers | |

Welcome/Introductions/Agenda Review: Meeting started at 9:00. Facilitator Neil Aaland reviewed the agenda.

Public Comment: Wendy Clark-Getzin noted that the budget funded a list of projects, something worth celebrating. She noted they had a ribbon-cutting ceremony for their Discovery Bay project. They're seeing returns of juvenile summer chum at 12-year highs.

Old Business

Meeting notes: The meeting notes for the April meeting were unanimously approved as submitted.

Signage: Dave Caudill posted two examples of signage. He had discussed them with Jeannie Abbott, who thought they looked good. The Board discussed pros and cons. FBRB will provide the signs and pole at a cost of about \$150. Installation will be part of the contract agreement, but recipients can request being released from that requirement if there is a good justification. A motion was made to adopt the sign but take off the agency logos, just leaving the website link. Motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

Legislative Update

Tom started with Personnel changes in WDFW. The Assistant Director for Fish, Ron Warren, has been moved to a policy position. Kelly Cunningham is acting Assistant Director. Jeff Davis is now responsible for conservation policy; Margen Carlson is acting Assistant Director for Habitat. There will be competition for the positions. There are three finalists for Justin's position, all internal. They were interviewed yesterday. Next step is reference checks. Margen will make the final decision.

He then discussed the legislative session. The white paper produced by Joe Mentor and several others was widely discussed. Tom, Justin, and Paul Wagner all provided feedback on the paper. Tom summarized some highlights and recommendations from the paper:

- The authors did not think a comprehensive strategy is in place to guide the Board
- FBRB does not attempt to reconcile actions with FFFPP, RMAP
- Legislature has not provided clear goals
- The watershed pathway is a process, not a strategy
 - Joe Mentor thinks the state should dictate which projects will be done
- The FBRB should do a Priority Index – habitat survey for every barrier (out of 30,000)
- Match should not be required
- Adequate funding is needed
- Adequate enforcement of regulations is needed

Joe is still working this. Legislators seemed to think the paper was credible but it “pushed the envelope”.

Tom then discussed a draft budget proviso that he helped prepare for the House. This proviso did not get out of the House and into the Senate. Components of the proviso:

- Develop a comprehensive plan
- Achieve a coordinated investment strategy
- Achieve several specific goals including orca recovery, targeting weak stocks, and efficient bundling of projects
- Board would determine priorities for other barrier programs

Tom noted that the Board needs to consider whether we have the right strategy. Comments and questions:

- Paul heard when tribes looked at these different strategies, one common message was to not interfere with the culverts case
- Carl also heard that U.S. v Washington is the top priority. He doesn't think we got in front of the Senate early enough but thinks the conversation will continue; we made some progress.
- Neil suggested the Board schedule time to review the approaches to funding, perhaps this summer [Tom and Paul agreed]
- Paul thinks part of this is looking at our approach and considering feedback; look at messaging
- Casey agreed, but disagrees that we don't have a strategy. We don't cogently describe one, though. This could probably be done quickly, should be a short term goal.
- John Foltz said the Board's been successful in getting capital dollars; what's been our strategy in finding projects in the past?
- Carl agrees with Casey that we DO have a strategy. Coordinated pathway for highest priority projects. How do we get more projects in the door? It's an interesting observation that others don't think we articulate a strategy.
- Wendy suggested looking at both pathways; she doesn't think the watershed pathway is really a watershed pathway
- Carl noted that other programs are operating in silos; aligning projects would be good

- He also thinks that this summer we should spend some time on this; the funding we got - \$26 million – is a very good sign
- Neil said he would work with Tom on a strategy session for the Board during the summer

Funding 17-19 and 19-21 Updates and Balances

Tom reviewed the funding spreadsheet for 17-19. We have \$486,000 left out of \$19.2 million. He has approved design funding for two alternates; these are also on the 19-21 funding list. Dave Caudill thinks there is a variance with RCO figures; the variance may be from what Tom has approved for Coleman Creek.

Tom handed out the 19-21 funding list. The Board asked for \$81 million for 66 projects, administrative costs, and a \$19 million allocation (to be allocated later). The Board got a total of \$26 million. This funds the list down to King County’s Ravensdale Creek project; projects 52-56 are now alternates. Everything after 56 is unfunded and not alternates. One other note is concern from OFM about using capital funds to cover labor costs; concerns about federal taxes.

John Foltz wonders about cost changes, how to address this given the nature of cost estimating. Tom said we can’t really create contingency funding as a category. Dave thinks we’ve been lucky so far, that’s a tough question. John thinks sponsors should be encouraged to somehow build in contingency. Tom noted we have \$486 K remaining, all remaining alternates are on the 19-21 funded list so we could give them some funding now.

Climate adapted culverts – George Wilhere

George started by stating in the future we’ll have less snow and more rain. This will cause larger peak stream flows. In culvert design, bankfull width is a key parameter. Working with the UW Climate Impacts Group, they looked at a number of models to predict increases in bankfull width, and projected bankfull width for specific watersheds. He discussed real world applications – a brochure on designing projects for the future, and an internal DFW intranet site with information will be moved to the internet for greater general access.

Next steps:

- Update streamflow numbers
- Update bankfull width projections
- Move intranet to internet
- Create a user-friendly internet site

They’re looking for user group members to make this happen.

Questions and comments from the Board:

- Is there a regular update process? [depends on the Climate Impacts Group]
- Does the existing model allow applicability to specific projects? [yes]
- Need to be able to defend this, since some legislators already think “Cadillac culverts” are being designed
 - George said some concerns are noted; we don’t have any documentation on the 1.2 factor [estimate of greater bankfull width is a factor of 1.2]
- Tom noted that half of the projects in the new list are design; they’d need to consider this information

A break was taken at 11:00.

Pilchuck Watershed Presentation

Gretchen Glaub and Morgan Ruff were on WebEx for this presentation. They introduced the Basin. It is equally divided into King and Snohomish counties. There are several communities that guide this work in the basin. Culverts are tier 2 and 3 priorities so they don't rank high for other funding. It seems that coho benefits score the highest; they don't have a basin-wide prioritization for culverts.

They discussed why they focused on Pilchuck. Parts of the watershed are on Ecology's 303D list [listing of impaired waterbodies]. The tribe has funding to remove a diversion dam – this will open access to 37 miles of habitat.

They reviewed funded projects and discussed how they are leveraging funding. They don't have a basin wide culvert strategy so don't have a plan on where to go next. They're interested in more fish passage work. King County has recently hired a fish passage coordinator, and they've developed a prioritization.

Final thoughts from Gretchen and Morgan:

- They've been working with NOAA on ways to streamline information needed for permits, ways to speed up the process
- Can culverts play a role in treating water quality?
- Beavers – they've started trapping and relocating beavers into the upper watershed

Their sponsors have some requests:

- Good to have ways to share data to improve efficiency; how to help counties share their assessments?
- RFP transparency – culvert ranking criteria
- Better understanding of funding opportunities – communication to lead entities
- Extra capacity would be helpful

John asked how they know to stay in the Pilchuck watershed – any gaps? Morgan and Gretchen said they're not able to move rapidly in “knocking things out”. They're curious to watch as King County ramps up their efforts. Two different counties with their own approach; their prioritizations might look different. Carl wonders if they prioritize culverts would there be a different watershed as a focus? They think Pilchuck would probably still be a focus.

LUNCH BREAK from 12:15 – 12:45

WSDOT Workplan Update

Paul Wagner gave this update. He passed out a project map for 2019-21 within the culverts case area. Previous funding for case area has been \$90-\$120 million per biennium, now it's upwards of \$275 million for this upcoming biennium. They have a deadline of 2030 to correct hundreds of barriers. They are moving toward a design/build model. This gives more flexibility, more workforce. Hope to roll out this approach in the next 3-4 months. Next biennium budget should increase to \$750 million. Carl asked about legislative language regarding “local projects”; Paul interprets that to mean leverage and coordinate, not to fund local projects.

Comments and questions:

- Carl thinks FBRB needs to consider what this local coordination would look like

- Rebecca thinks have Cade and Gina look at these maps, funnel that information to LEs and others
- Christy said this information is available now, she can help
- Cade thinks this looks like a difficult permitting process
- Paul is bringing on more staff, more liaisons within permitting agencies
- John said additional information on the map would be helpful; help coordinate RFP schedules
- DOT will post a revised map on the DOT site as more information is available

North of Falcon

Tom Jameson provided this update. It is an annual negotiation between state and treaty tribes regarding fishing. The catch is estimated and divided. It's a seven week process. John Foltz noted this also occurs in the Columbia Basin.

Construction Photos

Several pictures of Johnson Creek were shown. Then, several of Chico Creek that were taken last week. They are first building a bridge over a culvert, then removing the culvert.

Other topics

Cade handed out a draft schedule for the upcoming coordinated pathway. He has not yet put together a schedule for the watershed pathway; it would be similar.

Upcoming meetings will include lessons learned from Lead Entities and strategic planning. The Board has a lot to do, starting with the July meeting.

Next meeting: Tuesday, July 16, 2019 – Rainier Room, Association of Washington Cities