



**Brian Abbott Fish Barrier Removal Board – November Meeting Summary**

**Date:** November 16, 2021

**Time:** 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

**Location:** Virtual Meeting

**Summary: Formal Actions/Decisions**

Item	Formal Action
Meeting notes from October, 2021	Approved

**Summary: Follow-up Actions**

Item	Follow-up
Board engagement with the National Culvert Removal, Replacement, and Restoration Grant Program	Board members were asked to reach out to their federal, state, Tribal, and Governor’s Office contacts to better understand the political landscape around the National Culvert Grant Program, the venues for statewide collaboration, and the perceived role of the FBRB.
Policy Subcommittee	The Board will consider convening the Policy Subcommittee to further discuss prioritization, ongoing inventory efforts, and pathways for Board engagement with federal grant program.

**Welcome/Introductions/Agenda Review:** Facilitator, Joy Juelson, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Alex Sweetser facilitated introductions with FBRB members and staff. A quorum was present.

**Public Comment:** No public comments were received.

**Old Business:** The meeting notes for the FBRB October 2021 meeting were approved by the Board.

**General Updates:**

***FBRB Personnel***

Chair Tom Jameson, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) explained there has been some risk for funding staff through the Board because staff bill their labor to tax exempted bonds used to fund the Board. Additionally, WDFW and RCO have received a lower amount of funds than requested. Also, he noted that no WDFW support staff were lost from vaccine mandate.

***Proviso Strategist Update***

The Chair explained WDFW is still trying to hire a new strategist to support the Proviso Report and once the position is posted, he will let the Board know. He noted there is a supplemental budget request to fund a strategist, which includes some dedicated time from a GIS technician to assist.

### ***Annual Culvert Case Injunction Meeting updates***

The Chair explained the Annual Culvert Case Injunction Meeting was held on November 2, 2021 between state agencies and the Western Treaty Tribes to make sure the State of Washington is following through on the culvert injunction. The State provided a briefing on projects completed, projects that need to be started or completed, any newly discovered fish passage barriers, and funding available from the state legislature. He noted most of the meeting focused on the work required by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and the Tribes were concerned about the estimated \$4 billion needed to meet injunction requirements. Currently, WSDOT needs to ask the legislature for funding every two years because there is no dedicated funding source. Additionally, all parties discussed properties with existing barriers newly acquired by state agencies.

### ***Other Updates***

The Chair provided a brief update on the following additional topics:

- An FBRB Application Workshop was held on October 27, 2021. At the meeting, grant applicants were told how to apply for FBRB grants, how the online PRISM platform works, and the components of an application.
- The Chair discussed other prioritization efforts occurring across the state:
  - WDFW met with the Puget Sound Partnership (PSP) for a workshop to discuss a prioritization scheme for the fish passage strategy. The next meeting is in December 2021.
  - Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is developing a pilot prioritization scheme for the Snohomish River Valley.

### **Discussion on Board Engagement with National Culvert Removal, Replacement, and Restoration Grant Program**

The Facilitator recapped the National Culvert Removal, Replacement, and Restoration Grant Program presentation that Margen Carlson and Meagan West, WDFW, gave at the last FBRB meeting on October 19, 2021. The Chair explained the program received \$1 billion spread over 5-years from the recently passed Federal Infrastructure Bill. This totals \$200 million per year. This can be raised to \$800 million per year if Congress passes appropriation bills.

The Facilitator summarized the discussion and ideas generated the Board to engage with or support the federal grant process at the October FBRB meeting:

- Fund Board alternates from FY 21-23 list.
- Engage in outreach to spread awareness of the grant program and provide technical assistance.
- Develop a mapping layer to visualize project locations and interconnection.
- Explore the possibility for a state match.

The Chair explained 66 of the FBRB's projects were approved as alternates by the state legislature, which means they would be funded if the money were available. These projects are queued in PRISM and require \$39.28 million in funds for design and implementation. Additionally, he noted that it is unclear what the new federal grant program would look like, and the Board may need to wait for the request for proposals (RFP) to be released to better understand the details. Then, the Governor's Office could bring

the state agencies together, develop legislative handouts, and potentially develop a strategy. WSDOT will likely apply for funding because they do not have a dedicated source of funding to meet the injunction requirements and currently fall short every year.

*Board Questions and Discussion:*

- Erik Neatherlin, Governor's Salmon Recovery Office (GSRO) noted the bill includes language for anadromous fish species and orcas, which means there is a significant opportunity for Washington to receive these funds. It will be important for the state agency family and its partners to leverage their resources to make Washington competitive for the program. Before the next Board meeting in January 2022, he requested Board members engage in outreach with their contacts at the U.S. Department of Transportation (US DOT), state representatives, state agencies, Tribes, and other salmon recovery partners to spread awareness of the program and begin exploring pathways for collaboration. Additionally, he noted the Board will need to have an ongoing conversation with WSDOT to understand the linkage between this program and funding for the culvert injunction.
- Carl Schroeder, Association of Washington Cities, suggested engaging with US DOT to model the program after the FBRB grant program. Additionally, the Board could submit or refer their projects to the program to receive these funds.
- Board members discussed the possibility for the state to submit one large application or if applications need to be individually submitted by applicant/organization. Board members were supportive of a larger application, but more details on the program are needed to know if this approach is possible.
- Paul Wagner, WSDOT, explained his agency was in early communications to develop the bill's language with Senator Cantwell. Also, he noted that WSDOT has a plan to meet the injunction requirements by 2030, which had previously been shared with the Board, but they have not received the needed funds or a dedicated funding source. Each year, WSDOT pursues multiple pathways for federal funding and is exploring the possibility of applying to this program. The initial \$200 million per year would not be enough to meet WSDOT's needs, but it would be very helpful. Lastly, he noted coordination throughout the state would be beneficial and encouraged outreach to coordinate around the federal program.
- Board members noted statewide coordination may likely occur in a venue outside the Board with the Governor's Office. Additionally, they noted it will be very important to engage and coordinate with the Tribes on a path forward.
- Board members discussed statewide efforts for prioritization and ongoing efforts to inventory fish passage barriers as a possible pathway to receive funds from the federal grant program for critical projects. They noted it would be important to leverage the Board's resources and partnerships to demonstrate the state's success in addressing fish passage barriers. Board members expressed their interest in convening the Policy Subcommittee to further discuss prioritization, ongoing inventory efforts, and pathways for Board engagement with US DOT. This will likely occur following the January FBRB meeting.

*Path Forward:* Consider convening the Policy Subcommittee to further discuss prioritization, ongoing inventory efforts, and pathways for Board engagement with federal grant program following the January FBRB meeting.

*Action Items:* Board members are asked to reach out to their federal, state, Tribal, and Governor’s Office contacts to better understand the political landscape around the National Culvert Grant Program and about the perceived role of the FBRB in it. Additionally, Board members are requested to engage in outreach to spread awareness of the program and explore venues for statewide collaboration.

## **FBRB Projects Status Update**

Matt Curtis, WDFW, and WDFW staff provided a status update on the projects funded and completed in the 2017-2019 grant round. They noted the intent of this presentation was to show where the program is, what has been done with the funds provided by the Board, and to “give thanks for fish passage.” Matt explained there was a large project list from the 2019-2021 grant program and many of these projects are still in progress and will be presented at a future Board meeting. A video of presentation slides from the meeting, and the 2019-2021 grant round project list, are available on the FBRB webpage linked here: [Brian Abbott Fish Barrier Removal Board | Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife](#)

### *Board Questions and Discussion:*

- Several Board members thanked WDFW staff for developing the presentation and bringing attention to the projects funded and completed through the FBRB grant program.
- In response to a question from Carl Schroeder about the project changes to the Catherine Creek to Little Pilchuck Creek project, WDFW staff explained the project was shifted to preliminary designs for culvert replacement to maintain the project’s scope and to provide best investment with the funds.
- Susan Eugenis, Washington State Association of Counties, noted that from the county perspective, it was heartening to see projects funded and completed. These projects are not always the top focus, but it is important that counties can advance their projects through this grant program.
- Matt noted he would like to provide a similar update to the Board in the future, perhaps around this time next year. He said it is important for Board to see the outcomes of their discussions on prioritization and funding, in addition to seeing fish passage improvements happening.

## **Updates for Upcoming FBRB Grant Round**

Matt Curtis explained the grant round opened on November 1<sup>st</sup>. There were about 100 participants at Application Workshop on October 27<sup>th</sup>, which is expected to reflect the number of applications. Currently, there are 30 applications in process, which is a large number for this early in the process.

- A recording of the workshop presentation and the grant application schedule is available on the RCO website: [Brian Abbott Fish Barrier Removal Board - RCO \(wa.gov\)](#).

## **Discuss Upcoming Opportunities for Engagement**

Chair Jameson noted the following upcoming engagement opportunities:

- The Puget Sound Partnership’s 5-year strategy meeting will be on December 5, 2021.
- Carl Schroeder was invited to the Washington Conservation Council Conference.

- The National Culvert Grant Program is the biggest upcoming opportunity. Past engagement by WDFW with Rep. Kilmer was helpful and the bill language shows he understood the requests for the program.
- Carl noted the Governor’s Salmon Strategy includes a fish passage component. He hopes to have a detailed conversation about the strategy in January 2022.

**Adjourn:** The meeting adjourned early at approximately 11:50 a.m.

**Next Meeting: Tuesday, January 18, 2021 – online meeting**

**ATTENDANCE**

**Board Members/Alternates:**

Axel Swanson, Washington State Association of Counties	John Foltz, Council of Regions, Snake River Salmon Recovery Board (SRSRB)
Carl Schroeder, Association of Washington Cities	Matt Curtis, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)
Chair Thomas Jameson, WDFW	Paul Wagner, Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)
Erik Neatherlin, Governor’s Salmon Recovery Office (GSRO)	Susan Kanzler, WSDOT
Jeannie Abbott, GSRO	Susan Eugenis, Washington State Association of Counties
Joe Shramek, Department of Natural Resources (DNR)	Tim Ressegiue, Yakama Indian Nation

**WDFW, RCO Staff and Triangle Facilitation Team:**

Adam Fleming, WDFW	Laura Till, WDFW
Alison Hart, WDFW	Alice Rubin, Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO)
Amber Martens, WDFW	Alissa Ferrell, RCO
Casey Costello, WDFW	Elizabeth Butler, RCO
Cassandra Weekes, WDFW	Josh Lambert, RCO
Christy Rains, WDFW	Kendall Barrameda, RCO
Gabrielle Stilwater, WDFW	Joy Juelson, Facilitator
Gina Piazza, WDFW	Alex Sweetser, Facilitator
Julie Groebelny, WDFW	

**Others observing:**

Bruce P.	Heidi Reynolds	Matthew Miskovic
Cheryl Baumann, North Olympic Lead Entity	James Blankenbeckler	Neil Aaland
Christina Kereki	Jim Heytvelt	Otto Lucas
Chuck Purnell	Jon Ambrose	Steve Helvey
Don Gourlie, Puget Sound Partnership	Kevin Long, North Olympic Salmon Coalition	Tracy Gilson
Elena Fernandez	Maria Jawad, Dept. of Commerce	