



## Brian Abbott Fish Barrier Removal Board – November 2024 Meeting Summary

**Date:** November 19, 2024

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

**Location:** Virtual Meeting

### Summary: Formal Actions / Decisions

Item	Formal Action
<b>Board Decision:</b> October 2024 Meeting Notes	Approved
<b>Board Decision:</b> Coleman Creek Fish Screening & Passage Cost Increase Request	Approved
<b>Board Decision:</b> Kenney Creek at North Fork Road Barrier Removal Center Road MP 3.23.	Approved

### Summary: Follow-up Items and Next Steps

Item	Follow-up
<b>Technical Review Team (TRT) Process Info Session</b>	WDFW will convene an informational session to give an overview of the Technical Review Team (TRT) process and the role of the Board.
<b>Policy Subcommittee – Fish Passage Strategy Implementation</b>	The Policy Subcommittee will continue to meet and provide regular updates to the Board on development of the optimization model and incorporation of the output into updates to Manual 22.
<b>Future Cost Increase Funding Pool</b>	The Board will consider what amount of return funds should be set aside for future cost increase requests
<b>Funding Status Updates (<i>Ongoing</i>)</b>	WDFW and RCO will keep the Board updated on the status of returned funds. A decision on whether to: 1) retain funds for cost increases, or 2) advance funds to alternates down the ranked project list is anticipated this fall/winter.
<b>2027-2029 Grant Round (<i>Long-term</i>)</b>	The Board will discuss updates to the next grant round RFP based on topics identified by Board staff.
<b>Match Modernization (<i>On Hold</i>)</b>	The Board will continue to monitor the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB)'s implementation of match modernization and consider updating the Board match requirements for future grant rounds.

## **Welcome/Introductions/Agenda Review:**

Triangle Associates (Triangle) facilitator, Joy Juelson, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Chair Thomas Jameson, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), welcomed attendees to the virtual meeting.

Kate Galambos, Triangle, facilitated introductions with Board members and staff. A quorum was present.

## **Old Business:**

October Site Tours: John Foltz reflected on the success of the October 1<sup>st</sup> Board meeting, which was hosted in Omak, WA, and the site visits to projects on Johnson Creek near Riverside, WA. John thanked project sponsors who helped organize the visits to Johnson Creek projects as well as the Icicle Creek site visit on October 2 outside of Leavenworth, WA.

October Summary Notes: Joy reviewed the summary notes from the October 1, 2024, meeting.

### ***Decision: Approval of October 1 Meeting Summary***

Chair Jameson made a motion to approve the October meeting summary. Karen Zirkle seconded the motion. With no objections, the October meeting summary was approved.

**Public Comment:** None

## **Strategy Update and Incorporation into Board Scoring and Evaluation**

Joy introduced the WDFW Fish Passage Prioritization Strategy (Strategy), which has been an agenda topic for Board consideration for several months. At the October 1<sup>st</sup> Board meeting, the Strategy was still open for public comment. The public comment period has concluded and WDFW is working to incorporate feedback and finalize the Strategy.

Policy Subcommittee Highlights: Since October 1<sup>st</sup>, the Policy Subcommittee met twice (10/15, 11/5) to discuss the role of the Board in implementation of the Strategy. Joy noted key takeaways from those meetings including:

- The subcommittee believes the Board is the appropriate body to finalize the Strategy.
- There is a need to "broaden the table" and involve Regions, Tribes, counties and others in the conversation, with Governor's Salmon Recovery Office (GSRO) also playing a role.
- We need to explore how the Strategy tool can be used with Regional prioritization efforts, inventories, and other outputs/data sets.
- Staff suggested rebranding the Strategy as a "Statewide Prioritization Model" to better prioritize projects and increase opportunities to leverage federal funding.
- An implementation outline would be valuable to have by the end of the year, addressing key questions raised in the current Strategy and during the meeting.

- Staff presented on updating the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) Manual 22, which provides guidelines and criteria for evaluating and prioritizing grant applications and discussed possible opportunities to integrate the optimization model as part of a hybrid approach outlined in the Strategy.
- Some Board members raised concerns about integrating the optimization model before its development and the review of its outputs.
- 

Jane Atha, WDFW: Joy introduced Jane Atha, WDFW Fish Passage Strategist, to walk through an example of the outputs of the optimization model. The model outputs will be a table showing groups or tiers of barriers, prioritized based on the model criteria and the optimization parameters.

Kaylee Kautz, WDFW, and John Foltz, RCO: walked through how the initial output from the optimization model could be incorporated into the next FBRB grant round (27-29). See [presentation here](#).

The proposed approach includes:

- Adding a criterion to the existing Board scoring system, increasing the total points to 200 (from 180).
- The additional points for the statewide optimization model output are the same as those for given for watershed priority

John and Kaylee will continue to provide updates on the status of the model and updates to Manual 22.

Board Questions and Comments: on the proposed timeline and approach to incorporating the model:

- Would this approach replace the Priority Watershed criteria?
  - No, this would be an additional question/criteria. It would not replace any existing components of the Manual or Scoring Criteria.
- The Board should consider how to evaluate the model's outputs to ensure quality control and understand potential differences between statewide and regional priorities, should they occur.
  - How well do the output align with Regional priorities? Are differences due to variations in prioritization approaches, or are they the results of unmatched data?
- The statewide approach needs to be integrated into other efforts across the state beyond the FBRB process.
  - The three agencies tasked with developing this strategy are FBRB, WSDOT, and WDFW must collaborate to incorporate the model outputs; While the FBRB is taking the first step additional work will follow this initial proposal.
- The Board will have an opportunity to consider the specific point value assigned to the optimization model output to ensure it accurately weighted prior to the update to Manual 22 in August.
- The optimization analysis would be conducted for the entire state and the results would be compared to the project applications for the Board.
- The optimization model will be run with the existing Fish Passage and Diversion Screening Inventory (FPDSI).

**Path Forward:** The Policy Subcommittee will continue to meet and provide regular updates to the Board on development of the optimization model and incorporation of the output into updates to Manual 22.

## Next Steps for Barrier Inventory Assessment and Prioritization

Greer Maier, Science Coordinator GSRO, presented findings from interviews with regional salmon recovery organizations. Greer presented to the Board at the October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024 meeting with initial findings. Greer completed her interview process and summary of results from conversations with representatives from 24 Lead Entities.

Key Takeaways:

- 21 of the 24 Lead Entities noted that they have some kind of barrier prioritization system already
- Conservation Districts and Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups (RFEs) are the primary groups collecting data on private land, which is often a barrier to completing inventories
- Identifying the funding that partners can use to complete inventories regionally is a major challenge
- With limited funding, it is difficult to prioritize funding inventories instead of projects

**Path Forward:** The Board will consider how to use the data captured through these interviews to inform future decisions

## Remaining Return Funds

John gave an update to the Board on the status of available funds. The Climate Commitment Act (CCA) was not repealed through Initiative 2117, therefore the Board will have \$20.7 million, starting Jan. 1, to apply to the 23-25 project list. Given this additional funding, John has reached out to project sponsors for projects number 70-90 on the 23-25 list to offer funding.

Alice Rubin, RCO Grants Manager, noted that CCA funds cannot be applied to cost increase requests from project sponsors who already received 23-25 funding.

**Path Forward:** John will continue to work with project sponsors on the 23-25 to offer funding based on the funds made available by the CCA

**Future Decision:** How much funding would the Board like to reserve for future Cost Increase requests?

## Decision: Cost Increase Requests & Decisions

John walked through three cost increase requests and recommendations from the Cost Increase Subcommittee, which met on Nov. 12, 2024.

- 20-1692 CID at Coleman Creek Fish Screening & Passage, Kittitas Conservation District
  - 21-23 project list
  - \$964,093 requested cost increase
  - Cost increase largely due to inflation and delay due to COVID
  - Project bid in Fall 2024; all bids declined

- The Board currently has ~\$906k in return funds for the 21-23 project list
- Sponsor has indicated that they could implement the project with ~\$450,000 (half the remaining 21-23 funds)
- 20-1738 Kenney Creek at North Fork Road Barrier Removal, Whatcom County Public Works
  - 21-23 project list
  - \$1,140,131 requested cost increase
  - Cost increase largely due to 2021 floods in Whatcom County delaying project (emergency response), issues with obtaining right-of-way, and inflation
  - The Board currently has ~\$906k in return funds for the 21-23 project list
  - Sponsor has indicated that they could implement the project with ~\$450,000 (half the remaining 21-23 funds)

**Decision:** Erik Neatherlin made a motion to approve the cost increase request for \$453,200 based upon the cost increase request and the subcommittee recommendation for both Coleman Creek and Kenney Creek. Chair Jameson seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

- 21-1413 Center Rd. MP 3.23, Jefferson County
  - 23-25 project list
  - \$274,042 cost increase request to complete final designs and permitting.
  - Double barrel culvert replacement
  - Request due to additional costs associated with stormwater permitting and inflation.

**Decision:** Karen Zirkle made a motion to approve the cost increase request for \$274,042 based upon the cost increase request and the subcommittee recommendation for Center Road Milepost 3.23. Chair Jameson seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

## Discuss Upcoming Opportunities for Engagement

- Chair Jameson presented to the Washington State County Leaders on 11/19 on the status of Fish Passage Rulemaking and the Strategy
- British Columbia Salmon Recovery and Resilience Conference
  - Dec. 2-4, Vancouver Convention Center, Vancouver B.C.
  - Register here:
- Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office, [Salmon Recovery Conference](#)
  - April 28-30, 2025
  - Yakima, WA
  - Early Bird Registration: January 6 – February 9, 2025\*
  - Standard Registration: February 10 – April 7, 2025\*

## Other Updates

- Funding Opportunity: NOAA – Restoring Fish Passage Through Barrier Removal Grants
  - \$75 million is available for fish passage projects through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law

- Award amounts range from \$750,000-\$8 million for the entire award
- Grant application period: October 30, 2024 – February 10, 2025. [Apply here](#)

### **Wrap Up**

**Next Meeting:** The next FBRB meeting is scheduled for December 17<sup>th</sup>, virtually. Triangle will follow up with Board and staff to confirm if this meeting will be cancelled for the holiday.

**Adjourn:** The meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

## ATTENDANCE

### Board Members/Alternates:

Alex Swanson, WA Association of Counties	Carl Schroeder, WA Association of Cities
Erik Neatherlin, GSRO	Jeannie Abbott, GSRO
Karen Zirkle, DNR	Steve Manlow, Council of Regions
Susan Kanzler, WSDOT	Kaylee Kautz, WDFW
Thomas Jameson, WDFW	Tim Resseguie, Yakama Nation

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

Alice Rubin, RCO	Casey Costello, WDFW
Daniel Coffman, WDFW	Daniel Auerbach, WDFW
David Collins, WDFW	Gabrielle Stilwater, WDFW
Joel Ingram, WDFW	John Foltz, RCO
Josh Lambert, RCO	Joy Juelson, Triangle Associates
Julie Grobelny, WDFW	Kate Galambos, Triangle Associates
Melissa Erkel, WDFW	Molly Borgaard, WDFW

### Others observing:

Betsy Lyons	Brett DeMond	Cheryl Baumann
Kevin Long	Tracy Gilson	Daniel Howe
Greer Maier		