

Brian Abbott Fish Barrier Removal Board – Approved August Meeting Notes

Date: August 17, 2021

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

Location: Virtual Meeting

Summary: Formal Actions/Decisions

Item	Formal Action
Meeting notes from June, 2021	Approved
Seabeck Creek Culvert Removal cost increase request of \$410,403 to address an emergency erosion event	Approved

Summary: Follow-up Actions

Item	Follow-up
Develop a linear cost-increase process based on FBRB member feedback to the cost increase course of action (COA).	The cost increase subgroup will present the process to the FBRB at the next meeting.
Discuss development of a policy subcommittee and other subcommittees.	The FBRB will likely move forward with a policy subcommittee and consider developing additional subcommittees. A proposed action will be proposed at the next FBRB meeting.
Revise the Project Evaluation Scoring Criteria.	Request for FBRB members to provide revisions and comments to Matt Curtis with WDFW.

Welcome/Introductions/Agenda Review:

Facilitator, Joy Juelson, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Alex Sweetser called on FBRB members and alternates and asked them to introduce themselves. A quorum was present.

Public Comments: No public comments were received.

Old Business: The meeting notes for the June meeting were approved.

General Updates:

Puget Sound Federal Taskforce Action Plan

Chair Tom Jameson provided background on the Puget Sound Federal Taskforce. The taskforce was formed in 2016 after nine federal agencies and cabinet departments signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) aimed to improve coordination of salmon recovery efforts. The taskforce’s goals are to strengthen coordination between federal agencies, improve federal interaction with the Action

Agenda, contribute to Federal trust responsibilities with federally recognized Tribes, and strengthen relations with Tribal, local, and State governments and the salmon recovery community.

This year, the Federal Taskforce is drafting the new five-year Action Plan in coordination with State agencies. Tom noted that Richard Vacirca, US Forest Service, is writing the fish barrier portion of the plan. Richard was invited to the meeting today and has regularly attended FBRB meetings but could not join today. Richard informed Tom he has not seen the funds come in to create project lists, but he is still working to identify if federal funds could be included in the new Action Plan.

National Culvert Removal, Replacement, and Restoration Grant Program

Tom provided background and an update on the National Culvert Removal, Replacement, and Restoration Grant Program. This program, written by Senator Maria Cantwell, is included as part of the multi-trillion-dollar federal infrastructure plan being negotiated in the US Senate. The US House of Representatives passed the infrastructure plan in July, and the Senate included \$1 billion to the National Culvert Removal, Replacement, and Restoration Grant Program. Additionally, the Federal infrastructure bill included \$400 million for fish passage barrier removal grants as part of a proviso advanced by a bipartisan congressional group led by Representative Derek Kilmer. Additional infrastructure funds were provided to aid the Duckabush Estuary Restoration Project.

Additional information on the Senate's infrastructure bill can be found at the following links:

- Infrastructure page - [What the big federal infrastructure package means for Washington — The Nature Conservancy in Washington \(washingtonnature.org\)](#)
- Cantwell Press Release: [Press Releases | News | U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell of Washington \(senate.gov\)](#)

Questions and discussion:

- The Board discussed what this increase of funding to the State would mean for FBRB's ability to fund barrier removal projects. The group was uncertain but did not believe this money would be given directly to the FBRB for their project list. However, FBRB members and staff are still exploring options.

Proviso Report to Legislature

Tom Jameson provided background on the Proviso Report recently submitted to the legislature and gave a status update on its progress. There were three provisos attached to this year's State budget: one for each of the supplemental operating, capital, and transportation budgets.

The first proviso report was submitted to the legislature last month and is available on the [Brian Abbott Fish Barrier Removal Board website](#). It includes a summary of progress and policy recommendations moving forward. It does not include a prioritized list of barrier removal projects, which will need to be included in the upcoming Statewide Barrier Prioritization Strategy. WDFW is looking to hire a new strategist to write the plan and coordinate with State agencies, Recovery Boards, Tribes, cities, counties, and the salmon recovery community. The next proviso report will likely be written in November, 2021 and another in January, 2021.

Questions and discussion:

- In response to a question from Board member Carl Schroeder on how the new strategist will work with the FBRB, Tom clarified the strategist will be working directly with the FBRB.
- In response to a question from Board member John Foltz on the Legislature's feedback on the report, Tom explained they have only received one comment requesting a prioritize list of statewide projects. John noted WDFW would likely need to get state or federal funds for this project inventory.

Present and Discuss Proposed Decision-making Process and Course of Action (COA) for Project Cost Increase Requests

A cost increase subgroup met on July 8, 2021 to develop a draft COA for project cost increase requests when FBRB funds are limited. Tom Jameson explained that an average of one to two cost increase requests are submitted each month, and the subgroup discussed options and protocols if funds are exhausted or if there are circumstances to deny a cost increase request. Alex Sweetser, Triangle Facilitation Team, provided an overview of the potential options developed by the subcommittee (see meeting handouts) for the Board to consider.

Board Questions and Discussion:

- John Foltz asked if there are processes the FBRB would like to consider when funds decrease. For example, the COA includes a checklist of considerations FBRB members could consider. Other options, like recommendations #5, #6, and #8 might need further discussion. John explained the subgroup did not develop a preferred approach and that each item on the COA has pros and cons.
- Susan Eugenis explained the draft COA is only a list of potential options that would need to be discussed with the FBRB. She noted options #6 and #8 are less preferable, but worth discussing.
- Tom noted the subgroup decided to maintain the current funding process where the FBRB generally approves cost increases as they come in. However, these draft options are to prepare the FBRB in case they run out of funds.
- Dave Caudill, RCO Staff, reiterated the subgroup did not agree on a path forward but developed a good list of ideas. Additionally, the FBRB will need to consider the circumstances of cost increase requests. As a grant manager, he would like to see the FBRB establish policies to reduce cost increase requests in the future and help project sponsors complete their projects. The FBRB will need more time to discuss these policies.
- Casey Baldwin noted he wants more time to review and provided some recommendations: He recommended cost increase requests should come to the full FBRB instead of a subcommittee. Additionally, he suggested cutting options #6 and #8.
- John Foltz noted the feedback from the Board was a help to the subgroup. He recommended the subgroup develop a linear cost increase process to present to the Board at the next meeting.

Path forward: The subcommittee will meet again to develop preferred options for the Board to consider at the next meeting

Discuss Options to Convene FBRB Subcommittees

Joy Juelson presented the discussion point to potentially convene Board subcommittees that can focus on targeted topics and she presented the “Subcommittee Idea List” that was originally developed by Alison Hart (see meeting handouts). Joy noted subcommittees would require additional time commitments from FBRB members and asked FBRB members if they feel there is a need to convene subcommittees to work on issues to bring back to the entire Board.

Tom Jameson explained there has been less interaction between FBRB members and group discussion since the pandemic began. He noted the FBRB had subcommittees in the past and convening subcommittees could help the Board prepare for the next legislative session. The first subcommittee would likely be a policy committee, but there are additional options for subcommittees that focus on grant reviews, legislative coordination, and outreach.

Several FBRB members expressed their interest and support in creating subcommittees. Jeannie Abbott noted subcommittee membership could also include FBRB alternatives to increase capacity and engagement. Casey Baldwin was supportive but would like to avoid subcommittees becoming siloed and detracting from the productiveness of full FBRB meeting.

Path forward: The Board will likely move forward with a policy subcommittee and consider developing additional subcommittees.

Project and Policy Issues Discussion and Decision: Seabeck Cost Increase Request

Josh Lambert, RCO grant manager, introduced Jus Johnson as the project sponsor and presented slides on the Seabeck Creek Culvert Removal Project cost increase request (see meeting handouts). He explained this culvert removal project would add 7.4 miles of access in the tributary for coho, fall chum, cutthroat, and ESA-listed steelhead. However, a major erosion event immediately upstream of the project site has jeopardized the project. This cost increase request would fund the installation of wood structure protections to create a more natural solution than installing gravel sacks. This approach would result in a cost increase of \$410,403.

Josh explained the FBRB has funds available for this cost increase request to address an emergency scenario and noted that due to the scale of the erosion event, there is concern from landowners and the county. Approving this cost increase now would help prevent future erosion or even costlier cost increase requests in the future.

Board Questions and Discussion:

- In response to a question on the cause of the erosion, Gus explained there were two record-setting rain events within weeks of each other while construction was ongoing. Josh and Gus elaborated that land above the project site is privately owned, and it is difficult to assess if there are systematic watershed conditions that may have caused these events.
- In response to a question about the low funds for replanting, Gus elaborated there are leftover funds in the project budget for replanting in the new banks. This new money would be used to replace planting that was lost in the erosion event.
- FBRB members noted this is clearly an emergency issue and were supportive of the cost increase. They also expressed support of this new approach instead of installing riprap or other less natural bank stabilization methods.

A motion was made to approve this cost increase request. The motion was approved.

Review of Project Evaluation Scoring Criteria

Matt Curtis, WDFW, presented the revised Project Evaluation Scoring Criteria (see meeting handouts). The Criteria are similar to last year, except this year everything will be going through the PRISM platform. The request for proposals will go out on November 15th, and all applications are due by January 22nd. Then, applicants who submitted an RFP will have the ability to update their plans and applications until May. Matt explained there are field checks as part of the review process, and applicants will be required to update their RFPs if any downstream barriers are identified. He noted the first seven questions were applicability questions, and questions one through four are automatic eligibility questions.

Matt walked through the scoring criteria and FBRB members provided revisions that were edited live in the meeting. Due to time limitations, the group only provided feedback through question 13 out of 22. The suggestions were incorporated into the criteria provided in the post-meeting handouts.

Path forward: The revised Project Evaluation Scoring Criteria will be sent following the meeting. FBRB members should provide their revisions and comments to Matt.

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

ATTENDANCE

Board Members/Alternates:

Carl Schroeder, Association of Washington Cities	Matt Curtis, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)
Casey Baldwin, Colville Confederated Tribes	Susan Eugenis, Washington State Association of Counties (WSAC) (Cowlitz Co.)
Jeannie Abbott, Governor’s Salmon Recovery Office (GSRO)	Tom Jameson, WDFW
Joe Shramek, Department of Natural Resources	Tim Ressegue, Yakama Indian Nation
John Foltz, Council of Regions, Snake River Salmon Recovery Board (SRSRB)	

WDFW, RCO Staff and Triangle Facilitation Team:

Adam Fleming, WDFW	Alissa Ferrell, RCO
Alison Hart, WDFW	Amee Bahr, RCO
Casey Costello, WDFW	Dave Caudill, RCO
Dave Collins, WDFW	Elizabeth Butler, RCO
Gabrielle Stilwater, WDFW	Josh Lambert, RCO
Gina Piazza, WDFW	Joy Juelson, Facilitator
Alice Rubin, RCO	Alex Sweetser, Facilitator

Others observing:

Cheryl Baumann, North Olympic Lead Entity	Evan Lewis	Steve Helvey
Dawn Nolan	Gus Johnson, HCSEG	Wendy Clark-Getzin, Jefferson County
Devin DeBono, Lewis County	Kristen Currents, Mackay Sposito	Whitney Reynier