

Fish Barrier Removal Board – Meeting Notes

Date: November 19, 2019

Place: Association of Washington Cities, Olympia, Washington

Summary: Agenda items with formal action

Item	Formal Action
Meeting notes from October 2019	Approved with edits
Cost increase requests	Motion approved to allow submittal within first six months of biennium but not necessarily Board approval in that time period
Request from UCSRB for one month extension and for new priority watershed	Motion approved to NOT approve one month extension but allow submittal without landowner acknowledgement forms; Board will meet on Dec. 17 by conference call to review formal request to switch priority watershed

Summary: Follow-up actions

Item	Follow-up
Chair’s authority to approve cost increase per the signature authority matrix	Board will discuss potential direction at next meeting
John Foltz has video of completed projects and thinks that could be edited for public information	Alison and Neil will discuss
Workplan for developing strategic packages of projects	Tom and WDFW staff take next steps on this effort

Board Members/Alternates Present:

Carl Schroeder, AWC	Dave Caudill, RCO
Jon Brand, WSAC	Dave Price, NOAA
John Foltz, COR (phone)	Paul Wagner, DOT
Tom Jameson, Chair, WDFW	Casey Baldwin, Colville Tribe

Others present at meeting:

Neil Aaland, Facilitator	Gina Piazza, WDFW
Dave Collins, WDFW	Pad Smith, WDFW
Alison Hart, WDFW	Cade Roler, WDFW
Christy Rains, WDFW	Wendy Brown, RCO
Richard Vacirca, Mt. Baker-Snoq. NF	John Aslakson, public

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

Public Comment: John Aslakson is a citizen participant in Black Lake restoration activities in Thurston County. He is interested in seeing barriers removed and restoration occur in the Black Lake watershed. He said there were historic salmon runs in tributaries, including the Black River. It was suggested he talk with Thurston County and the Salmon Enhancement Group.

Old Business

Meeting notes: The meeting notes for the October meeting were approved with edits.

Casey asked about the discussion regarding coordinated and watershed pathways at last meeting. He wonders if projects are not coordinated, if they are still eligible under the new combined pathway. The group confirmed that there are extra points given for coordination, but the coordination eligibility requirements were dropped from the RFP.

Cost increases: Question is process for handling future requests for cost increases. Tom reviewed the current process listed in manual 22, page 25. The project has to be under agreement; RCO allows 6 months to get under agreement. Tom pointed out the signature matrix in the manual which gives him authority to approve. Wendy Brown, RCO, said it might be worth asking for looser language from OFM now. A motion was made to allow submittal of requests for cost increases but noting that action may not be taken for six months; will receive requests during that period; will only approve within the first six months if there is some level of significance. Motion was approved. Board agreed to discuss at the next meeting any direction to Chair Jameson on his authority to approve.

Update on potential new funding packages

Neil summarized the question and noted that a small subcommittee (Tom, Matt, Jane Wall, Carl Schroeder, Neil) met on Oct 8 to discuss. Tom noted we've changed the RFP so coordination is not required; changed the point structure; and made chinook a priority. He would need staff to do some of the work needed. Carl thinks we've had a conversation several times about this possibility. He thinks the Board should approve Tom moving forward, hiring the staff person and working on potential packages. Potential aspects of this could be:

- Making packages attractive, connecting with Washington DOT barriers;
- Associated with chinook
- Put together 4-5 packages

Casey agrees, suggests thinking of this as a "strategic approach" or a "gap analysis", which seeks good projects that are being missed by the RFP strategy. John Foltz is interested in helping develop packages. Paul said to think about how to prioritize, he's thinking about the state's obligation under the lawsuit. Carl wants to land on a workplan for this before the next Board meeting.

Change in Priority Watershed for Upper Columbia

The Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board has sent a letter requesting a change in their priority watershed, outlined their process, highlighted 3 likely candidates for a new watershed priority and asked the FBRB to provide a one month extension to submit watershed projects (from Jan. 15 to Feb. 15). They will be meeting on Dec. 12 to select a new watershed (out of the three potential choices). Casey noted one major reason for the change is that the projects previously proposed in their current priority watershed (Johnson Creek) are all underway and there are no willing landowners and no projects to continue working there in the next biennium.

Tom favors them recommending a new watershed for the Board to consider. Regarding the extension of time, Cade told the Executive Director they should be doing outreach now on potential new projects. He suggests not providing the extension but providing what information they can by the Jan. 15 deadline. Otherwise, it will affect their timeline for being in the field, WDFW staff review, etc.

Casey was in favor of the extension and suggested that WDFW could do their work in the other recovery regions first, to manage the workload. People were concerned with fairness and setting a precedent of giving one region more time than the others. Paul suggests no extension, having them put together projects as they can. Tom agreed, suggesting the submit what they can by Jan. 15. His other concern is

staff capacity, their work on other projects including DOT has tripled. Jon and Carl also agreed with no extension.

It was suggested that if landowner acknowledgement is the holdup then that portion of the application could be submitted later, and the points/scoring adjusted when it is submitted. There was general support for that exemption.

A motion was made and seconded that UCSRB should submit their projects by the January 15 deadline, with the understanding they could submit later on the landowner acknowledgement form. Discussion included direction that a letter be sent to them explaining about the current scoring criteria, and that the Board will meet in December either in person or a conference call to consider a request to change their priority watershed. The motion was approved unanimously. The Board decided that the regular FBRB meeting scheduled for Tuesday December 17 would be cancelled but a conference call meeting would be held at 10 am that same day to consider their request.

Lunch break: A brief 15 minute break was taken.

Update on Outreach Event

Alison Hart explained the arrangements for the November 20th event. Three legislators are coming, and two media representatives. A presentation will be made at a nearby park, then shuttles will take people to the project site.

Eligible Project Costs

Two questions are being asked. First, are costs associated with acquisition eligible as project costs? The question is around acquisition required above that specifically needed for the barrier removal, e.g. if additional right of way is needed for other reasons. Paul said that DOT allows this but need to think about this for FBRB. For example, if additional improvements could be done but are not part of the project. He thinks FBRB should not fund due to limited funding. Cade thinks the issue is when more funding is needed to successfully implement the project. If you have a temporary habitat impact to implement, restoration should be allowed. Gina described a project with that situation. Casey supported the concept of allowing some acquisition or restoration if it is a reasonable scope and essential to implementing the project. Following discussion, the Board was comfortable with costs in these instances, but given the nuances it will need to be evaluated on a case by case basis.

The second question is whether tide gate removals are eligible. Cade explained the lower Columbia has lots of tidegates. They have run into situations where the landowners may not want to totally get rid of a tidegate, but partial removal could happen which would be better for fish but might not fully meet fish passage criteria. This means the question is whether we can replace a major blockage with a partial blockage. The Board discussed and thought they probably could not justify recommending a project for funding that resulted in a partial barrier. They decided not to have a specific policy but on a case by case basis this can be considered, particularly if the result was not a partial barrier.

Outreach on Next Grant Round: How are Efforts Going?

This item was discussion about how efforts to publicize the current round are going. Dave Caudill, Jane, and Carl have sent it around. Jon says he heard about it from a number of sources. Tom noted there have been discussions about targeted outreach where DOT will be working; Christy and Dan are looking into that.

Upcoming Opportunities for Engagement

This is a regular agenda topic. Upcoming opportunities include:

- WSAC Conference this week

- The recognition ceremony on Nov. 20
- Carl noted that Rep. Blake is interested in a comprehensive approach; he's interested in an early work session and is interested in how culvert corrections fit with other restoration.
- Tom noted the meeting regarding Skagit culverts was supposed to be this month, but has been postponed to January

The meeting adjourned at 1:25 pm.

Next meeting: Conference call meeting on Tuesday, December 17, 2019