

Working to restore viable and sustainable populations of salmon, steelhead and other at-risk species through collaborative, economically sensitive efforts, combined resources, and wise resource management of the Upper Columbia Region.



November 15, 2019

Brian Abbott Fish Barrier Removal Board  
Attn: Matthew Curtis, Program Manager  
[Matthew.Curtis@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:Matthew.Curtis@dfw.wa.gov)

Dear Matthew Curtis,

The Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board (UCSRB) values the partnership of the Brian Abbott Fish Barrier Removal Board's (FBRB) and is **requesting to change the Upper Columbia (UC) River designated priority watershed for the FBRB's 2021-23 request for proposals, and to request a one-month extension to Feb. 14, 2020 for the deadline to submit proposals within the updated Priority Watershed.**

As UCSRB staff communicated at the March 19, 2019 FBRB meeting, the UC region planned to re-evaluate its designated priority watershed in preparation for this coming biennium RFP because the eligible barriers in the Omak Creek watershed, the region's previous designated priority watershed, have been addressed with the generous support of the FBRB. The UCSRB expected to receive notification from the FBRB as to when new designations were due this calendar year. Unfortunately, it appears that the RFP was distributed with Omak Creek watershed still listed as the designated priority watershed in the UC. The UCSRB is actively following the FBRB RFP, page 1 "Note: ... to change their designated priority watersheds, they must work with their WDFW fish passage biologists to get FBRB approval."

On Nov. 8<sup>th</sup> the UC Regional Technical Team (UCRTT) workgroup met to evaluate potential watersheds in context of the FBRB criteria, the number of potential projects, species benefiting, etc. The UCRTT workgroup reviewed data throughout the region and identified three potential watersheds that meet the FBRB criteria. The workgroup is now soliciting input from the regional Watershed Action and Implementation Teams on these three:

- Wenatchee River HUC10 (Eagle, Chumstick, Derby, and Beaver Creeks),
- Peshastin HUC10 (Camas Creek)
- Lynch Coulee-Columbia River HUC10 - Colockum Creek

After reviewing information on these watersheds and input received, the full UCRTT will recommend a final designated priority watershed at its Dec. 11, 2019 meeting, and the UCSRB Directors will approve the final watershed on Dec. 12, 2019. The UCSRB will submit the new designated priority watershed to

the FBRB for review and approval at its Dec. 17, 2019 meeting. Once approved, UCSRB staff will work with Watershed Action Teams (WATs) and project sponsors to identify projects and develop proposals for the current RFP.

The Upper Columbia is implementing a very ambitious process to designate a new Priority Watershed on this shortened timeline AND work with sponsors to submit proposals before the deadline. **A one-month extension, to Feb. 14, 2020, would allow for adequate landowner outreach and project development in the selected watershed.**

As a small side note, the online link to Manual 22 Appendix A has been broken for close to two weeks and I have emailed RCO staff to obtain a copy of said manual and received no reply. It is important that the manual that guides an RFP process be readily available to project sponsors who will develop proposals.

Please feel free to contact me at 509-888-0321 if I can provide any more information in support of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Melody Kreimes". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned to the left of the typed name.

Melody Kreimes  
Executive Director



State of Washington  
**DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE**

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November 21st, 2019

Melody Kreimes, Executive Director  
Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board  
11 Spokane Street, Suite 101  
Wenatchee, WA 98801

Dear Ms. Kreimes:

The Brian Abbott Fish Barrier Review Board (FBRB) has received your letter of November 15, 2019 requesting a change in your priority watershed and a one-month extension of the January 15th due date for project request. The Board discussed this request at its meeting earlier this week on Tuesday, November 19th.

The FBRB is willing to consider a change in your priority watershed. Your letter indicated three watersheds are under consideration and a final selection will be made by the Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board Directors on December 12, 2019. This decision will then be transmitted to the FBRB with a request for a decision at the Board's meeting of December 17, 2019.

As a piece of information for you, the Board has cancelled its December 17 meeting. However, we are willing to hold a special meeting conducted via telephone and WebEx focused on your request on that same date. It is of key importance that you notify us immediately following your December 12 meeting if you wish us to hold that special call/meeting. We would expect that you have a short presentation that you can make via WebEx to explain your choice of selected watershed during that call/meeting.

Your second request is for an extension of time for submittal of projects within the new priority watershed from January 15, 2020 to February 14, 2020. Your stated concern is to allow enough time to work on adequate landowner outreach and project development in the selected watershed.

The Board has significant concerns about this request. A timeline has been adopted by the Board for consideration of all projects. This affects the time set aside for WDFW staff to conduct needed field work and assessment of projects, and thus could result in a delay to the ultimate approval of projects by the desired date. We are willing to accept applications for Board funding by January 15 that include everything EXCEPT the landowner acknowledgement form, with the understanding you will work to provide this as soon as possible.

One part of the discussion by the Board was about the criteria originally provided to regional organizations when selection of your first priority watersheds were solicited. The criteria you should employ in the selection of your priority watershed is as follows; nominated watersheds should benefit depressed, threatened, or endangered stocks, and/or support tribal treaty rights. Watersheds with healthy anadromous runs, or runs with an undefined stock status, should be considered if high quality habitat can be made accessible through barrier removals. Please explain why the watershed is a good candidate for fish passage restoration.

Considerations for Watershed pathway nominations:

- Amount of quality steelhead and Coho salmon rearing habitat within the nominated watershed
- Limited amount of impervious surfaces within the watershed
- Minimal amounts of water temperature concerns, as identified by Washington State Department of Ecology's 303 D and 305 B listings, within the watershed
- High diversity of barrier ownership types: state, local, private, tribal, etc.
- What critical anadromous populations would benefit most from fish passage projects within the recovery region?
- Barrier density – number of barriers per stream mile
- Consider the Viable Salmon Population criteria (see questions below)
- Are the parent populations classified as "primary" or otherwise considered essential to recovery of the ESU?
- To what extent would the restored watershed contribute to achieving viable salmonid population(s), relative to other populations?
- Spatial structure - does the watershed have potential to be a major or minor spawning area? Would it contribute a meaningful area for expanded distribution and reduced population risk due to increased spatial structure?
- Abundance - Will the barrier restoration add a meaningful quantity of habitat to the population and to what extent might it contribute to improvements in abundance? Quantify the relationship of the fish potential in the restored watershed to the whole population (e.g., stream area, intrinsic potential, EDT or other life cycle model outputs).
- Productivity - Is the quality of the habitat in the restored watershed worse than, similar to, or better than the quality of habitat in the rest of the population?
- Diversity - Will the expanded distribution result in reduced risk for diversity? (e.g., unique habitat types, ecoregions, flow or temperature regimes that allow unique life history pathways to be successful).

I look forward to hearing from you regarding your local selection of your new priority watershed.

Regards,



Thomas Jameson, Chair  
Brian Abbott Fish Barrier Removal Board