

Fish Passage Barrier Removal Board – Meeting Notes

Date: September 16, 2014

Place: Red Lion Hotel, Olympia, Washington

Summary: Agenda items with formal action

Item	Formal Action
Meeting Notes	Approved meeting notes from August 2014

Summary: Follow-up actions

Item	Follow-up
Ground rules/bylaws	Chair will make several revisions, including clarifying provisions related to special meetings, and bring a final draft back to October meeting.
Values/principles for prioritization and proposed approaches	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The flipchart from the morning discussion will be written up.2. Options for prioritizing will be drafted for discussion purposes.
Legislative report	Action pending further discussion.

Board Members/Alternates Present:

Julie Henning, Chair (WDFW)	Gary Rowe, WSAC
Casey Baldwin, Colville Confederated Tribes	Jon Brand, Kitsap County/WSAC
Paul Wagner, DOT	Brandon Austin, WDNR
Jonalee Squeochs, Yakama Indian Nation	Brian Abbott, GSRO

Welcome/Introductions/Agenda Review

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. by facilitator Neil Aaland. Neil reviewed some logistical items, asked people around the table to introduce themselves, and then reviewed the agenda. The follow-up item to approve the bylaws were tabled until later in the meeting to allow Jonalee Squeochs to be present and discuss some additional thoughts. A motion was made and seconded to approve the August meeting notes; motion passed unanimously.

Public Comments: Nobody present wished to offer any comments.

Overview of the Salmon Recovery Regions (Jeff Breckel, Executive Director of Lower Columbia Salmon Recovery Board)

Jeff Breckel was introduced by Brian Abbott. He reviewed a PowerPoint presentation about the salmon recovery regions. The regions are very interested in working with the FBRB. 6 of 7 regions have adopted a salmon recovery plan. They score projects based on the number of primary fish populations addressed, and whether a high priority sub-basin is addressed. The Lower Columbia Board uses Ecosystem Diagnosis and Treatment (EDT) as a starting point to prioritize reaches. The top priority reaches are tier 1 and have high potential for their primary populations. Tier 2 reaches are important for contributing populations. They ask sponsors to focus on tier 1 and tier 2 reaches. Projects outside these reaches may also be funded if they help those reaches. EDT has limitations, some streams are too small to use EDT but collectively small streams may make an important contribution.

Questions and comments¹ from members and alternates:

- Is EDT missing streams that are not mapped? [Yes; that has a huge effect on barriers higher in a watershed.]
- How are barriers represented in data? [One of their criteria is access to blocked habitats; but they don't really do a good job of prioritizing barriers]
- How do other regions prioritize? [answers ranged from relying on Lead Entities and others, to identifying key spawning areas and looking at passage projects that provide access to those areas]
- Could also address readiness for partnerships
- Want to work with regions, this is a big effort
- What if this Board asks each region to select a focus area with some principles – could they do that? [Regions would likely want to do this for the Board]
- If this Board wanted to pick priority watersheds and work upstream, does that fit with regional board approaches? [That approach would fit, they're working on lower barriers first in the lower Columbia]
- Puget Sound prioritizes by each Lead Entity; how hard is it to look at that region and determine top areas for focus? [Puget Sound plan is for Chinook, passage is not as important. But most Lead Entities address additional species.]

The Board discussed these potential next steps for FBRB:

- Further explore working and coordinating with the regional boards including:
 - Attending the regional boards' October or December meeting to discuss engagement
 - Consider asking each regional board to select a focus area with some principles to be provided by the FBRB

Values and principles of prioritization

The facilitator called on, in turn, each board member and alternate present to provide one or more statements reflecting their perspectives on values and principles for prioritization. These were captured on flipcharts (which were typed up and included herein as attachment 1). The facilitator then opened the floor for general discussion.

Questions and comments from members and alternates:

- A watershed approach makes some sense, but as a practical matter, other factors come into play – including where opportunities are ripest for implementing projects
- One concern for a watershed approach is it might be a long time for other areas to see action
- Should the Board pick some focused areas?
 - Every area is so different
 - Could divide the state and work with priorities in each part; use regions and give priorities
- How is funding allocated by the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB)?
 - It's a mix of science and "political science"; Puget Sound has 42% of the funding, Lower Columbia River gets 15%
- Differentiate between prioritizing and sequencing
- Each region could bring in their top projects; if all are in one place let that happen then look at other issues/areas
- Board needs to have its own set of priorities
- One approach is to use legislative priorities as a start, develop a set of criteria for each of the bullets
- Trying to draw priorities across the state can be difficult; should consider:
 - What are the benefits for fish

¹ In these meeting notes, the sections for each topic on questions and comments do not necessarily reflect consensus or a decision; they only reflect individual discussion point unless otherwise noted

- Cost of projects
- Certainty of success

LUNCH BREAK 12:00 noon to 1:00 pm

Discuss prioritization options

Neil explained that we have a couple of presentations about prioritization options. Julie will discuss salmon recovery regions, HUCs, and WRAs. Casey will then talk about the NOAA and ESU approach.

Julie said she talked with other members of the Board about prioritization. She showed a PowerPoint presentation that shows some approaches, to further the conversation. [Note: see the PPT, housed on the WDFW FBRB website, for details on her presentation]. Starting with the salmon recovery regions, there are 8 regions. One of them lies above Bonneville Dam, with only bull trout as a listed species, and another is nested within Puget Sound (Hood Canal). The net number, without those two, is 6 salmon recovery regions. She then described HUC-12s (HUC is hydraulic unit code). A HUC8 covers a larger area than a HUC12. They are a larger United States watershed unit; they keep dividing into a smaller geographic area as the HUC number increases. She took Puget Sound as an example of dividing up a salmon recovery region. She showed a set of maps that continued to divide the area into smaller units. Her point was using different scales may fit different types of problems.

Casey pointed out that the HUC approach might split fish use areas. We might not be able to pick a HUC12 that represents a full fish area. Jon shares the concern, thinks it needs to be more watershed based. Julie said the purpose of this presentation was to start the discussion of geographic scope; the Board would need to decide how far to drill down. There are other tools that would help with this analysis.

Casey then did a presentation on an approach that uses Evolutionary Significant units (ESUs). He isn't necessarily recommending this as an approach, just showing one way of using recovery criteria in this effort and setting up the next part of the conversation. [See the presentation for details.] He reviewed the Viable Salmonid Population (VSP) concept from NOAA Fisheries. In order to be considered viable, there has to be a reasonable certainty of survival. ESUs are the level that NOAA uses to list or de-list species. There are four main VSP attributes: abundance, productivity, diversity, and spatial structure. Abundance and spatial structure are the primary attributes that barrier removal will address. FBRB prioritization could include criteria for contribution to VSP concepts.

Julie commented that the Board will need to discuss, for this approach, which species will benefit from barrier removal. For example, chinook benefit from mainstem improvements, steelhead from tributary improvements.

Questions and comments from members and alternates:

- How do three-year workplans fit with recovery plans? [The link is three-year work plans are related to getting projects ready to go. Some projects may be opportunistic; less important ones would drop off when compared to criteria]
 - Three-year workplans tend to be focused on projects that can get funding in that timeframe, rather than big picture priorities.
- Another nuance is with recovery plans, they may not have looked at barriers in context of new information (additional species). This board may have different priorities than SRFB/regional plans
- Looking at recovery plans is only part of the issue; it's about opening the habitat
 - The weakness of the regional recovery plans are they can be single-species focus
- We should utilize the infrastructure of the salmon recovery regions, not necessarily the plans
 - General agreement from other FBRB members
- How can we address Puget Sound, with its more complicated structure?

- Should consider the Lead Entity Strategies developed for each LE, which should take other species into account
- NOAA recovery ESUs cross jurisdictional boundaries in the L.E. structure.
- Brian will get the formula for Puget Sound funding and provide to Julie for her to send around; it's a complicated process

Intrinsic Potential model

Casey reviewed his slides on this topic. IP evaluates how good an area might be for spawning and rearing salmon and steelhead. The evaluation is coarse-scale, generally not influenced by current habitat degradation, and based on several different criteria, including gradient, stream width, and other factors. In the example, they rated every 200-meter segment of the stream. It can be an important supplement to current/historic distribution maps because all occupied habitat does not have the same potential for fish production.

Julie quickly reviewed several other prioritization ideas. DFW has concluded that RMAPs should not be a primary driver. PI, or Priority Index, is another tool but her perspective is that it doesn't provide as much help for the Board's charge because it hasn't been done everywhere and it only looks at single barriers.

Questions and comments from members and alternates:

- Highest priority barriers are likely to be in Puget Sound
- Could run PI in each region and get highest ranked segments in each

Next steps

1. Draft a proposal for prioritizing that goes down the path of using the regional boards.
2. Don't re-invent the wheel; use existing approaches and frameworks.
3. If possible, the Board will try to have a draft approach by the end of the year.
4. Look at some options at the next meeting.

Bylaws

Jonalee Squeochs brought up several items for consideration. In article IV, concerns about the decision-making process outlined in the last sentence. Decision was to strike that sentence since it's already in the law. She also asked for more clarification of the special meetings, and defining key actions. The next draft will provide additional clarification.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:05 p.m.

The next meeting of the Board will be Tuesday, October 21, 2014 - location to be determined.

Others present at meeting:

Neil Aaland, Facilitator	Colleen Thompson, RFEG Coalition
Alison Hart, WDFW	John Adkins, ExcelTech Consulting
Ryan Gatchell, WDFW	Bonnie Kim, Washington State Senate staff
Jeff Breckel, Lower Columbia Salmon Recovery Board	

ATTACHMENT ONE
Principles/Values – Prioritization
Board discussion 9/16/14

Note: This is written from flip-chart sheets written down by the Facilitator during the brainstorming discussion. These notes do not reflect official agency or member positions; the intent of this is to start the discussion about prioritization principles and values.

DNR:

- Help private landowners without capital to remove barriers
- Complete RMAPs
- Fill in the gaps (where other plans and regulations don't result in removal)

DOT:

- Promote correction o barriers statewide, seek partnerships
- Further the needs in the court case area – 800+ culverts
- Some connections are inter-related with others – e.g. multiple owners
- Simple and transparent is better

GSRO:

- Get fish back in productive habitat
- Do the worst first
- Barriers blocking the most habitat, or areas that have best chance of rebounding
- Every barrier is important – some more than others
- Don't talk in terms of winners and losers

WDFW:

- Identify key areas with the largest gain for recovery
- Build on existing investments – e.g. RMAP, other projects
- Past efforts looked at individual barriers; look instead at a watershed perspective

WSAC/Kitsap:

- Want to resolve all county owned barriers, this requires funding
- Support the “down and dirty” fast approach

Yakama Tribe:

- Tribal treaty rights recognized and melt
- Get fish back in productive habitats and places important to tribal members
- Get into productive habitat first

Colville Tribe:

- Priorities in legislation are good
- Statewide approach
- Contributing to salmon recovery
- Different kinds of barriers beyond just culverts; look more broadly including confinement caused by roads.

PARKING LOT:

- What does the reference in the legislation mean – infrastructure, flooding, etc