

Fish Passage Barrier Removal Board – Meeting Notes

Date: December 16, 2014

Place: Washington Department of Transportation, Olympia, Washington

Summary: Agenda items with formal action

Item	Formal Action
Meeting Notes	Approved meeting notes from November 2014

Summary: Follow-up actions

Item	Follow-up
Review of responses from Regional Salmon Recovery Boards on Focus Areas request	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• FBRB members to send any thoughts on a potential budget to Julie• Consider developing a workplan for the program• Review information on the SRFB process
Develop a demonstration project for potential funding for this session	WDFW will put together a proposal by mid-January to have available for legislators.

Board Members/Alternates Present/on the phone:

David Price, Chair (WDFW)	Chris Hanlon-Meyer, WDNR
Casey Baldwin, Colville Confederated Tribes (phone)	Brian Abbott, GSRO
Paul Wagner, DOT	Alison Hellberg, AWC (phone)
Jon Brand, Kitsap County/WSAC (phone)	Gary Rowe, WSAC
Julie Henning, WDFW	

Welcome/Introductions/Agenda Review

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. by facilitator Neil Aaland. Neil asked people around the table and on the phone to introduce themselves, and then reviewed the agenda. A motion was made by Paul Wagner to approve the September meeting notes; Brian Abbott seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Comments: No member of the public was present during this portion of the agenda.

Update on the Focus Areas Request to Regional Salmon Recovery Boards

Julie Henning handed around the final version of the request that was sent to the Boards. She met with Jeff Breckel of the Lower Columbia Board, along with a few others including Brian Abbott from GSRO. She sent out the request just before Thanksgiving, and gave two weeks for a response. The deadline for responding was yesterday (December 15th). All of the regional boards responded.

David Price put together a table that summarized the responses and handed that out. He had several observations. He noted that they are not really comparable due to different scales, but that's not necessarily difficult to address. The Snake River Board doesn't have as many barriers as do other regions.

FBRB members discussed the Hood Canal Floating Bridge being listed as a barrier. Dave said acoustic tag data shows a disproportionate mortality rate at the bridge, although this data is not conclusive. It was noted that the Hood Canal Coordinating council is interested in doing more research on the bridge. Dave

noted that a number of dams were submitted as barriers. The FBRB needs to clarify their perspective on dams.

It was noted that this is only looking at basic information. Julie pointed out the request was to choose watersheds with the largest gain. We'd then develop criteria to get the biggest gain. She asked how the FBRB should compare between regions, and noted this could be challenging. Dave said the FBB has discussed one approach where each region would be given some funding and they would allocate. He also noted that in terms of specific projects, dams are probably beyond the scope of these efforts. Julie likes the idea of prioritizing some basins within each region.

Brian explained that the Salmon Recovery Funding Board divides up funding by a percentage for each region, rather than a statewide project list. Gary pointed out that we are focusing on fixing an entire area, need to get the most value out of investment. We don't want to re-invent another prioritization project. Dave is interested in the story behind the SRFB process and how they came up with it.

The FBRB discussed whether dams should be taken off the funding list. There were mixed opinions. Some were concerned that projects involving large dams could absorb most of the available funding. Others thought certain types of dams should be eligible, such as irrigation dams. Gary asked if nearshore marine habitat should be included. Julie believes dikes should not be considered in this program, since there is other funding available to address them.

Dave asked how much funding would provide a reasonable budget. Gary commented that an estimate just county roads was that it would take \$60 million per year for 25 years. He cautioned that this was a very rough estimate. Julie asked FBRB members to send any additional thoughts to her on what a reasonable budget would be.

Additional perspectives from FBRB members:

- Chris: important to set priorities for each region; and he would like more information from Brian on the SRFB model
- Brian: We should think about a workplan for the FRB; look at the RCW and our directives. In order to have a program in place for biennium 2017-19, need to start considering and build support now
- Julie: She likes Brian's idea for a workplan providing an overall vision for the program. She appreciates what the regions provided; she noted that the regions are excited and appreciate of the collaborative approach
- Paul: He agrees with Brian about the need for a workplan; more information from regions on each listed priority. One idea, as an example, is to have regions pick their top proposal, including number of barriers and a cost estimate
- Jon: Agrees; he's reviewed the letters from regions and they are hard to compare.
- Casey: he agrees with the workplan and other perspectives. He trusts that the regions know their priorities, but they didn't provide enough information to understand and evaluate.
- Gary: Agrees.

Report Back from Subcommittee on Project Prioritization Criteria

Julie summarized the task for the FBRB. The subcommittee has initially focused on the categories from the October meeting. These are habitat importance; coordination; risk/probability of success; and cost. She said the group began talking about what the grant program looks like, and what we want from sponsors. They decided this needed discussion from the broader group. There are different models, such as the SRFB model.

It was suggested that a review team of some type would be needed to provide technical/feasibility perspectives. A question was raised on whether this is a new grant program or are we working with other funding organizations? Julie mentioned the statute says the FBRB is creating a new grant program.

She also noted that this needs to be a phases approach; landowners will need to weigh in at some point.

Paul noted that we're really talking about projects may be more than a single barrier. He is thinking about the cost aspect, and thinks we should look at the cost per unit of habitat gain. He asked the group what they would consider a good project. Dave said the Chico Creek type of project resonates with him. Gary pointed out the fairly high price tag is daunting, and wants to be sure about what is gained with those types of investments. It was noted that the opportunity for coordination is very useful for more expensive projects.

Chris thought it was important for projects that there would be no blockages below a project, and perhaps a couple above, and a huge amount of habitat opened up. Brian thinks it's important to open great habitat AND once opened fish can get into it; a number of different partners on board is important.

Further Discussion of Demonstration Project

This agenda item is an outgrowth of earlier discussion by the FBRB. Julie met with Rep. Wilcox, who asked about an example of what the FBRB thinks should be funded. He's interested in a real illustration. Four examples were e-mailed out to the FBRB prior to today's meeting. These are examples that could be used as pilots. For example, Newaukum Creek could provide a good assortment of project types.

Casey commented that what seems to be missing is the importance of the project to the ESU, how much habitat is being opened up. Also, how do focus watersheds fit into focus areas?

Gary suggested getting feedback on these ideas. Dave noted that they have been contacted by legislators, and need to get back to them with some thoughts by early to mid-January. He suggested they could work with the regions. Julie thinks this is an opportunity to promote the program. Dave is thinking that we could show the legislature some examples, basic cost estimates, fact sheet. It's important to have commitment to the program beyond one legislative session.

Chris noted that we need to show coordination as part of a demonstration program.

Julie said they would go back and look at what the regions provided. They need to show large amounts of habitat that could be opened up. WDFW will need to get people on the ground to verify potential projects before listing as demonstration projects.

Paul thinks it is important to show projects linked in to WDOT projects. Gary agrees with Paul, and offered to poll WSAC members on the projects. Jon mentioned that there is a lot of information on Chico Creek; Dave and Julie will consider that site.

Casey noted issues with Newaukum Creek. He cautioned to be sure the fish production is there for any project selected. Jon noted we should be sure that a sample watershed would be a region's priority as well.

Dave thinks we'll need at least one of the regions to refine a project. In addition, none of the present 4 is an eastern Washington project. Casey noted that top priorities on the eastside are not ready; the Snake or Yakima would be the place to start.

Final input from FBRB members:

- Consider staff resources needed for better analysis
- WDFW did not get additional resources to implement this program, which was frustrating
- Paul agrees that we need some examples; looking at Newaukum Creek, that will take years to implement.

Summary/Next Steps

Julie raised the topic of meetings during the legislative session. The group decided to meet on Fridays, instead of Tuesdays, January through March, and go back to Tuesdays in April (if the session is done).

The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:00 p.m.

The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for Friday, February 20.

Others present at meeting:

Neil Aaland, Facilitator	