



Operating Procedures of the Upper Columbia Regional Technical Team

I. PURPOSE

The Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board (UCSRB) is a partnership among Chelan, Douglas, and Okanogan counties, the Yakama Nation, and Colville Confederated Tribes in cooperation with local, state, and federal partners. The mission of the UCSRB is to restore viable and sustainable populations of salmon, steelhead, and other at-risk species through the collaborative, economically sensitive efforts, combined resources, and wise resource management of the Upper Columbia Region. To meet its mission, the UCSRB wishes to ensure that actions to protect and restore salmonid habitat in the region are based on sound scientific principles.

The UCSRB requested the Regional Technical Team (RTT) accomplish the following functions: 1) recommend region-wide approaches and priorities to protect and restore salmonid habitat, 2) aid in developing and evaluating salmonid recovery projects within the Upper Columbia Region as appropriate, and 3) aid in developing guidance for salmonid recovery monitoring plans as appropriate. The RTT may adopt other functions, such as product reviews, as described in Attachment A.

An important function of the RTT is to review the technical merits of projects to be submitted by project sponsors in the Upper Columbia Region for funding by the Washington State Salmon Recovery Funding Board (or other funding sources). The RTT has established a scientific foundation for this process (See RTT Biological Strategy, Appendix D), with the premise that it allows for the identification of projects that will best contribute to the recovery of salmonids listed under the Endangered Species Act.

Mission Statement: The Upper Columbia Regional Technical Team is a consortium of natural resource biologists, scientists, and professionals that coordinate, review, and advise on technical issues, projects, and monitoring concerning aquatic resources within the Upper Columbia by integrating habitat restoration/protection with management actions and other factors to achieve functioning aquatic ecosystems and sustainable natural fish populations.

II. GEOGRAPHIC AREA

Those portions of the Upper Columbia River and tributaries included in the Upper Columbia Evolutionarily Significant Unit (ESU) for spring Chinook salmon, Upper Columbia Distinct Population Segment (DPS) for steelhead, or Upper Columbia Recovery Unit (RU) for bull trout. The RTT may address issues outside this geographic area if it considers them germane to its functions.

III. MEMBERSHIP

The RTT shall consist of persons with appropriate technical skills and new members shall be appointed by the standing RTT. The RTT may consist of members of private, tribal, public utility, and government entities, but is not representational of these entities. RTT members must possess a strong technical background and knowledge of salmonids and their habitats in the Upper Columbia Region. To reduce the potential for conflict of interests, RTT members must divest interest in a particular subbasin or activity within the region, and reflect regional responsibilities in their deliberations. A roster of current RTT members is in Attachment B.

Entities or individuals that seek membership on the RTT shall provide written notice to the RTT chairperson of their request to join, and if requested, provide a written description of their experience, skills, education, and understanding of the Upper Columbia Recovery Region. The RTT shall determine, in consultation with the UCSRB chairperson, whether the candidate meets the criteria for RTT membership stated in the preceding paragraph. The RTT chairperson will provide written notice to the UCSRB of revisions to RTT membership. A member shall formally notify the chairperson of the RTT of his or her intent to leave the RTT.

IV. MEETINGS

Regular meetings of the RTT will be from 9:00 to 3:00 on the second Wednesday of each month, unless otherwise agreed to by the RTT. Meetings of the RTT are open to the public, unless the RTT chairperson calls for a special closed session.

The chairperson shall submit an agenda to members of the RTT, other appropriate individuals, and to the UCSRB associate director for posting to the UCSRB website at least one week prior to a scheduled meeting. For special meetings, the chairperson shall submit an agenda to RTT members and individuals required to be notified of the special meeting at least twenty-four hours prior to such meeting.

V. CHAIRPERSON

In consultation with the UCSRB chairperson, the RTT shall appoint a chairperson to facilitate the deliberations of the RTT and to take notes of attendance, decisions, and action plans of the RTT. The RTT chairperson will distribute the draft notes for edits within one week of the meeting and then circulate the final draft version before the next month's meeting. The RTT chairperson shall be a voting member, the official spokesperson for the RTT, and serve on the Upper Columbia Implementation Team. The RTT shall appoint a vice-chairperson to preside as chair *pro-tem* in the absence of the chairperson. At the request of any UCSRB member, the chairperson shall provide a written documentation of RTT activities to the UCSRB.

VI. DECISION-MAKING

In making decisions, the RTT will use numerical scoring for project reviews (see section VII) and a supermajority of a quorum for all other issues. A quorum for the transaction of RTT business exists when 60% of the RTT membership is present (including the chairperson)¹. A supermajority is 60% of a quorum². The chair will give a seven-day notice of decisional items to be addressed by the RTT at a regularly scheduled meeting, typically identified in the agenda for an upcoming meeting. Members shall not assign a proxy. When a member is unable to attend a meeting, he or she should advise the chairperson or other RTT members of any issues of concern or of special interest to such member. The chairperson shall provide for members to participate by conference call. If unable to attend a meeting, a member may convey his/her vote to the chairperson prior to the meeting, or after the meeting by responding to the draft meeting notes. Members must respond within five working days of the notification; non-response indicates concurrence. RTT members shall make no recommendation to the UCSRB or other entity without a formal decision. Any member may submit a minority opinion with the recommendation report of the RTT.

If a member does not attend a majority of regularly scheduled RTT meetings within a year, she or he may be considered "inactive" and will be a non-voting member who is ineligible to participate in formal decisions or, at the RTT's discretion, review of project applications. The RTT may

¹ For example, with a 15 member team the minimum number needed for a quorum is 9 and a supermajority of the quorum would be 6.

² If someone abstains they still count towards the quorum but the total number of yes votes needed remains the same. For example, assume there are 9 members present, one person abstains, and 5 people vote yes; the motion would not pass because $5/9 = 56\%$.

elect to address non-attendance by members, as appropriate. Members may also declare themselves inactive for future time periods if they anticipate poor attendance in upcoming months, thereby allowing the RTT to more effectively make decisions.

VII. PROJECT EVALUATION

The RTT project rating procedures outlined below are focused primarily on the process associated with reviewing SRFB and HCP Tributary Fund proposals. For other processes, such as the Community Salmon Fund, alternative project review procedures will need to be worked out with the RTT chairperson well in advance (generally 60 days) of the review.

The RTT chairperson will work with the associate director of the UCSRB, the Lead Entity coordinators, and a Tributary Committee liaison to establish dates and times for the various steps in the process including the pre-proposal presentations, field site visits, and final proposal review. Generally, the pre-proposal workshop and formal RTT review will occur during a regularly scheduled RTT meeting (2nd Wednesday of each month).

RTT members are available and willing to talk with project sponsors about questions or concerns raised during the pre-proposal presentations and field tours. Project sponsors can contact RTT members directly, or through the RTT chairperson between the pre-proposal presentations and the final applications. The intension of this interaction is to clarify previous questions or concerns from the individual RTT members. Comments and opinions rendered during these interactions (and during the pre-proposal presentations or on the field tours) do not represent the consensus or majority opinion of the RTT.

The RTT or a subgroup of the RTT will be responsible for the project review. Attending the pre-proposal presentations and field tours is encouraged but is not a requirement of reviewing and scoring proposals. RTT members not participating in the formal review are welcome to attend and comment during the pre-proposal period. The RTT chairperson will be eligible to review and score projects, but only if an acceptable proxy is available to facilitate the meeting during which the project review occurs (i.e. executive or associate director of the UCSRB).

Each RTT member involved in the review will read and score the final proposals using the RTT project rating criteria (RTT Biological Strategy, Appendix D). Our scoring system is designed to allow reviewers to apply a consistent set of criteria in their evaluation of the projects. The SRFB/Tributary Fund process requires that we complete a review within a rigid timeline and provide a ranked list of projects along with comments and recommendations. Therefore we follow a different format than for our general decision-making rules because we are not asked to “decide” if a project should receive funding. Rather, we provide an evaluation of the technical merits and deficiencies of each project.

- Formal RTT project reviews will occur during closed sessions.
- An alternative scoring system may be used if agreed to beforehand by both the RTT and the funding entity (i.e. Community Salmon Fund).
- RTT members must be present at the formal review and rating meeting in order for their scores to be officially incorporated. Past experience has shown that participating in the discussion is vital to a reviewers understanding of the project. The SRFB/Tributary Fund process and timeline precludes us from shifting our project review date to accommodate scheduling conflicts from individual RTT members. Scores will be averaged and only the mean (and perhaps the variance, upon request) for the group will be reported. Comments, scores, or ranks submitted by an absent RTT member can be incorporated into the discussion during the formal review via the RTT chairperson or other RTT member, but the scores from the absent member will not be entered into the average.
- There will be a discussion period for each project, after which evaluators will have the opportunity to change their scores in light of the discussion.

- Individual RTT members do not have to submit scores for all of the proposals (i.e. time or other limitations may prevent an RTT member from reading and scoring all of the proposals) but that person will be allowed to contribute to the scores and discussion for the remaining proposals.
- Attachments: The RTT does not agree to read and review an unlimited quantity of information attached to proposals. RTT members will read attachments at their discretion to the extent that they are convinced that reading the attachment is necessary to understanding and rating the proposal. Project sponsors should include brief synopses of Alternative Evaluation Reports (or other important detailed documents / assessments) within the main body of the proposal so that RTT members can understand what was evaluated, why the chosen alternative was selected and why the other alternatives were rejected. Such synopses should refer to relevant sections of attachments. In general, the more voluminous the proposal (and attachments), the more difficult it is for RTT members to effectively review the proposal and ascertain the salient details of the proposed action(s). The RTT encourages project sponsors to seek brevity and precision in the preparation of their respective proposals.

RTT members with direct involvement in the development of a project, a family relationship to someone directly involved in the project, supervision of an employee directly involved in the project, a high likelihood of involvement with implementation of the project, or other potential conflict of interest should recuse themselves from the scoring and the discussion of the project. This person will leave the room during the discussion and scoring of that proposal. Additionally, reviewers are expected to abstain from submitting scores for a project if they did not have adequate time to read and apply the RTT project scoring criteria.

In the event that a proposal does not fit one of the scoring categories (restoration, protection, assessment, and design), or under other special circumstances, the RTT reserves the right to forego scoring the project. In such cases, the RTT will make it clear why it could not score the project and provide technical feedback, if possible, to help funding agencies or other entities (i.e. citizens' advisory committee) make decisions about the merits of the project. The RTT recognizes that a "no score" designation has been problematic during past SRFB reviews and hopes to minimize future occurrences.

Notes will be generated to highlight some of the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal and to articulate the major talking points during the discussion. Notes that are a product of the review are the official RTT statement about the proposal and may not reflect a consensus opinion of all RTT members. Dissenting opinions will be noted upon request. The RTT chairperson will distribute draft notes and RTT members will have at least 3 days to review the notes and offer edits or additions. Comments or additions to the notes that were not mentioned in the meeting will not be included or will be noted separately.

The RTT chairperson will compile, summarize, distribute, and present the results of the RTT project rating to the funding entity or appropriate proxy (i.e. citizens advisory committee). For SRFB and HCP Tributary Fund, there is no feedback loop after the formal RTT review. At that point, project sponsors will need to follow up with the state Review Panel or the Tributary Committees directly in order to meet the requirements of those two processes. Further feedback or interaction with the RTT could confuse the issues or hinder those processes. For other technical reviews, a feedback loop would need to be negotiated as part of setting up the review.

VIII. MONITORING OVERSIGHT

In cooperation with several outside entities, the RTT has developed a strategy to monitor salmonid habitat and productivity in the Upper Columbia ESU/DPS (Hillman 2006). Additionally, the RTT has worked with several outside entities to develop intensive monitoring plans for three of the subbasins within the ESU/DPS. These include the Integrated Status and

Effectiveness Monitoring Program (ISEMP; Wenatchee and Entiat) and the Okanogan Basin Monitoring and Effectiveness Project. The scope of intensive monitoring plans address the status and trend of habitat and productivity, project effectiveness, or case studies of salmonid recovery scenarios. RTT members will review and may update these monitoring plans on a regular basis, and will provide guidance to entities engaged in monitoring. To reduce duplication of efforts, the RTT will integrate, to the maximum practicable extent, the monitoring efforts funded through existing or proposed processes into one coordinated monitoring effort for the ESU/DPS.

The RTT recognizes the need to coordinate sampling protocols, experimental design, crew and equipment sharing, data management, and, in the case of effectiveness monitoring, the type and location of management actions undertaken. The RTT also recognizes that it has no collective authority to direct how these issues are coordinated and managed. The RTT will review the results of monitoring projects, and guide the implementation of future work. The RTT may provide guidance on contractual issues related to monitoring projects, but will not necessarily have direct authority on the contracts themselves. All entities engaged in monitoring in the ESU/DPS are urged to coordinate through the RTT.

The RTT has established an ad hoc, facilitated, work group (Monitoring and Data Management Committee (MaDMC) for regional coordination, which may consist of RTT and non-RTT members. This committee will have additional meetings, as necessary, to engage in the monitoring and data management oversight activities and will report those activities to the full RTT during regularly scheduled meetings. The MaDMC may perform other functions upon adoption of further changes to the RTT Operating Procedures.

IX. DATA MANAGEMENT

An important data management function of the MaDMC is to provide technical input and oversight in developing information systems for the Upper Columbia Monitoring Strategy (Hillman 2006). The RTT MaDMC will establish a technical foundation for this process, which will improve the quality of the final products and facilitate the acceptance of recommended methods by stakeholders. The RTT MaDMC will address data management to accomplish four functions: 1) provide technical input and oversight in developing information systems for the Upper Columbia Monitoring Strategy, 2) recommend a standardized format for information systems related to fisheries monitoring, management, and restoration, 3) recommend a standardized format for databases related to fisheries monitoring, management, and restoration, and 4) recommend long-term solutions for data storage and management.

ATTACHMENT A
UPPER COLUMBIA REGIONAL TECHNICAL TEAM
GENERAL PRODUCT REVIEW POLICY

BACKGROUND

The Upper Columbia Regional Technical Team (RTT) encourages individuals and organizations (referred to herein as “Applicants”) pursuing goals consistent with the RTT Mission Statement³ to submit to the RTT for technical review project proposals, program descriptions, technical aspects of policy statements, study designs, and other oral or written reports (referred to herein as “Products”) that may develop goals and objectives included within the RTT Mission Statement. The RTT has developed this Review Policy to help Applicants understand what they will receive from an RTT review of their Product and to help RTT members, who all serve in a voluntary capacity, manage an increasing demand for Product reviews and protect the integrity of the RTT’s professional standing.

PROCEDURE FOR SUBMITTING A REQUEST FOR REVIEW



Submit Request

An Applicant must submit in writing a request for a review of their product to the RTT Chairperson at least 30 days before the review is to begin and must agree to the following procedures and requirements. The RTT will have a standard agenda item at a subset of regularly scheduled meetings for requests for product review (with a list of those specific requests, if applicable). Generally, these reviews will need to occur between October and April, to accommodate the workload of the RTT with respect to the SRFB technical review process. A request for review should contain the following information:

1. A description of the process and path of development of the Product to date and the documents / agencies / individuals involved in the development of the Product.
2. Clearly defined objectives with a list of expected benefits, including but not limited to:
 - The location and scope (spatial and temporal footprint; photographs, aerial photos, and Lidar images are helpful).
 - Limiting factors addressed (including the site specific problem that is being addressed)
 - Quantity of habitat effected
 - Biological and environmental parameters addressed for each species and population.
 - Monitoring and evaluation
3. Elements of the work plan, including but not limited to:
 - Who is/will be involved?
 - Who is doing the design?
 - What are the key elements and issues for permitting?

³ Mission Statement: The Upper Columbia Regional Technical Team is a consortium of natural resource biologists, scientists, and professionals that coordinate, review, develop, and advise on technical issues, projects, and monitoring concerning aquatic resources within the Upper Columbia by integrating habitat restoration/protection with management actions and other factors to achieve functioning aquatic ecosystems and sustainable natural fish populations.

- Implementation timelines, milestones, deliverables, and products.
4. Feasibility of implementation, which could include:
 - Demonstration of landowner willingness.
 - A general outline of expected costs and appropriate funding opportunities.
 5. What the Applicant hopes to achieve by obtaining the RTT review
 - Objectives, timeline, content, level of detail

RTT REVIEW

RTT reserves the right to reject a request for review on the basis of workload, conflict of interest, or the incompleteness of the request. The RTT will neither endorse nor reject any specific proposal for funding. The RTT will focus solely on the technical merits. If the RTT agrees to perform the review, the RTT chair and Applicant will negotiate the timing and procedures of the review, and the format of the resulting review documentation. Review documentation could span the range from informal oral comments⁴ to project rankings to formal written statements; however, for all Products that the RTT reviews, the RTT will issue, at a minimum, a short Review Summary Statement.

RTT REVIEW SUMMARY STATEMENT

The Review Summary Statement will be a formal two or three sentence statement that conveys the name of the Applicant and Product, the depth or extent of the RTT review, the RTT opinion of the Product's goals and merits relative to the RTT Mission Statement, and a recommendation for how the Product should be further developed. (See the attached page for examples of the structure of hypothetical review statements). The RTT chair will provide a written Review Summary Statement to the Applicant within 60 days. The review will be maintained on file by the RTT for future reference.

The RTT requires of all Applicants receiving an RTT review, that any written or oral public citation or mention of the RTT review must include a complete and verbatim copy of the Review Summary Statement. The RTT may choose, at its discretion, to deny all future requests for product reviews by an individual (or an individual's present or future affiliated organizations) that has received an RTT review and subsequently mischaracterizes the RTT review or fails to completely and accurately report the Review Summary Statement when referencing an RTT product review. Applicants who do not wish to include a complete and verbatim copy of the Review Summary Statement in future public communication need not do so provided that no explicit or implicit mention of the RTT review or RTT endorsement is made by the Applicant.

HYPOTHETICAL EXAMPLES OF REVIEW SUMMARY STATEMENTS

Case Study 1: A landowner asks RTT for a review of a streamside restoration project.

Review Summary Statement: The RTT reviewed Ms. Smith's proposal to exclude livestock from Trout Creek by reviewing a draft project proposal, conducting a site visit, providing fix-it-loop suggestions, and reviewing the final project application. The RTT concluded that the project was addressing a limiting factor in an important Assessment Unit, the objectives were consistent with the Biological Strategy and the Recovery Plan, and the project design had a high certainty of success.

Case Study 2: A federal agency task force asks RTT for a review of proposed public policy.

⁴ Oral comments from individual RTT members during the review should not be construed or portrayed as the consensus opinion of the RTT.

Review Summary Statement: *The RTT read an administrative review draft of the U.S. Bureau of Ecosystem Security's proposed watershed management policy and interviewed the task force committee at length. While the RTT acknowledges the high level of technical accuracy in the science underlying this draft policy, the RTT denies the request to review the policy implications, but agrees to address the technical merits of the draft policy.*

Case Study 3: A municipality asks RTT for a review of a proposed restoration outreach program.

Review Summary Statement: *The RTT viewed a PowerPoint presentation describing the general goals and objectives of Glacier County's proposed Water Users Guide to Salmon Recovery. While the general goals of this program may be consistent with salmon recovery and sustainable aquatic ecosystems, the presentation lacked sufficient detail for a complete RTT review. The RTT needs more information, such as a draft report, before it can provide additional technical recommendations.*

Case Study 4: A university researcher asks RTT for a review of a proposed study.

Review Summary Statement: *The RTT heard an oral description from a graduate student regarding Dr. Smith's proposed study of the effects of an intentional introduction of non-native northern pike into a pothole lake in the lower Okanogan River. The RTT finds this study proposal to be inconsistent with the Upper Columbia Recovery Plan. Furthermore, the RTT concluded that this study concept is not technically sound, lacks sufficient detail to determine effects of the introduction, and provides no biological benefit or useful scientific information for native species recovery.*

Case Study 5: The Native Salmonid Recovery Foundation requests an RTT review of 10 project proposals.

Review Summary Statement: *A work group of five members of the RTT conducted the review of the projects for the Native Salmonid Recovery Foundation. Scoring criteria, project scores, and detailed comments can be found in the attached memo. Seven of the ten proposals were consistent with the RTT's Biological Strategy and the Recovery Plan and were predicted to produce projects that have high to moderate certainty of success with likely biological benefits for listed salmonids. One proposal was determined to be inconsistent with the RTT Biological Strategy and Recovery Plan and was not focused on limiting factors in an important subwatershed. The two remaining proposals lacked sufficient information to conduct a technical review.*

**ATTACHMENT B
UPPER COLUMBIA REGIONAL TECHNICAL TEAM
ROSTER**

Voting members:

1. John Arterburn	6. Tom Kahler	11. Keely Murdoch
2. Casey Baldwin (<i>chair</i>)	7. Joe Kelly	12. Chuck Peven
3. Dale Bambrick	8. Joe Lange	13. Karl Polivka
4. Steve Hays	9. Russell Langshaw	14. Kate Terrell (<i>vice chair</i>)
5. Tracy Hillman	10. Michelle McClure	15. Cameron Thomas

Note: For a quorum there needs to be 9 members present (15 * 60% = 9)

Inactive members:

- Bob Rose (Inactive, as of January 2009)
- Mike Ward (Inactive, as of July 2007)
- Carmen Andonaegui (Inactive, as of October 2009)

RTT members are professional biologists working in various fields of natural resource science and management from BioAnalysts, Bureau of Land Management, Chelan County Public Utility District, Colville Confederated Tribes, Douglas County Public Utility District, Grant County Public Utility District, Natural Resource Conservation Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, Terraqua Inc., U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the Yakama Nation.

RTT Monitoring and Data Management Committee (MaDMC):

Keely Murdoch (<i>chair</i>)	Casey Baldwin	
Chuck Peven	John Arterburn	
Tracy Hillman	Karl Polivka	

Non-RTT members of the MaDMC:

Rick Woodsmith	James White	
Pamela Nelle	John Crandall	
RD Nelle	Todd Pearsons	

Previous RTT Members

Joe Foster	Shane Bickford	Jerry Marco	Ken MacDonald	John Monahan
Brian Cates	Rick Woodsmith	Bob Bugert	Dennis Carlson	