

Meeting Notes 12 May 2010

Location: CPUD Auditorium, 327 Wenatchee Ave.

For more info contact: Casey Baldwin 509-664-3148 casey.baldwin@dfw.wa.gov

RTT members attending: Casey Baldwin, Tracy Hillman, Chuck Peven, Steve Hays, Tom Kahler, Keely Murdoch, Michelle McClure, Russell Langshaw, Joe Lange

Others attending: Mike Ward, Pamela Nelle, Graham Simon, Paul LaRiviere, Derek Van Marter, James White, Julie Morgan.

Casey began the meeting with introductions and asked if there were any suggested changes to the agenda. None were offered.

1) Updates: a) **UCSRB;** Julie announced that the Board would be hiring a new position to help with all-H coordination. Derek said that the WATs had populated the Multi Year Action Plans (MYAP) and that he would be doing a crosswalk with RTT priorities. That product would be evaluated at the upcoming IT meeting on June 1. A workgroup of the RTT conducted the technical review for the Community Salmon Fund on May 10th. Ten projects had been evaluated and NFWF/Evergreen would be following up to get more information from project sponsors in the coming weeks, in response to questions raised during the technical review. After the response period, NFWF would combine the technical review with their funding requirements and other considerations and make the decisions on which projects to fund, probably within a month.

b) RTT Workplan—Casey handed out a spreadsheet with the RTT workplan. Major categories included the AW synthesis paper, SRFB/Trib project review, and the targeted solicitation project review. He then went over some key dates for the upcoming project review. See the process guide for a full list of all dates and tasks (<http://www.ucsr.com/resources.asp>).

- June 4: Pre-proposals available for RTT to download and read
- June 9: RTT meeting, Tyee Ranch site visit (*maybe others in Entiat*)
- June 21–24: field site visits
- July 7: RTT meeting – pre-proposal presentations
- July 23: Final proposals available for RTT review
- August 4: RTT meeting, proposal review and scoring

Tracy mentioned that several Tributary Committee members were hoping for site visits to only be two days because conflicts that week. Casey mentioned that he was trying to determine if a site visit would be needed for the Entiat since they would primarily be focused in the Tyee area and the RTT was scheduled for the targeted solicitation site visit on June 9.

Paul LaRaviere gave an update on the state drought situation. Since his last update the problem has largely gone away. Cool weather and rain has helped the snow pack all across the state of Washington and reduced the problem. Spokane area is still low and Olympic peninsula is very high. Upper Columbia is close to normal but things could change as the summer progresses. Steve Hays pointed out there is a discrepancy between the states Snotel prediction and the PUD reports which are still claiming a dire situation in terms of runoff and how that effects their operations an revenue.

2) UCRTT Analysis Workshop Results / Synthesis Paper (Mike Ward, RTT):

Casey gave an overview of the task at hand and the history related to the effort to summarize the proceedings of the Analysis Workshop (AW). The RTT had previously indicated that they wanted to see the document in more of a finished format and then to work through it in longer sessions in person with Mike Ward. Casey laid out a potential timeline within today's meeting to get through 4 sections of the report. He recommended that the RTT allow the MaDMC to work on the 5th section (data gaps), and the RTT agreed with that plan.

Mike gave an update on the status of the report and handed out the most recent version. Mike said there are still a few presentations to be put in and some are still in very rough form. Mike said that he modeled the layout after popular science magazines, to tap into their knowledge of how to portray complex science and less technical information in one package. However, he would welcome format suggestions and Julie would be hiring a graphic designer to finalize the layout. Casey pointed out that we should focus on the deliberations an recommendations and generally avoid wordsmithing and fine details, as that would consume all of our time and keep us from getting through the big picture items we needed to cover. Mike said the executive summary will eventually have more text that ties in with the findings and there will be two appendices, 1) how the key management questions were developed and 2) how the report was developed.

Session 1 Review

The Cooney and McClure presentation write-up is largely not done. Decision on what graphics to use and text to go with them have not been made. In some ways, this is the most important presentation. Michelle said that given the high risk of these populations and their high natural variability, she worried that both the write-up and summary are too optimistic (applies to key findings as well). There are still unresolved issues outside of habitat, such as the risk factors from other H's. Keely agreed that we should tie in other Hs, but there is a lot of progress in the Hs, such as hatchery reform and that hatchery science is evolving as fast as or faster than habitat. Casey suggested we focus the highlights on the risk assessment so that it is tied to the recovery criteria. Chuck pointed out that there is no introductory paragraph and suggested framing it in that section. Mike said he could include language that points to other synthesis efforts in the other Hs, etc.

Michelle said she does not mind putting a positive spin on things, but does not want to be misleading about progress, the reality is that these fish are highly endangered. Julie suggested setting the frame by talking about how many endangered populations in the PNW and building on what Michelle is saying at the beginning. Mike said that despite

low abundance and high risk, the direction we are going is optimistic – as the first AM report, it's a good opportunity to be optimistic. We have created a plan and are implementing it. Michelle agreed we are on the right track, but do we know that it is sufficient? After all, the recovery does not say that it will achieve recovery.

Julie asked if the RTT could be more specific on our recommendations for genetics. Casey said that the purpose of the ongoing genetic programs is to look at the effect of hatcheries on the wild populations, Dana's work was a finer scale and showed potentially that there is a lot more variation than was known based on the population level work that included a larger hatchery influence and more sub-population mixing. He thought that some changes to the genetic monitoring may be needed in order to capture the variability, but not sure of how or what would make those changes. Not sure that we can be more specific than the recommendation in the draft.

Michelle said that what is important is to allow normative exchange between sub-populations – things that are happening as part of the hatchery reforms. Chuck asked if the PUD monitoring programs were already doing this? Casey thought it depended on what we mean by spatially balanced – not sure we want to make the recommendation that we need to take samples from juveniles in a huge spatially balanced program. Michelle thought that in this case, given the size of the Methow and Wenatchee (two of the largest populations in the Columbia Basin), and given recent and past hatchery issues, it would be worth doing within population samples as well as whole population samples.

Mike asked what are the implications of Dana's work for adaptive management? It seemed somewhat academic and didn't consider the recovery implications. At a minimum we need to recommend that steelhead and spring Chinook genetics are collected and evaluated at the population level, as well as an intermediate level such as Major Spawning Areas.

Chuck asked if there are TRT recommendations about what is to be done for diversity? Michelle reiterated her comments about criteria to promote the spatially mediated processes. When asked how you would sample for that Michelle suggested taking samples within each of the main tributaries, looking for similarity to hatchery stocks and for differentiation between the tributaries. Casey said that he thinks that is already happening for Chinook, but not for steelhead yet, so we might limit the recommendation to steelhead. Someone mentioned that the other thing that would be useful for steelhead would be some idea of the contribution from resident rainbows.

The group then discussed the lack of a reference or baseline for genotypic and phenotypic variation and that it had previously been identified as a data gap / information need.

Session 2:

There was some discussion around the recommendation that the Board be more proactive on not supporting the low priority projects. Derek pointed out that the board had very little involvement in decision making regarding projects in the past, so that recommendation might not be relevant. Steve did not think it was a funder issue since the Tributary Committee hasn't been any more successful than other funders in finding the hidden projects that address key limiting factors, it is not necessarily a problem of funding requirements, etc. Derek – what has been missing from the funding and implementation discussion is an overarching vision. Tracy suggested we need measures for if habitat is getting better and for whether the unimpacted habitat is getting worse. Tracy suggested looking at the metrics that affect survival – not capacity but survival (temp, WQ, fines, etc.), just measuring those would cut the cost quite a bit. Many of the things that we identify as limiting factors are not really limiting survival of fish directly, they affect something else that is. There are a lot of habitat impairments, those that affect the survival of fish are the most important.

Mike suggested we should try to back away from using the term LF the wrong way, but not sure how to tactfully say that without offending or alienating the documents/writers that used it that way. Casey's presentation talked about human induced degradation of habitat versus limiting factors.

For none limiting factor metrics it is still important to measure them, even though variability is high. Maybe a target is not appropriate but we should be able to note if it is going down (LWD being an example, where ~80% of juvenile Chinook are associated with logjams). ISEMP will be coming out with a document soon with recommendations that came out of a meeting in Portland about how we could better collect some of the metrics that we are interested in (focus sediment measure on riffles instead of equally spaced transects that catch both pools and riffles). This was a discussion point in C. Jordan's talk so we should re-visit it there.

Session 4: Habitat Effectiveness.

The group discussed the Roni presentation and the need to include some recommendations emphasizing the high priority level for a process based approach as is discussed in the RTT Biological Strategy. There should be a reference to the RTT priority reaches and actions spreadsheet (weblink to UCSRB site) so that implementers know where to find the priorities.

Derek asked if the RTT agreed that “no project can be categorically ruled out” as was claimed in the Roni paper. The RTT discussed that it was site and scale dependent but there was not one category that should be abandoned. Site specificity and reach based processes always need to be incorporated.

A discussion on implementation monitoring lead to the following recommendation: Implementation monitoring should be done and done well so that it can be summarized at a scale appropriate to answering this KMQ.

There was discussion around a comment Roni had made regarding the effectiveness of clustering projects in one area. The idea is that there is a greater intensity of effect when multiple projects are done in one area rather than spread out. This is consistent with the reach based approach that the RTT recommends in the Biological Strategy. James thought he could find literature references on patch size that would help make this point. However, literature examples for effects to salmonid populations are thought to be limited. ISEMP in the Entiat and USGS/USBR M2 monitoring in the Methow should help to prove this theory, but it will take some time.

The group discussed the Tetra Tech section on effectiveness monitoring. Mike W. had some concerns regarding the presentation of statistical results and the validity of the tests used in the SRFB monitoring approach. Julie was concerned that the Upper Columbia specific results might be taken out of context if they are not meant to be used outside of the larger categorical study. A number of specific examples were discussed. Casey pointed out that we specifically asked Tetra Tech for Upper Columbia results and that we can capture the uncertainties in the RTT deliberations. Julie thought that the larger categorical study should have a bigger emphasis and the UC results should be taken out or reduced. The group agreed that the UC results could be scaled back and that it was important to include “disclaimers” regarding the use of the information given the short duration and single site statistical issues. Julie agreed to work with Casey and Tetra Tech on a re-draft of the section.

The group wrapped up the meeting with an overview of what they had accomplished and a plan for the next meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 1400.