

Meeting Notes 13 May 2009

Location: Douglas Co Land and Transportation Services Bld., 140 19th St., East Wenatchee

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

Attendance: Casey Baldwin, Tom Kahler, Karl Polivka, Keely Murdoch, Steve Hays, Chuck Peven, Joe Kelly, Kate Terrell, Tracy Hillman, Cameron Thomas, Todd Pearsons, Julie Morgan, James White, Pamela Nelle, John Monahan, Brandon Rogers, Jason Breidert, Ken Dzinbal, Bob Cusimano, R.D. Nelle, Steve Rentmeester, Sean Quigley, Rick Woodsmith, and John Crandall.

Updates: **1) UCSRB/ FTE model:** Julie gave an update on recent Board activities including their trip to D.C., the GSRO report, and an upcoming tour in August. She also mentioned that she had attended the recent HSRG roll-out meeting in Portland and offered to make her notes available to those interested. Casey offered to forward her notes to the RTT. Julie handed out a large spreadsheet showing the upcoming tasks and estimated FTE's for Board staff during the next biennium. It included an increase in effort by the RTT chairperson. Casey pointed out that the tasks would not necessarily have to be conducted by the chairperson, but that they were RTT related. Julie and Casey were looking for guidance on the best way to proceed to get the Board the technical support that they need. Several options were discussed including: 1) The chairperson does more 2) The vice-chair takes on extra tasks 3) other RTT members are contracted to do specific tasks 4) the data steward or future data technician do some of the work. Kate indicated she would not be available to do more work and asked about Casey's interest and ability to take on more RTT tasks. Casey said he would have to talk with his WDFW supervisor and other management staff before committing. Others indicated that they were fine with whatever option or combination Julie and Casey came up with.

2) Icicle Creek Assessment: Casey passed around a copy of the Lower Icicle Creek Reach Level Assessment 2005, conducted by the Watershed Company for Trout Unlimited. Steve Kolk had asked Casey if the RTT had reviewed it and had an opinion about it. Casey had checked back through Bob Bugert's notes and files from 2004-2006 and not found anything. Kate thought that the RTT had reviewed it but that it may have been an earlier version that went through the SRFB process some time before that. Casey mentioned that the RTT had previously recommended that reach assessments be conducted in Peshastin Creek and the Icicle boulder field, rather than lower Icicle Creek. However, it was good to have it brought back to our attention so that newer members of the RTT could be aware of it in case project sponsors use it to justify or guide projects in lower Icicle Creek. Casey will check back through the older SRFB project review notes and see if he can find comments to provide to Steve. If further review is desired Casey will work with the requestors to line out exactly what is being asked of the RTT.

3) Project Review: Casey handed out the most recent regional timeline for SRFB/ Trib Fund project review and asked RTT members if they were planning to participate. Of those present, Kate, Tracy, Tom, and Steve planned on it. Keely, Karl, and Chuck

wanted to but were not sure based on workload timing. Casey will check with all absent RTT members to get a full head count. It was mentioned that the Trib Committees were not going to make hard copies of the proposals this year. The proposals will be put online for reviewers to download for themselves, only printing out what they needed. Kate warned that a previous attempt to do online proposals did not go well, which was why we went back to hard copies several years ago. The problems stemmed around file incompatibility issues that prohibited some reviewers from accessing all necessary files and multiple files per proposal leading to missed or overlooked information by reviewers. There was a recommendation to have only 1 file per proposal in a standard format, such as .pdf. Casey said that the Lead Entities had offered to make hard copies for reviewers that could not or did not want to try to access them electronically.

Kate requested that the RTT project review be conducted during a closed session. All RTT members present supported the notion that the review is best conducted without inhibited discussions. Casey pointed out that the primary reason for an open review is transparency in the process. However, the previous process of allowing people to attend but not interact has led to frustration on the part of non-RTT attendees (project sponsors). Keely noted that none of the other technical review processes she was aware of in the Pacific Northwest allowed project sponsors to be present during the formal review. Other justification mentioned for having the review in closed session included:

- 1) Comments made during the discussion are individual opinions, which can be changed during the review based on input from the group during the discussion. The average score and the official notes are the consensus opinion of the RTT, which is what we have agreed to provide to the regional process.
- 2) Efficiency. We have a lot of projects to get through in that day of review. If we can't cut right to the point and speak freely (for fear of offending someone in the room) then our process can get bogged down leading to abbreviated reviews and discussion for those projects at the end of the day.
- 3) Fairness to all project sponsors. Not all project sponsors can or want to attend the review. If a project sponsor presence in the room alters the discussion then not everyone is getting the same review conditions.

When asked, Julie recommended that the RTT send a memo to Board informing them of our decision to review projects during a closed session. The consensus of the RTT members in the room was to move forward with having the reviews in closed session¹, but a quorum was not present and additional agreement from at least one more RTT member is needed if we are to move forward with this decision².

Project rating criteria. Casey explained that a workgroup had been formed to draft some changes to the RTT scoring criteria to accommodate a request by the Board regarding project costs. Casey relayed Derek's message that the Board thought more points and additional consideration for cost effectiveness were warranted. Other potential changes were proposed for project design proposal criteria. Casey handed out a packet of

¹ After the meeting Casey recommended that Derek Van Marter be invited to the review session to be a liaison for the UCSRB and the combined Upper Columbia Lead Entities.

² After the meeting Casey received confirmation from additional RTT members on this decision item.

proposed changes to the scoring criteria and highlighted what the workgroup's proposed changes to the scoring criteria. He said that there were 2 main focal questions that the RTT cost considerations were relevant to:

- 1) Does the project cost about what it should for what it is trying to accomplish?
- 2) Are the ecological benefits appropriately scaled with the costs?

Casey pointed out that the current RTT review criteria already address aspects of #1. Some discussion led to slight modifications of the workgroups proposal for questions and point allotments regarding the project costs. Casey pointed out that, for restoration projects, the cost considerations would increase from ~11% to ~19% of the total score. Casey said the proposed changes would include the same total points (32 out of 166) for project costs for all four project types, rather than variable amounts in the previous version. This standardization should lead to a more equitable overall review across the different project types.

Casey briefly pointed out the proposed changes to the project design proposal criteria, but there was not adequate time for a thorough review and discussion. Due to time limitations the group could not finalize the review criteria at this meeting. Ample time will be allotted for this task at the June meeting when the RTT will need to finalize the 2009 criteria. Casey will make the adjustments discussed in the meeting and re-distribute the spreadsheets for people to review prior to the June RTT meeting.

ISEMP, preliminary results & proposed experimental design (J. Monahan, P. Nelle et al.): John Monahan gave a presentation on the power analysis for the opportunistic statistical design that ISEMP has been operating under to date. ISEMP conducted this analysis at our request because we had previously suggested they needed to show why the old system would not work in order to justify moving to a new statistical design. Results were presented for changes in steelhead density at treatment and control sites in the lower Entiat. Although there appeared to be a treatment effect, power was extremely low and an unreasonable number of treatments (several hundred) would be necessary to get to 80% confidence intervals. When asked, John thought that the results were similar for Chinook. Some discussion revealed a list of considerations for causes of the high variability between sites. These confounding factors would be present regardless of the statistical design chosen. Casey suggested that the Entiat Habitat Subcommittee and the RTT help inventory and track the confounding factors so that ISEMP can do the best job possible of teasing them out of the results. Some of the factors included:

- Habitat restoration actions not part of the experiment (i.e. roads, forest practices, fish screens, etc)
- Effects of hatchery interactions: 1) improving overall reproductive success 2) changing ecological interactions 3) altering density dependence
- Observer error. If fish densities are extremely low then the signal to noise ratio may always be too high to detect change
- Upstream treatment effects

Tracy suggested that using total fish (or salmonid) biomass might help get around some of the single species / hatchery interaction issues. John M. mentioned that a group of ISEMP researchers would be getting together on the 19th to talk about implementing the new statistical design and invited RTT members to attend and provide input.

John completed the second portion of his presentation that laid out the current plan for a hierarchical stepwise approach that treated two sections of the lower Entiat in 2011, two sections of the Stillwater in 2014, two additional sections of the lower Entiat in 2017, and finishing up with the two final sections of the Stillwater in 2020. The lower Entiat projects would be mostly rock based structures whereas the Stillwater treatments would be mostly wood based structures and sidechannel reconnection. This would leave only one section of the Entiat untreated (rm 10-16) and the Mad River which could serve as controls (as well as the untreated reaches in the interim years). Reference streams might include the Chiwawa, White, and Little Wenatchee Rivers.

There was some discussion about feasibility with respect to the capacity and funding to implement the number of projects needed to treat all the areas in the specified timeframe.

Moving forward, John wanted to know if the RTT thought this was a valid approach and said that RTT support of the new hierarchical experimental design would be important for securing funding with BPA. Casey asked the group if they had seen enough information to say that ISEMP should pursue the new design. Cameron said he had and offered up that this monitoring program was very important and should proceed. No one objected, but some RTT members wanted to see something in writing before being able to officially respond. Casey suggested that a lot of good informal input had been provided by the RTT at this meeting, but that a formal request for support would be needed.

ATM and Stem databank updates (Steve Rentmeester and Sean Quigley): Steve Rentmeester gave a presentation to update the RTT and MaDMC on the state of data management within ISEMP and PNAMP. He gave an update on the ATM Data Entry Application, data flow, and the STEM website. For PNAMP activities he focused on technology exchange meetings and their metadata guidance document.

Sean Quigley is the new data steward for PNAMP. His presentation focused on PNAMP data management tasks and projects and high level indicators for salmon and watershed health.

Coordination with WDOE and WA State Forum on Monitoring Bob Cusimano (WDOE) Ken Dzinbal (WA Monitoring Forum): Ken Dzinbal provided some background of the development and funding history for their effort, which is currently focused in Puget Sound and the Coast regions. Legislative funding has been provided to standardize monitoring efforts statewide so that results are comparable and management decisions can be more effective. Bob gave a presentation to highlight how WDOE is implementing the program. They have developed an e-map approach, similar to ISEMP and OBMEP. They are currently working on metrics and indicators and are aware of the

work that we have done in the Upper Columbia such as the Monitoring Strategy (Hillman 2006). Casey mentioned that since they are using the same metrics and indicators that are in the Upper Columbia Monitoring Strategy and that they are using the ISEMP data management approach that things were pretty well coordinated. Some additional coordination might be needed regarding site selection where an e-map approach has already been implemented, such as the Wenatchee, Entiat, and Okanogan. It would be important for DOE to use the existing site selection efforts, rather than picking new sites which could be redundant. ISEMP has 5 years of data so if WDOE/the Forum adopts what ISEMP has already done they have a great existing data set to pull from with minimal investment on their part. Bob indicated that their system was able to incorporate sites already selected under a random/probabilistic design so there should be no problems or redundancies. In the Methow, it might make sense for local practitioners to tie in with the sample site random draws that have been made through this effort if/when habitat status and trend monitoring is implemented there. Ken pointed out that Julie was the official designee from the UC to the Forum so she would be the key person for bringing UC information and coordination issues to the Forum.

Final review and comments on Wenatchee Monitoring Implementation Plan (P. Nelle /MaDMC): Keely said the RTT and Derek had previously given the MaDMC direction to finalize the document and formulate a memo to the USSRB recommending that they adopt the appendix and incorporate it into the Upper Columbia Monitoring Strategy. Pamela has one more paragraph to add to the introduction to point out the other monitoring efforts not included in the appendix (i.e. hatchery evaluation for the HCP's and GCPUD BiOp). Keely and Casey will draft the memo to Board. These two items will be circulated to the MaDMC by June 4th, the MaDMC will respond by June 11th, Keely will submit the appendix and the memo to Julie Morgan by the 18th so it can be circulated to the Board and included as a decision item at their June 25 meeting.

Methow monitoring coordination (John Crandall): John gave an update on the status of the monitoring inventory document that the MaDMC reviewed and commented on. He had incorporated the changes recommended by the MaDMC at our last meeting and appreciated the input.

The meeting was adjourned at 16:00.