

## UPPER COLUMBIA REGIONAL TECHNICAL TEAM MEETING NOTES FOR 14 MARCH 2007

RTT Members Present: Baldwin, Hillman, Peven, Carlson, Lange, Kelly, Arterburn, Murdoch, Terrell, and Bugert

Others Present: Carolyn Pearson (ECOAIM), Julie Morgan (UCSRB), Mark Cookson (WDFW), Sarah Walker (CCCD), Greg Knott (BOR), Derek Van Marter (UCSRB)

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### 1. Review and adopt proposed agenda

The group reviewed the proposed agenda, and added to it a discussion and approval of the Scope of Work for the position of RTT Chair.

### 2. Review and adopt January meeting notes

The notes from the January RTT meeting were not approved due to lack of a quorum.

### 3. Update on Monitoring Workshop

Keely Murdoch handed out copies of the draft meeting minutes from the monitoring workshop for review. She said that over 30 people attended from most of the agencies that do monitoring in the Upper Columbia. She said that a notable gap in attendance were the on-the-ground monitoring representatives from each of the PUDs. She said that if there were others that needed to be on the distribution list to let her know.

She said that from her perspective it seemed that the most interesting discussions were those focused on new projects and the data gaps. In general there was quite a bit of repetition compared to previous years. To that end, she asked for suggestions on ways to improve future monitoring forum meetings.

The following suggestions resulted from the discussion:

- Consider new project presentations at the beginning of the meeting and follow with on-going activities.
- Highlight discussion topics in advance for the group.
- Provide training information on certain topics (e.g. identification of lamprey redds).
- Organize and conduct future meetings with a team of people. Consider the topics and decide whether one day is sufficient or whether there is a need for a multi-day symposium approach. Possibly divide the days into different topics for discussion.
- Ask for the general updates in writing in advance of the meeting to streamline presentation of that information, and spend time focusing on the new activities.

The group agreed to revisit these topics and begin planning for the event by October in order to have enough time to plan the event for February 2008.

### 4. EDT Sensitivity Studies

Casey Baldwin provided a general update on the possibility of assembling a group to present updates on EDT to the RTT. He described the nuances of at least two different approaches to updating the models.

The group briefly discussed the need to have this done, the timing of it, and the possibility that it might be an Implementation Team activity. Casey suggested coming back to this topic next month.

5. Update from the Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board (UCSRB)

Julie Morgan provided the following updates from the UCSRB.

- Plan Adoption  
She said that the *Federal Register* Notice #2 (plan approval) is scheduled to be published in June. In the meantime, NOAA is reviewing comments that came in on the current draft Plan, and will be preparing revisions to the Plan as appropriate. The UCSRB will meet on March 21, from 10AM-5PM, and March 22 from 10AM-4PM to review the comments, proposed responses and suggested revisions to the Plan.
- Washington DC Briefing  
The UCSRB members were in DC last week, and met with the northwest delegation and agency leaders about several topics. The key messages focused on support for the Endangered Species Recovery Act, assurances and funding.
- Project Selection  
The Community Salmon Fund went through a change this year. They now contract with Evergreen Funding Consultants to go through the funding selection process. This year, there was only one application for the \$100,000 available in the Upper Columbia region from the Community Salmon Fund. The project that came requested \$35,000 for a \$50,000 project. She said that the Upper Columbia needs more press and relations on this funding source so that more than one application comes in each year. This is a good fund for projects that may not rate technically high in other processes, but are projects that have strong community support.

The group discussed the need to have the review process tied more into the existing RTT process. The RTT should be made aware of the projects well in advance of the deadline for reviewing them. Previously the technical reviews for this fund were done by a group of technical experts from the region, but not necessarily as a function of the RTT.

The group also agreed that this fund should get more publicity, possibly through the UCSRB on its website, or through the conservation districts' newsletters, who could compile all of the other sources for small projects (e.g. Tributary Fund). There is concern that if these funds dedicated to small projects are under-utilized, the money may disappear due to lack of interest. In fact, there is interest, but the availability of these funds has not been distributed as widely as it should be.

Julie said that at the end of this funding round, the unused monies in the Community Salmon Fund will go into a statewide pool of funds. That statewide pool of funds will be available for projects, but obviously the competition is broader than just the region. This will likely happen in June or July.

The group agreed to discuss the Community Salmon Fund process at the next RTT meeting to develop suggestions for improving the next round of funding.

- Implementation Team Update

Julie provided an update on the implementation structure, including the various Watershed Action Teams and the interface of these groups with the Implementation Team and the UCSRB. She said that the Implementation Team is currently being assembled and would likely meet on a quarterly basis. She said the current proposal has identified both the Chair and Vice Chair of the RTT to sit on the team, which is something the group may want to discuss.

- Monitoring Coordination

The chair of the RTT M/E subcommittee asked to hold off on the conversation of a data steward until he returns from vacation. Julie said that several conversations are occurring at the state level about how to coordinate monitoring efforts.

At the Governor's Forum on Monitoring meeting last week, the Council of Regions asked the Forum to focus on the following four items:

1. Identification of key high-level indicators, tied to de-listing, that should be monitored across all regions;
2. Identification of monitoring protocols for these indicators and expected data and reporting;
3. Securing the cooperation and assistance of state agencies in implementing the monitoring plans; and
4. Development of a comprehensive state funding strategy for implementation of the monitoring plans.

PNAMP sponsored a protocol comparison in 2005 of seven commonly used watershed condition protocols. Julie said that the Hillman document is on the list of those being reviewed.

- Regional Operation Budget

At the February UCSRB meeting, the Board approved a revised budget that moved the individual entity dollars into a contractor line item. In presenting all of the regional budgets to the SRFB last Thursday, members there said that they were going to use the leftover funds of \$1.5M to fund the first year budgets of the regions. At the SRFB's meeting in May, members will make the decision about the second year of the biennium.

## 6. Gagnon and/or Nason Creek Monitoring Study Plan

Carolyn Pearson asked the RTT to look at the monitoring and maintenance projects for Gagnon and Nason Creeks projects. Nason is funded through BPA and Gagnon is funded through SRFB. The Chelan Co NRD is looking for additional funds to monitor and maintain these types of projects.

After a lengthy discussion, the RTT agreed that it could provide a service to offer technical feedback on previously funded projects, but that requests for that feedback would have to be timed accordingly (i.e. outside of the SRFB technical review process). Several comments and suggestions were provided to Carolyn regarding the Nason and Gagnon proposals to help guide the implementation and effectiveness monitoring components. The group also agreed that it needed to revisit this discussion at a future meeting to develop some guidelines around how the RTT could provide this service.

## 7. Timeline for 2007 SRFB review

Bob Bugert presented the proposed regional timeline for the SRFB's 8<sup>th</sup> round funding process. He said that the Tributary Committees approved the draft timeline last week. Bob highlighted some meetings and deadlines in the proposed schedule relevant to the RTT. The group agreed to a minor revision to add a deadline for distribution of the required pre-proposals to the RTT. Derek Van Marter said he will distribute the final regional timeline to the Lead Entity Coordinators, and that he would work with them to set their local dates in coordination with the regional timeline.

#### 8. Update on Technical Session with Reclamation

Greg Knott asked for comments from those that attended Reclamation's technical review session. The group agreed that the monitoring discussions went really well. Kate suggested to Steve that folks involved in the BiOp remand process get involved in the technical review meetings.

Greg reviewed the project prioritization spreadsheet for the Methow. He identified the top reaches that made the prioritization list: the Twisp, Methow and Chewuch. The project scoring was heavily weighted toward the assumption that the more area you treat the more results you will get. Greg would like the RTT to apply their review of the biological benefit ranking to the prioritized list for the Methow Reclamation projects. The group agreed that these projects needed to be inserted in the implementation schedules for the Methow when they are updated. Greg said he would work with the Implementation Team to get the BOR projects in the update.

Greg said the next quarterly meeting is proposed for the week of May 22. Reclamation would appreciate having RTT representation at those site tours, which is also going to be coordinated with the quarterly BOR review meeting.

Greg also encouraged the development of the Methow Monitoring Plan. He said the Methow needs a good plan for monitoring that will show the success of the projects. Chuck Peven said there is a monitoring plan associated with the recovery plan, but it is in review while the Plan is in the approval process. The group agreed on the need for a monitoring plan in the Methow and suggested that a lead to spearhead the effort needed to be identified soon.

#### 9. Revised Scoring Criteria

Casey Baldwin distributed scoring sheets from the last funding cycle delineated by project type. He identified a few refinements that had been made in the scoring criteria since the last cycle. The group agreed to establish a flat 150 points for each of the three project types (100 for biological benefit and 50 for certainty of success), with relative weight for each of the scoring categories. Monitoring plans in projects can also receive extra credit points beyond the total allowable maximum score. (Since SRFB does not require it, the RTT cannot require it as part of the scoring.) The RTT subgroup will develop a system for grading assessments and present that to the RTT next month.

#### 10. Biological Benefit Ranking for the Implementation Schedule

The RTT received a request to rank the biological benefit of project types in the implementation schedules of the recovery plan. Casey presented preliminary results from that exercise. The group discussed the rationale of determining break points between tiers of projects. Chuck proposed a quartile approach that clearly indicated break points between Tiers I-IV. The group agreed that it was a justifiable approach. Casey said the RTT subgroup will be completing the same exercise for all of the region's watersheds.

#### 11. Revised Biological Strategy

Casey highlighted some revisions to the current version of the biological strategy. He asked that comments be submitted to him electronically and in tracked changes. The group spent some time trying to clarify the meaning of the table identifying significant sub-watersheds within each watershed. There was some confusion as to what additional criteria beyond the 5<sup>th</sup>-level HUC were used to identify these significant sub-watersheds. Chuck will research opportunities to develop GIS maps of the significant sub-watersheds, which may also provide additional clarity.

12. Revised Scope of Work for the RTT Chair

Kate presented the revised scope of work reflecting comments from the UCSRB. The group discussed the revisions and agreed to the final Scope of Work.

13. Wrap-up and Next Steps

Kate adjourned the meeting at 3:30 PM. The next meeting is set for April 11, 9:00 a.m., at the BLM conference room in Wenatchee.

The following are possible agenda items:

- review the revised biological strategy,
- discuss and finalize ranking criteria for the SRFB process,
- discuss a framework for technical review of projects that are already funded.

Meeting notes by Derek Van Marter ([derek.vanmarter@ucsrp.com](mailto:derek.vanmarter@ucsrp.com))

Approval and comments by Kate Terrell and Casey Baldwin