

Columbia Basin Collaborative Hatcheries/Harvest Work Group

Meeting Summary

Friday, January 20th, 9:00am – 12:00pm PT/ 10:00am – 1:00pm MT

Attendees

Participants: Andrew Gibbs (Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife), Brad Halverson (NW Steelheaders), Brent Hall (Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation), Chris Sullivan (Idaho Fish and Game), David Bain (Orca Conservancy), David Moskowitz (The Conservation Angler), Eric Kinne (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife), Gary James (Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation), Gary Marston (Wild Steelheaders United), Glen Spain (Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen), Guy Norman (State of Washington), Helen Neville (Trout Unlimited), Jay Hesse (Nez Perce Tribe Department of Fisheries), Jeff Whisler (Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife), Joe Zendt (Yakama Nation Fisheries), John Powell (Idaho Fish and Game), Joseph Oatman (Nez Perce Tribe), Jim Lyman (Confederated Tribe of Warm Springs), Lytle Denny (Shoshone-Bannock Tribes), Maureen Hess (Northwest Power and Conservation Council), Robert Sudar (Independent Salmon Distributor), Ryan Lothrop (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife), Steve Manlow (Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board), Stuart Rosenberger (Idaho Power), Susan Bishop (NOAA), Tom Iverson (Yakama Nation Fisheries), Tom Scribner (Yakama Nation Fisheries), Tucker Jones (Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife)

Observers: Alan Kelsch (Idaho Irrigation District), Bill Bosch (Yakama Nation Fisheries Program), Casey Attebery (US Senator Mike Crapo), Dennis Rohr (DRohr & Associates, Inc.), Heather Nicholson (Heather Nicholson Insurance), Jeromy Jording (NOAA), Joseph Snapp (Shoshone-Bannock Tribes), Mark Martin (Idaho Outfitters and Guides Association), Mitch Silvers (US Senator Mike Crapo), Natasha Preston (NOAA), Stuart Ellis (CRITFC)

Facilitation Team: Amira Streeter (Kearns & West), and Grant Simmons (Kearns & West)

Welcome, Agenda Review, and Updates

Amira started the meeting by providing an overview of the meeting guidelines and reviewing the agenda. The topics included (1) Review and Discussion of Hatchery Recommendations and (2) Review and Discussion of Harvest Recommendations.

Review and Discussion of Hatchery Recommendations

Amira shared the most up to date version of the hatchery recommendations. She then asked the group for input and thoughts in response to the information. The group offered the following input:

Recommendation #1

Analysis/Performance: Review hatchery release and adult return data, and other appropriate metrics throughout the Basin to comprehensively understand mitigation performance.

- Some work group members noted that they felt mitigation was not adequately addressed by this recommendation.
 - Work group members discussed mitigation objectives. One member noted that there is not one place you can go to understand how mitigation programs are meeting their goals. One of the challenges about the basin is that funding is fairly fragmented across the basin even as organizations/hatcheries are interwoven and making sure hatcheries are managed to meet their goals will be a critical question moving forward. Members then debated if mitigation was the best way to frame this recommendation. One member stated that there is no concrete evidence that mitigation truly works. Another member stated the same was true about fish traps.
- Work group members discussed how this recommendation would translate into an action. One member noted the need for these recommendations to be more proactive in anticipating how this would be implemented. One member noted that to link the recommendation to CBC actions, they would likely have to check the biological matrix against the stock classifications.
 - Members noted a need to identify a list of fish hatcheries in the basin relative to what stocks they work with / impact. Amira asked if developing such a list is an action for this group and one member responded saying this group does not have the bandwidth to do so.
- Multiple members expressed concern against using pHOS as the sole metric for evaluation and suggested other metrics be incorporated such as natural abundance and gene flow.
- One member voiced the need for this recommendation to review if hatcheries are meeting their goals and to look at ways to improve hatchery performance. Another member stated that Recommendation #3 could be a better place to put language pertaining to monitoring and evaluation.
- Members noted that there has been a large effort to consolidate and standardize data across the basin. One member stated that altering this recommendation to support those efforts could be a way for this recommendation to tie into the larger scale that others had noted.

Work group members suggested the recommendation be changed to "Ensure Columbia Basin hatcheries are managed to meet mitigation goals on annual basis, contribute to achieving CBP quantitative hatchery goals, while ensuring conservation and supporting wild/natural runs." Amira asked the members if they were okay with this. There was no objection. Amira formalized this change in the language.

Recommendation #2

Infrastructure: Repair, maintain, and build improvements to existing infrastructure and find sources of funding for deferred maintenance and system upgrades, including new equipment (capital investments). Enhance infrastructure to be climate change resilient. Utilize summary of Infrastructure needs and associated costs for Columbia basin federally funded hatcheries developed by state, federal, and tribal managers.

- One member asked that hatchery reform actions as recommendations be added into this recommendation. They noted there's a Hatchery Scientific Review Study that would act as a good resource for understanding what hasn't been done in regard to hatchery infrastructure.
- Work group members discussed the need to review and update the list of hatchery needs and prioritize them for funding.
- Work group members discussed the need to identify a list of infrastructure needs. Many noted that other organizations and forums likely have a list of needed infrastructure updates in the basin and there was likely no need for the CBC to compile such a list from scratch. One member noted that the Hatchery Scientific Review Group (HSRG) has a list of deferred maintenance that is still relevant in the Lower Columbia. Another member noted that it is possible that states, tribal entities, and federal agencies all have their own list of their own needed infrastructure updates. One member noted that such a list would have to be prioritized so that funds were spent efficiently, and several members pushed back on this comment, noting that the HSRG was compiled with priority already in mind.
- Multiple members expressed concern about the allocation of funds for deferred maintenance, which is becoming more expensive as time goes on. One member noted the need to secure funds for these projects could possibly necessitate congressional support. They also noted that this group should consider lobbying if necessary. Another member stated that part of the goal of the CBC is to offer recommendations that the entire region could support; having support of most of the region would mean funding could be secured faster.
- Two members asked if this recommendation could be broadened to include not only infrastructure but biological practices, including release timing and number of releases.
- One member expressed that traps could be used as a management tool. Increasing hatchery production would allow more fish to be caught before hitting limits on wild run

catches. Releasing wild fish on site would protect wild runs. Relocating hatchery fish to waterways where they don't have potential to interbreed with wild fish might be a way to support additional commercial and sport harvest, as those fisheries would be essentially 100% hatchery fish.

- Multiple members noted the connection between mitigation obligations and conservation obligations by noting that hatcheries are necessary to reach either obligation.
- Question: Is there a list of hatchery best practices? Answer: Possibly, but that is an additional element that will need to be discussed later.

Amira ended this section by stating that, in terms of action for this group pertaining to Recommendation #2, that they should one) Update the current lists or prioritizations and needs and make sure they're continuously updated and two) Make a coordinated request for funding across the basin. Group members agreed with this assessment.

Recommendation #3

- Monitoring and Evaluation: Provide assessments of pHOS by increasing funding for parentage identification (tagging) to better evaluate hatchery percentages in natural spawning returns. One member suggested the language be changed to "PHOS and ecological impacts (density dependence effects related to carrying capacity)".
- One member suggested that the
- Work group members debated over the main metric, with some questioning the focus on pHOS and calling for a focus on RRS or monitoring and performance.

Review and Discussion of Harvest Recommendations

Amira shared the most up to date version of the harvest recommendations. She then asked the group for input and thoughts in response to the information. The group offered the following input:

Recommendation #1

Monitoring: Develop sufficient and stable funding for additional tagging and monitoring tools and technology to assess catches and returns to optimize in-season management. For example, increase sample rates with additional funding to provide more boots on the ground, improve software technology to analyze sample data in real time and increase PIT tag arrays in geographical strategic areas. In some cases, consider improving electronic reporting of catch for commercial and recreational fisheries.

- Work group members noted that additional funding could lead to more boots on the ground, better technology, and more samples in all geographic areas to process in real time and keep the harvest within conservation limits.
- Question: How much funding is there currently? Answer: That is something we do not know at this time and would need to ask people outside this group.
- Work group members discussed best practices regarding tagging. One member asked if marking every fish released was the best practice that would benefit both hatchery performance and harvest effectiveness while protecting wild fish. Multiple members noted that many tribes, such as the Nez Perce tribe, have a policy to minimize marking of fish due to cultural and spiritual beliefs and they apply marking techniques selectively and intentionally. Another member stated that harvest management personnel understand that there may be disagreements on certain aspects such as mass marking, which is required by federal funding requirements. Another member noted that there are international complications associated with coded wire tagged fall chinook.

Recommendation #2 and #3

Information Gaps: Enhance forecast models by ensuring complete basin-wide run reconstruction is implemented to develop accurate database for forecasts.

Information Gaps: Improve the adult fish sampling facility at Bonneville Dam to help develop an accurate pre-season model of run sizes.

- Work group members discussed the issue of data gaps in river commercial harvest and adult fish sampling. One member that the best way to address these gaps is to increase funding and coordination.
- Question: Is enhancing these systems mostly a matter of funding? Answer: Yes, it is.
- One member specifically mentioned issues with the adult fish facility at the Bonneville Dam as presently there is only one fish ladder and different fish may use different ladders. They suggested adding additional fish ladders, or at least one on the north and south shores, to improve the current setup.
- One member asked if money may be better spent on intensive real-time sampling of all fisheries.

After discussion, group members agreed to combine Harvest Recommendation #2 with Harvest Recommendation #3. One member suggested combining the two recommendations into one sentence by adding "include improving the adult fish..." to the end of the first recommendation. The participants agreed to this suggestion. Amira updated the recommendations.

Recommendation #4

Information Gaps: Enhance run size updates by expanding monitoring and recording of real-time measures of effort, encounter, and harvest rates.

Work group members felt they had adequately addressed real-time monitoring in previous discussions.

Recommendation #5

Information Gaps: Assess how climate change is impacting salmon at all life stages and effecting harvest opportunities.

- Work group members discussed the use of stoplight charts produced by ocean researchers to help understand the effects of climate change on fish populations and productivity. Several members suggested that understanding the future outlook for both ocean and interior ecosystem changes is crucial for maintaining fish production. One member stated that the question of ocean conditions is extremely complex and finding causal correlations between ocean conditions and the basin is difficult. They emphasized the need for caution until more research is done to provide answers.
- Work group members discussed the human footprint of growth and development, in addition to climate change, and its significant ramifications against fish populations. One member pointed out that human growth compounds the challenges posed by climate change, leading to increased water supply demands and decreased stream flows. Another member noted that climate conditions not necessarily directly affect fish populations, pointing out that there was not a huge mortality event in 2021 after record temperatures, but warned that a future event may occur.
- One member shared a WDFW tool to collect mortalities attributed to natural causes: <https://publicinput.com/X7060>
- One member stated that they believe rebuilding salmon populations requires political will, which is currently lacking.

Recommendation #6

Support and enhance current and future tribal fisheries, management, and fishing-based economies that the CBP healthy and harvestable goals would provide for salmon and steelhead in the basin.

- Work group members discussed the importance of fishing-based economies, both tribal and non-tribal, along the river. They emphasized the critical role these fisheries play in communities and the need to support them – especially small communities that exist directly adjacent to the Columbia River.

- The participants also discussed the need for specific recommendations to build capacity for these fishing economies and ensuring that the recommendations do not constrain harvest.
- Several members emphasized the importance of considering both wild rebuilding objectives and harvest goals in the partnership goals.
- One member noted that the current set of recommendations for harvest do not address tribal fishery harvest needs. They suggested the development of a recommendation that addresses equitable harvest, mitigation, treaty obligations, and levels of treaty/tribal harvest that line up with Columbia Basin Partnership goals.

Confirm Next Steps and Action Items

Amira reviewed the next steps for this work group and confirmed upcoming meeting topics. The next meeting (to be scheduled for February) will focus on further refining the recommended actions and completing the recommended action form.

Action items from this meeting included the following:

- Review the edited recommendation concepts after this meeting.

Amira thanked everyone for participating and adjourned the meeting.