

Columbia Basin Collaborative Hatcheries Subgroup

Meeting Summary

Tuesday, June 13th, 1:00pm – 2:30pm PT/ 2:00pm – 3:30pm MT

Attendees

Participants: Chris Sullivan (Idaho Fish and Game), David Moskowitz (The Conservation Angler), Eric Kinne (Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife), Gary Marston (Trout Unlimited), Helen Neville (Trout Unlimited), Liz Hamilton (Northwest Sportfishing Industry Association), Robert Masonis (Trout Unlimited), Tom Iverson (Yakama Nation)

Observers: N/A

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

Welcome and Agenda Review

Liz opened the meeting by reviewing the agenda.

Review Hatchery CBP Goals

Liz reviewed the Hatchery CBP goals outlined in the Phase II Report. She then brought up the Hatchery Qualitative Subgroup Goals. The group had the following input:

- Multiple members expressed the view of the importance of aligning hatchery production goals with natural production goals. They expressed their view that this alignment is a key aspect of the goal-setting process. One member stated that achieving the goal of changing hatchery practices to align with natural origin returns within 25 years is a short timeframe, considering the complexity involved.
- One member stated that the tribes strongly believe in aligning hatchery practices with natural production. However, due to limited habitat, they currently rely on hatcheries for their harvest. Funding for hatcheries is crucial for two reasons: to fulfill the promised fish mitigation and to enable their modernization. While they desire natural production and a resilient population, they believe the current habitat is inadequate and, thus, funding is needed to ensure proper management of each hatchery and address habitat concerns.
- Multiple work group members voiced concern about the funding recommendation being disconnected from hatchery priorities and improvements identified through Independent Scientific Review Panels (ISRPs). These members also stated that they saw multiple recommendations as a joint package, including monitoring, risk assessment/management, and funding, and were surprised when recommendation #2 proceeded independently within the I/RG process.

- Work group members discussed the money asked for in the recommendation. One member pointed out that the allocated money in the recommendation was intended to bring the hatcheries back to an acceptable level of maintenance, without allowing for any improvements. Processes are in place to ensure scientific consistency when implementing the funded projects. However, the lack of even minimum funding for hatcheries is a concern, as there is insufficient funding available even for assessments.
- One work group member pointed out that there are no hatchery quantitative goals in the CBP Phase II Report. There are reports of anticipated levels of returns but technically no hatchery quantitative goals.
- One work group member stated that the promised mitigation for dam development and other projects did not consider a clear understanding of the effectiveness or potential harm of hatcheries. If the goal is to achieve mitigation goals and we rely on hatcheries to meet them, it is a false promise.
- Work group members discussed the Hatchery Scientific Review Group (HSRG) findings as well as the Hatchery Genetic Management Plan (HGMP) findings. They discussed the disagreement within the group on what is the best scientific reference for the recommendation. Some members argued that the HSRG findings were the most current scientific research that the group has and thus should be considered above all other references. These members also argued that to address the gaps in implementing HSRG recommendations, as well as the Hatchery Genetic Management Plans (HGMPs) and biological operations, is crucial. Funding is seen as a necessary component to address these issues and align them with natural production goals. One member noted that HGMPs focus on jeopardy and recovery goal levels and that this group will have to go beyond these low-level goals and to fulfill their objectives. The author believes that rejecting HSRG documents is a significant mistake, as these resources are already available and can be utilized. They stated that there are specific issues that vary from hatchery to hatchery and area to area, necessitating a closer examination of these details. Another member suggested that the Hatchery Scientific Review Group (HSRG) recommendations should be prioritized. Another member agreed that there is disagreement within the group on the best available science.
- One member expressed the need for science-led decisions and incorporation of tribal knowledge in the workgroup, highlighting the lack of alignment with scientific guidance.
- Work group members discussed mitigation goals. One member stated that they believe that mitigation goals cannot be met without considering specific contexts and another member shared a report indicating that current mitigation goals will not be met despite increased production. One member stated honoring the promised mitigation to tribes was critical and emphasized the importance of funding and implementing recommendations in order to do so. Another member stated that mitigation goals were set based on outdated understanding and argued for aligning hatcheries with natural production goals through specific analysis.
- Multiple members suggested involving hatchery scientists from states and tribes in these discussions for further clarity on hatcheries' needs.
- One member highlighted the risk associated with increasing hatchery production and emphasized the need for policy change if scientific evidence contradicts existing policies.

Discussion of Hatcheries Recommendation in relation to CBP Goals

Liz turned the discussion to the Hatchery Recommendation in relation to CBP Goals. The group offered the following input:

- One member raised concerns about the value of CBC recommendations and the importance of presenting a unified regional voice when seeking funding.
- One member emphasized the importance of pre-existing planning for hatchery recommendations and the potential for a basin-wide solution, while recognizing the need to define the group's collective value.

The group ran out of time for further discussion. Liz stated that there would be follow up later in the summer, likely before the next Integrations/Recommendations Group Meeting.

Confirm Next Steps and Action Items

- KW: Plan next I/RG Meeting
- KW: Plan next subgroup meeting
- Group members: Review the hatchery recs and whether they get to the goals
- Group members: Share hatchery "best practices" documents
- KW: Pull in more of the Project Team into the discussion
- KW: Contact Hatchery managers for possible future discussions

Meeting adjourned at 2:30pm PT.