

# Columbia Basin Collaborative Blocked Areas Work Group

## Meeting Summary

Wednesday, August 23, 2023 from 1:00pm – 2:30pm PT/2:00pm - 3:30pm MT

### Attendees

**Work group members in attendance:** Adam Storch (Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife), Andrew Gingrich (Douglas Public Utilities District), Art Martin (Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife), Calla Hagle (Burns Paiute Tribe Natural Resources), Claire McGrath (Bureau of Reclamation), David Bain (Orca Conservancy), David Doeringsfeld (Port of Lewiston), Dennis Daw (Upper Snake River Tribes Foundation), Erik Neatherlin (Governor’s Salmon Recovery Office), Gary Marston (Trout Unlimited), Glen Spain (Pacific Coast Federation of Fisherman’s Associations), Jay Backus (Port of Clarkston Commissioner), Jens Rasmussen (AgriNorthwest), Jerry Rigby (Rigby, Andrus & Rigby Law, PLLC), Keely Murdoch (Yakama Nation Fisheries), Kelly Reis (Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife), Megan Kernan (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife), Michael Garrity (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife), Norman Semanko (Quincy-Columbia Basin Irrigation District), Scott Hauser (Upper Snake River Tribes), Stephen Waste (United States Geological Survey), and Tim Copeland (Idaho Department of Fish & Game).

**Observers in attendance:** Dennis Rohr (Drohr & Associates, Inc.), Heather Nicholson (Public), John Shurts (Northwest Power & Conservation Council), Stacy Horton (Northwest Power & Conservation Council), Stuart Crane (Yakama Nation Water Resources Program), Ted Knight (Attorney)

**Presenter:** Kelly Reis, Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife

**Facilitation Team:** Samantha Meysohn, Colin Johnson, and Angela Hessenius (Kearns & West)

### Welcome, Agenda Review, and Updates

Samantha Meysohn, Kearns & West, welcomed the workgroup members, provided the meeting guidelines, and reviewed the meeting agenda. Agenda topics included: 1) Upper Snake Funding Concept 2) Blocked Area Survey, 3) Blocked Areas – Tributaries to the Willamette River, and 4) Confirm Next Steps, Upcoming Meeting Topics, and Summary.

### Upper Snake Funding Concept

Samantha opened the discussion on the Upper Snake funding concept by inviting representatives from the drafting sub-group to provide an update. Dennis Daw, Upper Snake River Tribes Foundation, previewed the recommendation and provided a historical overview of Tribal salmon use in the basin, including how traditionally accessible stocks of salmon became limited following the construction of dams in the basin. While some Tribes have ceremonial fisheries that come out of State harvest, this does not provide a sustainable long-term source of fish for ceremonial and other activities.

[The Hells Canyon Complex \(HCC\) Fisheries Resource Management Plan](#) aims to address this situation and includes the following three goals:

- Re-establish anadromous fisheries on unlisted, hatchery origin spring/summer/fall Chinook salmon and/or steelhead in select tributaries to provide subsistence, cultural, and recreational harvest opportunities.
- Restore naturally reproducing unlisted populations of salmon and steelhead within select tributaries upstream of HCC to meet harvest, cultural, and ecological needs.
- Restore fall Chinook salmon in the mainstem Snake River (as a long-term goal – likely 20-30 years after license issuance), dependent, in part, upon restoration of mainstem habitat (i.e., mainstem water quality improvements) and effectiveness of mainstem collection measures.

The representative shared that the recommendation would be to create a hatchery, either by expanding a current facility or constructing a new facility. This hatchery would need to produce four million outgoing smolts to meet goals identified by the Columbia Basin Partnership (CBP) Task Force Phase 2 Report and would require adaptive management. Not only would this hatchery meet the needs of Tribes, but it would also serve to provide recreational fish for the states of Oregon, Washington, and potentially Nevada depending on the location of releases.

Samantha shared a draft of the recommendation with the work group members and invited questions.

Work group members shared the following comments and questions:

- The CBC Hatchery work group has paused meetings over the summer. What hatchery expertise was engaged in developing this recommendation?
  - Lance Hebdon and John Cassinelli from Idaho Fish and Game were involved in putting this recommendation together.
- Are there opportunities to include fish passage after the hatchery work is complete?
  - There would be opportunities to include fish passage once the hatchery work is complete, which would facilitate natural origin and hatchery origin fish passage through the area, however the initial goal is to meet the needs of ceremonial fisheries.

Samantha asked work group members if there were any objections to moving the recommendation forward. A work group member asked for a caveat to the section outlining potential entities to complete the work with a note that these entities had not yet been contacted but had the means to complete the work if they agreed to do so. The work group performed a final review of the recommendation and agreed that it could be moved forward to the Science and Integration Work Group (SIWG) and the Integration/Recommendations Group (I/RG) once all edits had been incorporated.

### Blocked Areas Survey

Samantha opened this section by reminding the work group of the information they had gathered from presentations thus far on the Tributaries to the Columbia River. The survey includes the unique needs presented by each blocked area and the task of the work group will be to identify actions to take to address issues.

Work group members were asked to consider actionable steps that could be taken using the information gathered thus far. Members raised the following questions and comments:

- Does consistent criteria need to be developed by which each of the blocked area's needs and potential actions can be assessed?
- Is more data about each of the blocked areas needed before any actions can be discussed and is a recommendation to fund data collection an area where the CBC can provide value?

- Presenters for each of the blocked areas have shared many of the actions that are needed.
- Some of the blocked areas include Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) projects in which passage improvements are part of the license.
- Other blocked areas present opportunities that can be advocated for, such as the removal of Enloe Dam.
- Should the blocked areas be prioritized by how impactful potential actions can be?
  - It is important that cultural impacts are considered, as well.
  - Actions that result in both large and small impacts to fish will be necessary to meet the CBPTF goals.
  - A prioritized fish passage list exists for the state of Oregon and is derived based on the benefit to native and wild fish.
- How should the work group proceed in developing recommendations for the blocked areas?
  - Small working groups comprised of individuals with regional knowledge can collaborate to develop specific solutions for blocked areas in that region.
  - Request additional information from past guest presenters to help to inform developing recommendations.

Work group members decided to contact the presenters for each of the blocked areas already discussed to ask about efforts that are currently underway, the status of said efforts, and where the CBC can add value. Members expressed that more information on these efforts would be beneficial in identifying next steps toward developing actions.

### Blocked Areas – Tributaries to the Willamette River

Samantha welcomed Kelly Reis, Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife (ODFW), to give part one of a presentation on blocked areas in the Willamette River Basin. This first part will focus on the Lower and Mid-Willamette. Part two, to be presented next month, would focus on the McKenzie and Middle Fork.

The presentation identified the priority migratory species in the Willamette Subbasin: winter steelhead, spring Chinook, bull trout, and Pacific lamprey. The Willamette Subbasin is an important subbasin within the larger Columbia Basin. Roughly 70% of Oregonians reside in the Willamette Subbasin, placing an increased demand on water and fish management. Kelly discussed the 13 multi-purpose dams owned and operated by the US Army Corps of Engineers (“USACE” or “Corps”) in the subbasin, sharing that authorized purposes for dams in the area include flood control, hydropower, recreation, irrigation, municipal and industrial water supply, fish and wildlife, and water quality. The presentation highlighted the different policies and processes that govern the USACE projects in the subbasin, the scope of each document, and how they outline maintenance for the dams.

The Corps blockages in particular have significant impacts on downstream passage and habitats. Sustainable funding is needed for long-term monitoring of operational and structural passage solutions under changing conditions, including monitoring of interim operational passage that can inform longer term solutions. Passive Integrated Transponder (PIT) infrastructure, as well as associated technical and administrative support, is needed for developing juvenile reach-level survival estimates sooner than waiting for adult returns, thus establishing timely results that can be used to inform management decisions. Although not a Corps blockage to be addressed, Willamette Falls provides an important opportunity for monitoring infrastructure with basin-wide benefits given its strategic location near the mouth of the Willamette River.

Kelly provided specific information on fish passage needs and plans for several dams.

#### **North Santiam Subbasin:**

- Lower and Upper Bennett Dams: Issues at Lower Bennett with retained gravel impeding passage and maintaining a camera to monitor adult spring Chinook and winter steelhead passage.
- Minto Dam: Concerns about total dissolved gasses for fish released between Minto and Big Cliff dams. Need for additional fish passage monitoring information at Bennett dams (especially for winter steelhead) to compare to fish collected upstream at Minto to understand fish disposition.
- Detroit Dam and Big Cliff Dam: Court ordered the USACE to address total dissolved gasses below Big Cliff Dam by 2027. The USACE Draft Willamette Valley Project EIS preferred alternative includes plans for temperature control tower at Detroit by 2031 and floating fish collector for downstream passage to be operational by 2036. Interim operational measures to improve downstream passage and TDGs are in effect until permanent solutions are in place.

#### **South Santiam Subbasin:**

- Lebanon Dam: Repairs to a Corps-owned PIT antenna are planned this fall after high flows destroyed the PIT antenna last year. Video cameras are needed for monitoring fish passage.
- Foster Dam: The Corps is working to address temperature issues in the fish ladder that affect fish attraction. Structural improvements to downstream fish passage are part of the draft WVP EIS preferred alternative and are scheduled to be operational by 2027.
- Green Peter Dam: The Corps will implement a court-ordered deep drawdown in fall 2023 to provide fish passage. The draft WVS EIS preferred alternative includes operational downstream passage and an adult collection facility to be operational by 2031.

Work group members asked Kelly to clarify how the improvements in 2031 and 2036 at Detroit dam would differentiate. Kelly responded that the improvements in 2031 will focus on temperature control and the 2036 improvements will focus on installing a floating fish collector. Work group members also asked if the number of smolts passing through spillway vs. turbines was available, and Kelly responded that she would have to check to see if smolt passage information is available.

### [Confirm Next Steps, Upcoming Meeting Topics, and Summary](#)

Samantha thanked workgroup members for their efforts and shared additional next steps as well as topics to be discussed at the next meeting.

#### Action Items

- **All:** Please complete a brief Blocked Areas Meeting survey to share feedback on the meeting by
- **KW:** Share the Upper Snake Hatcheries Recommendation with the Science Integration Work Group
- **KW:** Reach out to Blocked Areas presenters and ask them to share responses to the following questions:
  - What are the biological impacts of these blockages?
  - What activities are occurring now to improve fish passage at these facilities? Are these activities on track?
  - How could a recommendation from the Columbia Basin Collaborative support these activities?

- **All:** Share any additional questions for presenters
- **KW:** Circulate slides from the presentation on the Blocked Areas Willamette Tributaries Part 1
- **KW:** Share Blocked Areas survey table with guest presenters to ensure accuracy.
- **KW:** Draft a meeting summary and circulate to the work group

*Meeting adjourned at 2:30pm PT/3:30pm MT*