

Columbia Basin Collaborative

Estuary, Tributary & Mainstem Habitat Work Group

Meeting Summary

Wednesday, May 24th, 2023, from 2:30pm – 4:30pm PT/3:30pm - 5:30pm MT

Attendees

Work Group Members in Attendance: Amelia Johnson (Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board), Bob Lessard (Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission), Casey Justice (Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission), Cynthia Studebaker (United States Army Corps of Engineers), David Bain (Orca Conservancy), Jay Hesse (Nez Perce Tribe Department of Fisheries Management), Jeff McLaughlin (Bureau of Reclamation), Jennifer Lord (Bonneville Power Administration), Jim Brick (Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife), John Foltz (Snake River Salmon Recovery Board), Leslie Bach (Northwest Power and Conservation Council), Lynne Krasnow (National Marine Fisheries Service), Michelle Rub (National Marine Fisheries Service), Mike Edmondson (Idaho Governor's Office of Species Conservation), Patty Dornbusch (National Marine Fisheries Service), Tom Iverson (Yakama Nation Fisheries)

Observers in Attendance: Cathy Kellon (Northwest Power and Conservation Council), Daniel Bertram (Governor's Office of Species Conservation), Heather Nicholson (Public), Jerry Klemm (Port of Lewiston), Scott Turo (United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service), Ian Chane (US Army Corps of Engineers)

Facilitation Team: Amira Streeter (Kearns & West), Colin Johnson (Kearns & West), Mark Anthony Sebarrotin (Kearns & West)

Welcome, Agenda Review, and Updates

Amira Streeter, Kearns & West, welcomed the workgroup members and provided meeting guidelines as well as a review of the agenda. The meeting agenda included: 1) Debrief Integration/Recommendations Group (I/RG) Spring meeting, 2) Discuss and Revise "NOAA 5-Year Review Recommendation", 3) Habitat Discussion of Current Recommendations and Next Steps, 4) Confirm Next Steps. Amira reminded group members of the role played by the Columbia Basin Collaborative (CBC), and how recommendations produced by the CBC are refined via a feedback loop with the I/RG. Amira also informed workgroup members that future meetings will be scheduled at a cadence of 'every six weeks' as opposed to monthly.

Debrief I/RG Spring Meeting

Amira provided an overview of the Spring I/RG meeting, highlighting a few key takeaways:

- This was the first time the I/RG went through the workgroup recommendation review process.
 - Consistent themes included finding balance between broad and specific recommendations as well as adding geographic specificity to recommendations.

- The workgroup should connect recommended actions with the Columbia Basin Partnership Task Force goals and focus on how the recommendation will be actionable or implementable.
- Consideration of social, cultural, economic and ecological implications in the recommendations is important.
 - Recommendations should consider the interests of Tribes, landowners, fisheries, and communities, as well as the time required to fulfill recommendations and who would be responsible for implementation.
 - It will be necessary to outline how to execute recommendations when other actions are in progress.

Amira shared that as a result of concerns expressed during the I/RG meeting that the NOAA 5-Year Review recommendation was too broad, a subgroup of I/RG members and Habitat workgroup members had met to identify a means for adding specificity to the recommendation. The workgroup will discuss this idea later in the meeting.

Workgroup members who had attended the I/RG meeting shared the following takeaways:

- The length of the 5-Year Review recommendation meant that the I/RG needed to digest a large amount of information prior to the meeting. This was identified as a potential cause for some of the disagreements that occurred.
- Workgroup members in attendance felt it was important that the 5-Year Review recommendation be seen as a first step towards recovery goals, rather than a comprehensive approach to achieving recovery goals.
- Questions were raised about the integration of the 5-Year Review recommendations with needs related to hydropower, hatcheries and harvest.
 - Workgroup members shared that these recommendations are intended to be integrated with those areas.
 - It was noted that some habitat actions may be standalone.
- Concerns were shared about the potential return on investment from the 5-Year Review recommendations.
- A follow-up conversation with members of Trout Unlimited (TU), regarding the 5-Year Review recommendation, was productive and helped in defining a path forward.
- There was discussion about developing specific habitat priority actions for species impacted throughout the basin, and incorporating geographic specificity could be an initial first step.
- The I/RG expressed interest in seeing a recommendation focused on achieving 'no net loss'.
- There was discussion about the importance of stopping development across the basin as a measure towards restoring habitat and ensuring reparative actions are effective.

Discuss and Revise “NOAA 5-Year Review Recommendation”

Amira shared the snapshot of the 5-Year Review recommendation that was presented at the I/RG meeting and invited John Foltz, Snake River Salmon Recovery Board, and Patty Dornbusch, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), to elaborate on the presentation and subsequent discussion with members from TU. John shared that what emerged from the collaborative brainstorm was a plan to add specificity to the recommendations from the 5-Year Review. Specificity would come by way of tracking

each recommendation in a spreadsheet that, at a glance, would identify who the point of contact was for each action, what needs currently existed for which the Columbia Basin Collaborative (CBC) could provide support, whether the action was ready for implementation, and if the action needed out-of-basin action or specific 'H' coordination to realize benefits. Highlighting the 'readiness' of an action would help to prioritize projects. Patty expanded that by identifying needs for each action, this spreadsheet would highlight obstacles and constraints to implementation.

Amira presented the 5-Year Review spreadsheet for workgroup members to review. The expectation is for the workgroup members to fill in as much detail as possible about each recommendation. There was discussion about how best to go about capturing the information needed to complete the spreadsheet, how best to address suggestions from implementers for additional actions, and what timeframe should be allotted to complete this task. Members shared a need for urgency and recommended this be completed as quickly as possible and kept at a high level.

The workgroup identified the following steps to complete the spreadsheet:

- Workgroup members will fill out as much of the information on the spreadsheet as possible on their own over the following week.
- Once workgroup members have completed as much of the spreadsheet as they are able, they will reach out to state implementers and recovery board members to fill in any information gaps. This will take place over two weeks.
 - The 5-Year Review recommendations were developed with input from local implementers, however any new priorities that have emerged since their publication should also be included and marked as 'additions'. When possible, these additions should be tied to one of the 5-Year Review recommendations.
 - Actions that are already completed should be marked as such.
 - The spreadsheet will be expanded to include an additional column designating whether there is an existing prioritization framework in place to identify specific actions in a broad geographic area.
 - An additional column will be added to designate projects that benefit non-listed species.
 - There may be a need for flexibility regarding the timeframe for this step as many local implementers are in the process of enacting recovery efforts at this time.
- Once the spreadsheet has been completed the workgroup will synthesize the information and share a first draft with members of the I/RG who voiced initial concerns about the 5-Year Review recommendations. Doing so will ensure the task is proceeding towards the desired outcome.

Workgroup members shared that some implementers may take more time to provide the requested information and may require additional context around the ask. It was suggested that implementers should be shown the spreadsheet so they can determine how long it will take them to complete it. An additional suggestion was made to provide clarity for implementers around the ask to help provide specificity to these recommendations, and that the group is not necessarily looking for additional recommendations. The workgroup set a check-in date of June 24th to review the status of the spreadsheet and identify any gaps or challenges in outreach. Completing this spreadsheet will be the focus of the workgroup in the lead-up to the next meeting. In July, when the group meets next, the

focus will be on developing additional recommendations in preparation for the I/RG meeting in September.

Amira shared that Kearns & West will produce, and share, a sign-up sheet corresponding with the information gaps on the spreadsheet so that workgroup members can denote which stocks, and thus which implementers, they will contact. In addition, Kearns & West will produce a list of questions that workgroup members can draw from when contacting implementers. Amira then reviewed the workplan for the next two meetings.

Habitat Discussion of Current Recommendations and Next Steps

Amira shifted the discussion towards additional Habitat recommendations that the group had discussed during past meetings. Amira asked the workgroup if there were specific recommendations from the list that the group should focus on. The list included the following recommendations:

- Increase Funding
 - Increase funding for existing habitat restoration and protection programs and monitoring, increase funding flexibility for projects that are beneficial to salmon recovery overall and find future funding sources / resources, particularly for highly impacted stocks.
- Coordination and Increased Efficiencies
 - Increase capacity for landowner engagement and provide incentives for private landowners to increase participation in salmon recovery, including work on water acquisition and exchanges and projects that establish and maintain screens of water diversions.
 - Build capacity and cross-coordination with agencies, Tribes, and non-government organizations, and build better opportunities for technical and financial assistance with the creation, writing, and management of grants by encouraging efficiencies in funding and grant programs and streamline reporting processes.
 - Streamline processes for regulatory compliance with federal agencies.
- Implementation Strategies
 - Improve water management, including maximizing water that is currently managed (ex: develop opportunities to buy water for fish from landowners).
 - Encourage nutrient enhancement in Basin waterways.
 - No net loss recommendation

Workgroup members shared an interest in working on a recommendation focused on no net loss. Members shared how that was originally a separate recommendation but that later it was incorporated into the 5-Year Review recommendation. Amira stated she will add the no net loss recommendation back onto the list of recommendations, and members decided it would be a good topic of discussion for the July workgroup meeting. It was suggested that because no net loss grew out of a Washington state initiative, an effort to draft that recommendation should be led by a representative from Washington. It was also shared that Steve Manlow, Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board, had developed a draft recommendation on no net loss and so that may be a starting point.

In identifying additional recommendations to focus on, workgroup members discussed interests that had been shared at the I/RG meeting. These interests included increasing funding and capacity amongst regional entities, landowner management, no net loss, and protecting existing habitat. While water quality was also brought up, workgroup members stated that it was already represented in the 5-Year Review recommendation and thus may not require specific actions.

Confirm Next Steps

Amira thanked the workgroup for their time and efforts before reviewing the next steps. The volunteer spreadsheet would be completed before the end of the week and circulated to the workgroup.

Action Items

- **KW:** Follow-up email and Doodle Poll on scheduling.
- **KW:** Send homework assignment to WG.
- **All:** Sign-up and volunteer to fill in excel spreadsheet by end of this week.
- **KW:** Coordinate with conservation groups about review of spreadsheet.
- **KW:** Reach out to Steve Manlow.

The meeting concluded at 4:30 pm PT/5:30 pm MT