

The Columbia Basin Collaborative

Revised Recommendations 1-24-24

Introduction

The Columbia Basin Collaborative (CBC) charter aims to achieve the quantitative and qualitative goals for salmon and steelhead documented in the Columbia Basin Partnership Task Force (CBPTF) Phase 1 and 2 Reports, as adopted by the Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee (MAFAC). The CBPTF “explored the various limiting factors that impact salmon and steelhead across their life cycles. The results of the analyses show that no single strategy (e.g., reducing predation, increasing habitat, reducing harvest) will achieve the Goals on its own. Instead, improvements in multiple factors will be needed to increase abundance to desired levels for most stocks. Together, these improvements create synergies that compound benefits greater than those achievable through single actions.”

The CBPTF also identified that, “reliable and predictable funding is essential. Funding must be targeted to achieve the Partnership’s Quantitative and Qualitative Goals. New funding sources should be identified. Funding must come from multiple sources, consider the burden across communities, and account for past, present, and potential impacts.”

The CBC agrees with these MAFAC-adopted objectives and hence the recommendations below are aimed to help achieve those CBPTF Goals. No one recommendation can meet these goals alone.

The parties of the CBC have come to consensus that this recommendation is valid for implementer consideration. As stated in the Charter “sovereigns with management decision-making authority will review recommendations and make independent decisions to implement or support actions. The CBC itself is not a management decision-making body, but will strive to support its recommendations through to implementation.”

Recommendation: Pursue Increasing Salmon Production to Support and Sustain a Stable and Dedicated Source of Fish in the Upper Snake

Background:

Historically, the Bannock, Paiute, and Shoshone peoples harvested salmon and trout throughout the Columbia River Basin for subsistence. Annual salmon and steelhead runs in what are now Idaho (ID), Nevada (NV), Oregon (OR), and Washington (WA) provided harvest opportunities throughout the year. Access to anadromous fish for subsistence and ceremonial purposes has been eliminated from much of the Upper Snake River Basin following the construction of dams for hydroelectric, flood control, and irrigation purposes within the Columbia and Snake basins. Upper Snake River tribes have an abiding interest in protecting and enhancing the fish and wildlife and cultural resources in ancestral territories and are actively working towards these goals.

Beyond the partnership goals, the Upper Snake River Tribes (USRT) Foundation, USRT member tribes, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), along with input from other stakeholders developed the Hells Canyon Complex Fisheries Resource Management Plan (Plan). Finalized in 2018, the Plan lists both short term goals (ex. anadromous fish for ceremonial fisheries) and long-term goals (ex. sustainable, harvestable populations of anadromous fish).

The major problem with the above goals is that hatcheries throughout the Columbia River Basin are struggling to meet production and escapement goals. The ID Governor's Salmon Workgroup recognized this struggle. The Hatchery Policy Recommendations of the ID Salmon Work Group Report (Report) states the importance of making sure the mitigation goals of the Lower Snake River Compensation Plan, Dworshak mitigation, and Idaho Power Company settlement agreements are being met. The Report also states the need for further funding to enhance hatchery production to meet current mitigation, supplementation, and conservation programs. The fact that hatcheries are struggling to meet current needs means the Upper Snake River member tribes are left to rely on "excess fish" even for ceremonial fish releases. The challenge is that there are no "excess fish." The USRT member tribes appreciate the efforts and importance that the states of ID and OR have put into providing fish, from the states harvest share, for ceremonial fisheries. However, this process is not sustainable, and unfortunately does nothing to move towards the goals of the Partnership or the Plan.

Summary of Action:

This recommendation is to either pursue increasing hatchery production or creating new hatchery facilities with the production being dedicated to the Upper Snake River Basin and the goals outlined in the Partnership. Increased production would allow for a dedicated source of fish for ceremonial/subsistence fisheries and future reintroductions into select tributaries in the Upper Snake River. Some collaborative agreements are already in place to support developing solutions, for example, in the 2022 MOA "ODFW and BPT agreed to meet to review opportunities to increase fish hatchery production of Chinook salmon and steelhead [...]", and to support "efforts to form an advisory and coordination body referred to as a "Hells Canyon Advisory Committee" with representatives from federal and state agencies, Tribes, and hydropower interests."

The Partnership goals call for 9,500-13,500 returning unlisted hatchery-origin Spring/Summer Chinook and Summer Steelhead adults for the Upper Snake. Using current smolt to adult return rates, the proposed new, or expanded, hatchery facility would need to produce four million smolts annually to achieve these goals. In addition to the partnership goals, the plan lists three goals. A hatchery with dedicated production for the Upper Snake Basin would help accomplish goal one: 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.

The broodstock for this facility would most likely come from fish trapped at HCC. Another potential source for initial broodstock could be from the Rapid River Hatchery. Any fish used from these two locations for broodstock would need to be acquired through negotiations with the Nez Perce Tribe (NPT) and the States of ID and OR. The HCC and Rapid River hatchery fish are the best options as these fish are excluded from the Endangered Species Act (ESA). All fish in the new, or expanded, facility would not have ESA listing and all fish placed or reintroduced would follow the ID Governors Blocked Area policy listed in the Partnership.

Existing or New Program:

New program.

Benefit Provided by Action:

This action will provide salmon to the Shoshone, Bannock, and Paiute people that call the Upper Sanke River Basin home. This will start a cultural healing that is long overdue. Salmon being returned to tributaries will be a benefit to all species as lost nutrients will begin to be restored.

The Plan does not only call for harvest by the tribes, but also a harvest share for public fishing opportunities in the states of ID and OR. Therefore, increased hatchery production and reintroductions would benefit the states of ID, NV, and OR. Further, increased production and reintroductions would increase the number of anadromous fish further downriver, which would increase potential harvest opportunities and decrease the stress due to harvest on the stocks that are currently harvestable.

Stocks Benefited by the Action:

Potentially all stocks may see a benefit, as there will be more salmon available for harvest which could potentially reduce the harvest of all stocks.

Data Supporting Benefits:

Implementing Entities:

- Shoshone Bannock Tribes
- Shoshone Paiute Tribes
- Burns Paiute Tribes
- Fort McDermitt Tribes

- Warm Springs Tribes
- Nez Perce Tribes
- State of Idaho
- State of Oregon
- State of Washington
- Bureau of Reclamation
- USFWS
- NOAA

Time Needed to Implement:

10-20 years.

Time Needed to Benefit Fish Populations:

10-20 years.

Estimated Cost:

Unknown at this time as planning has not occurred as to whether a new facility will be constructed or additions to a current facility may be made.

Uncertainties:

- Who would fund the project?
- Where would the hatchery be located?
- How will fish be distributed?

Associated Regulatory Processes or Policies:

- Idaho blocked area policy
- Harvest allocations
- United States v. Oregon

Potential Challenges:

- Idaho blocked area policy
- Harvest allocations
- United States v. Oregon
- Initial brood stock
- 2019 settlement agreement between Idaho, Oregon and IPC

Adaptive Management:

Adaptive management would be used to determine the best rearing and release strategy to return adults most successfully. As part of the adaptive management plan straying rates and the potential impacts of an additional four million smolts will be monitored and evaluated. The returning adults would be monitored in each tributary to best utilize them to meet short- and long-term goals of the Partnership phase two report. This recommendation is for the construction of a hatchery, the

adaptive management will play a more important role in the operation of a hatchery once it is constructed and operational.

SIWG Narrative Feedback & Stock Benefits Report Card:

SIWG Feedback:

- The Upper Snake River has been blocked by federal and private dams for 100 years, and fishing opportunities for Upper Snake River tribes have been lost as a result. The CBPTF goals call for 9,500-13,500 returning unlisted hatchery-origin Spring/Summer Chinook and Summer Steelhead adults for the Upper Snake. This recommended action would either build a new hatchery or expand a current hatchery to produce four million smolts annually to achieve these goals. All fish in this hatchery facility would be non-listed fish and would likely come from Hells Canyon or Rapid River. The benefits of this action include that it would put higher numbers of fish in the river, providing more fish to harvest downriver and reducing fishing pressure on Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed stocks.
- This action would integrate well with other efforts in the basin. Opening the habitat in the upper basin could help advance salmon and steelhead recovery throughout the Columbia Basin. It would also increase the non-ESA listed fish available for harvest. Increases in salmon abundance would result in harvest to be shared with the Upper Snake River Tribes and the States.
- This action is aligned with achieving the quantitative and qualitative goals within the CBPTF Phase 2 Report.
- This effort aligns well with the ongoing project at Grand Coulee and Chief Joseph Dams. That initiative could be used as a source of information on how that effort impacted factors downstream.
- This recommended action is also consistent with the recent Presidential [Memorandum on Restoring Healthy and Abundant Salmon, Steelhead, and Other Native Fish Populations in the Columbia River Basin](#) and actions asked of federal agencies by the Biden administration.
- SIWG members raised a concern related to disease management. The recommended action includes strategies to manage this risk in the long-term plan, which specifies that any stocks used would be examined for disease potential.
- There could be unintended consequences of this action related to predation.
 - Some SIWG members shared that increasing the number of outmigrants could promote greater predation. Increased avian presence and predation has been observed with increased numbers of hatchery fish, particularly if they are all released at the same time.
 - Other SIWG members shared that it is also possible that the recommended action could alleviate predation impacts since an increased number of smolts in the river system could reduce predation pressure on other stocks.
 - Others shared that the scale of this action may not be enough to have a measurable impact, since the four million smolt output called for in the recommended action is very small compared to the total smolt production in the system, so the impact on predator food budget would be minimal.
 - SIWG members suggested potentially having this recommendation reviewed by the Avian Predation subgroup and having a structured risk assessment included as part of implementation for this recommended action.

- SIWG members noted that any new hatchery program in the basin would need to undergo ESA consultation, which would include a NOAA analysis that evaluates these risks and impacts. They also noted that this action relates to harvest allocations that are determined in the *United States vs. Oregon* process, and appropriate coordination would be needed.
- This action would likely benefit all stocks in the Columbia River, with a significant benefit to the Upper Snake River stocks above the blocked area. SIWG members noted that the main benefits of this recommendation are to fisheries by increasing the number of fish available for harvest. Others noted that increasing the number of fish could also create challenges for other limiting factors and the dynamics of downstream fisheries.
- The goal of this action is to gain regional support acknowledging that that Upper Snake Tribes have lost the cultural benefit of access to fish and that the only way to restore fish in the Upper Snake is to increase production. This is still a long-term goal and the intention of having this as a CBC recommendation is to demonstrate regional support when seeking funding for this effort. There are many uncertainties remaining and additional work that would need to happen to implement the action.

Stock Benefits Report Card:

Sub-Region	Stock	Status	Abundance			MAFAC Phase II Impact Priority								
			Current	MAFAC Medium goal	Current as % of Medium Goal	Tributary Habitat	Estuary Habitat	Hydro (Mainstem)	Hydro (Latent)	Hydro (Blocked)	Predation	Fishery	Hatchery	Harvest
Low-C	L Col R Spring Chinook	Threatened	2,240	21,550	10%	1	3	3	3	2	3	3	2	3
Low-C	L Col R Winter Steelhead	Threatened	5,989	27,900	21%	1	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Low-C	L Col R Fall (tule) Chinook	Threatened	12,329	54,100	23%	1	2	3	3	3	3	1	2	1
Low-C	L Col R Coho	Threatened	31,524	129,550	24%	1	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3
Low-C	L Col R Summer Steelhead	Threatened	10,594	29,800	36%	2	4	4	4	2	4	4	4	4
Low-C	Col R Chum	Threatened	11,762	33,000	36%	2	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	
Low-C	SW WA Winter Steelhead	Threatened	3,252	5,850	56%	2	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Low-C	L Col R Late Fall (bright) Chinook		10,800	16,700	65%									
Low-C	L Col R Fall (bright) Chinook	Threatened	11,000	11,000	100%	5	5	5	5	4	5	4	5	4
Mid-C	M Col Sockeye	Not Listed	1,036	45,000	2%	3	3	3	2	1	3	3		3
Mid-C	M Col R Spring Chinook	Not Listed	11,600	40,425	29%	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Mid-C	M Col R Summer Steelhead	Threatened	18,155	43,850	41%	2	4	4	4	4	2	4	4	4
Mid-C	M Col R Coho	Not Listed	6,324	11,600	55%		5	4	5	5	5	4		4
Mid-C	M Col R Summer/Fall Chinook	Not Listed	11,500	13,000	88%	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	4
Up-C	U Col R Coho	Not Listed	392	15,000	3%									
Up-C	U Col R Summer Steelhead	Threatened	1480	31,000	5%	1	1	2	1	1	1	3	2	3
Up-C	U Col R Sockeye	Not Listed	40,850	580,000	7%	1	3	1	1	1	2	3	3	3
Up-C	U Col R Spring Chinook	Endangered	1430	19,840	7%	1	3	1	1	1	2	3	1	3
Up-C	U Col R Summer Chinook	Not Listed	16920	78,350	22%	1	2	1	1	1	3	1	2	1
Up-C	U Col R Fall Chinook	Not Listed	92,400	62,215	149%	5	5	4	5	5	5	4	5	4
Snake	Snake R Coho	Not Listed	100	26,600	0%									
Snake	Snake R Sockeye	Endangered	100	15,750	1%	3	3	1	1	1	2	3		3
Snake	Snake R Spring/Summer Chinook	Threatened	6,988	98,750	7%	1	3	1	1	2	2	3	3	3
Snake	Snake R Summer Steelhead	Threatened	28,000	75,000	37%	2	4	4	2	2	2	4	4	4
Snake	Snake R Fall Chinook	Threatened	8,360	10,780	78%	5	5	4	4	4	5	4		3
Willam	U Will R Spring Chinook	Threatened	4,278	47,850	9%	1	2	3	3	1	3	3	2	3
Willam	U Will R Winter Steelhead	Threatened	2,816	27,805	10%	1	2	3	3	3	1	3	3	3

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 Stocks most benefited
 Stocks receiving secondary benefit