

Columbia Basin Collaborative Structured Decision Making Sub-group

Meeting Summary

Monday April 29, 2024, from 1:00pm – 3:00pm PT/ 2:00pm – 4:00pm MT

Attendees

Sub-group Members in Attendance: Art Martin (Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife), Brent Hall (Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs), Gary Marston (Trout Unlimited), Jeremiah Bonifer (Columbia River Inter-tribal Fish Commission), Jim McKenna (State of Oregon), Kevin Scribner (Salmon-Safe), Leslie Druffel (The McGregor Company), Michael Garrity (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife), Paul Arrington (Idaho Water Users Association), Robert Lessard (Columbia River Inter-tribal Fish Commission), Scott Hoefer (Bureau of Reclamation), Ted Knight (Spokane Tribe of Indians), Tom Iverson (Yakama Nation Fisheries), Tucker Jones (Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife),

Facilitation Team: Colin Johnson (Kearns & West), Liz Mack (Kearns & West), and Samantha Meysohn (Kearns & West).

Welcome, Agenda Review, and Context

Liz Mack, Kearns & West (K&W), welcomed members to the second Structured Decision Making (SDM) sub-group meeting as part of the Columbia Basin Collaborative (CBC). Liz reviewed meeting guidelines and provided an overview of the agenda. The topics included: 1) Scenario approach for recommendations, 2) Determine next steps for SDM in the CBC, and 3) Confirm next steps and action items.

Liz began by recapping the last meeting, including the review of prior SDM discussions from the Science Integration Work Group (SIWG) and the Integration/Recommendations Group (I/RG). The sub-group discussed potential benefits and concerns about SDM, existing tools such as the salmon slider, as well as the role of the SIWG and its potential to meet the desired goals of SDM. The discussion of scenario scale recommendations, and the potential use of SDM to select scenarios, was identified as a next step.

Scenario Approach for Recommendations

Kevin Scribner, Salmon-Safe, and Paul Arrington, Idaho Water Users Association, presented on the scenarios from the Phase 2 report of the Columbia Basin Partnership Task Force (CBPTF) of the Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee. The CBPTF worked hard over two years to assemble a robust collection of science on salmon around the basin, and the report reflects that. A third year was spent studying a method of integrating salmon science with the social, cultural, economic, and ecological (SCEE) values related to salmon recovery. The process of integration is what led the CBPTF to support scenario planning.

The CBPTF defined scenarios as a combination of one or more strategies, sets of assumed future conditions, and other components or approaches intended to achieve the salmon and steelhead goals. The scenarios developed, and captured in the report, represent a range of options informed by limiting

factors and life cycle modeling. The scenario development process began with consideration of biological strategies before moving toward the SCEE values. Kevin shared that potential scenario components included: critical uncertainties and research needs, regional variation, innovative approaches, climate change and population growth, and strategic choices such as sequencing and identification of strongholds. Due to time constraints, the scenarios could not be evaluated by running them through the life-cycle models. Future evaluation should determine the certainty of achieving goals through each scenario, as well as the time required to do so.

Kevin reviewed a timeline of development for the scenarios beginning in April 2019 and concluding in February 2020. The timeline detailed the process by which the CBPTF and Project Team engaged in small group discussions, developed levels of effort, and constructed a menu of strategies to mix and match for specific stocks and locations. A baseline scenario was developed and removed as it would not achieve the high-range goals of the CBPTF. A *Salmon First* scenario was developed by Tribal Partners which encouraged others to develop scenarios.

Paul emphasized the important role that building relationships played in establishing an open dialogue at the onset of this effort. He added that each person and organization held different values and priorities thus a consensus on one scenario could not be reached in the time allowed. The inability to reach a consensus led to the development of multiple scenarios and tension among the CBPTF members. Kevin shared that the scenario themes ranged from step-wise and cautious to radical and experimental changes. Common themes included: habitat investments, hydropower operations and dam breaching, harvest, predation and invasive species, reintroduction into blocked areas, hatcheries, public engagement and education, and shared sacrifice.

SDM Sub-group members discussed the following topics after the presentation was complete:

- Sub-group members discussed the best ways to analyze scenarios and compare potential outcomes.
 - The salmon slider developed for the CBPTF offers a good analytical tool to start with, and sub-group members proposed including a temporal component to assess the length of time that each approach will take to meet identified goals.
 - Sub-group members agreed that adding interactions between the limiting factors would be beneficial and worth exploring.
 - Sub-group members advocated for a quantitative standardization of the scenarios in order to assess their utility.
 - The sub-group agreed that the Phase 2 impact numbers and additional factors such as predation rates, all of which informed the development of the salmon slider, should serve as a baseline. These numbers should be updated where new information exists.
 - The importance of transparency and the values that are brought into the process was emphasized. The incorporation of values allows for discussion on what sacrifices are needed and what sacrifices are acceptable.
 - A scenario where everything possible is done to restore salmon stocks, and one where nothing is done can provide bookends for consideration. Bookend scenarios, even if they are unrealistic, are helpful in establishing boundaries from which a middle ground can be approached.

- SDM could be a framework that the scenarios are put through, and components of different scenarios can be combined to create scenarios with the most desirable outcomes weighed against the CBPTF Goals and SCEE values.
- A sub-group member highlighted the similarity between this process and the SDM process underway in the San Joaquin Valley and highlighted the potential to learn from the work done on that project.
- Sub-group members proposed developing a scenario for a stock, or region, that the CBC could support.
 - Sub-group members emphasized that doing so could lead to an acceleration of recovery actions which would result in benefits for surrounding stocks or the region as a whole.
 - It was proposed that each strategy would be reviewed individually to define, and bring all parties to agreement on, the anticipated impacts of each strategy. The strategies would then be assembled into different scenarios.
 - This process would also allow for the identification of any synergies or potential conflicts between strategies.
 - A sub-group member highlighted the need to spend time with the scenario and translate its intention into how much it reduces the existing impacts as they are reflected in the fundamental impact tables within the Phase 2 report.
 - The pilot effort should start slowly with consideration for existing funds. If this is scaled up it will need to be a collective effort.

The SDM sub-group proposed looking at stocks in the Mid-Columbia. A sub-group member advocated for focusing on Mid-Columbia steelhead specifically as this would be the easiest stock to potentially de-list under the Endangered Species Act. Focusing on this stock would result in tangential benefits to surrounding stocks in the region. Sub-group members discussed developing a proposal to pilot scenario planning for Mid-Columbia steelhead to present to the I/RG.

Confirm Next Steps and Action Items

Liz thanked the sub-group members for their time and efforts before reviewing action items from the meeting.

Action Items

- **K&W:** Draft a high-level proposal to use a scenario approach to recommendations for the I/RG to consider and circulate to the SDM Sub-group to review.
- **K&W:** Draft a meeting summary and circulate to the SDM Sub-group for review.

Meeting was adjourned at 2:30pm PT.