

# Columbia Basin Collaborative Integration/Recommendations Group

## Meeting Summary

June 27th, 2024, 8:00 am – 2:00 pm PT/9:00am – 3:00 pm MT  
Hilton Garden Inn Boise Downtown, Boise, ID

### Welcome and Context

Liz Mack, Kearns & West, welcomed everyone to the meeting and went over the agenda.

### Charter Review Sub-group

Liz provided background on the formation of the Charter Review Sub-group. The sub-group was developed in response to feedback shared at the last Integration/Recommendations Group (I/RG) meeting which called for an examination of the Columbia Basin Collaborative (CBC) charter to determine if changes were necessary. Over the course of the several meetings the sub-group identified three process changes that address feedback without requiring changes to the existing charter.

### Short-term Scope Changes

The first process change calls for making short-term changes to the CBC scope. This change would focus work through the end of the year on actions with potential to make progress toward Columbia Basin Partnership Task Force (CBPTF) goals and pause discussion on specific topics. The paused discussion topics include: Lower Snake River dam breach, hydropower system operation, hatcheries and harvest, and Upper Columbia blocked areas. This proposed change would allow the CBC additional time to develop an approach for addressing complex topics and would avoid discussing topics that are being addressed in concurrent processes.

Attendees agreed to this scope change and shared the following comments and questions:

- Members clarified that informational updates about the four paused topics can continue to be shared and recommendations on these topics that have been advanced and approved will not be paused.
- Some members shared that the paused topics are of significant importance to achieving the goals of the CBC and will need to be addressed in 2025.
  - The I/RG agreed to reconsider the pause on recommendations for the four identified topics in 2025.

### Adding Tribal Representation to the CBC Project Team

The second process change adds several seats for Tribal representation to the Project Team. This would strengthen project leadership, prioritize co-manager roles and stewardship interests, as well as meet the need to uphold tribal treaty and non-treaty rights and sovereignty. Liz shared that the role of the Project Team is to coordinate and oversee process operations and logistics, and ensure the CBC is making progress toward partnership goals.

Concerns were shared about asking Tribes to take on additional responsibilities. Attendees responded by saying that seats on the Project Team were requested by the Tribes following the Tribal Caucus meeting. The Tribes are currently in discussion to determine how to share representation among the Tribes.

### Consensus Process for Work Group Discussions

The third process change calls for modifying the consensus process for work groups so that recommendations without full consensus can be advanced to the I/RG with a narrative documenting the pros and cons of the recommendation. This change is intended to alleviate roadblocks to advancing recommendations that have been discussed and have significant support. Liz shared that, if approved, this change would take effect when the work groups resume. Attendees agreed to this process change.

An attendee highlighted the similarities between the CBC and the Western Governors Association, and proposed looking at their governance structure to see if there are best practices to support the CBC moving forward.

### Structured Decision Making Sub-group

Liz provided background on the formation of the Structured Decision Making (SDM) Sub-group. She stated that this group was formed to explore if an SDM framework could be used in the Columbia Basin context, and that the group developed the SDM Process Proposal. The proposal advocates for a pilot group to use CBPTF Report scenarios to build transparent data-driven, integrated recommendations.

The group had the following questions and comments:

- Members discussed Social, Cultural, Economic and Ecological (SCEE) values. One member noted that the SDM Proposal has a lot of cross section with the SCEE goals as outlined in the CBC Charter. Another member noted that SCEE values are open to interpretation and different stakeholders may have different SCEE values.
- Section 8 currently reads as “Create a scenario by combining the actions that will positively impact Mid-Columbia Steelhead and balance SCEE outcomes, and bring the scenario, along with the analysis, to the Integration/Recommendation Group for review and consideration.” There was a suggestion, to replace the word “balance” with “achieve.” The other members were ok with this revision.
- Multiple members expressed concerns about resources and capacity constraints for I/RG members in regard to implementing the SDM Proposal.
- Members discussed funding, with some members noting their concern that there is currently no identified funding for the SDM Process. One member stated that the CBC should engage in lobbying congress for funds.
- Members discussed the CBPTF goals, noting that one of the goals is to delist two endangered fish species. Members noted that recovery plans and action plans at the watershed council level have already been developed for the Mid-Columbia steelhead. Members advocated for using these plans in tandem with the SDM model to focus on the Mid-Columbia steelhead and delist it within two generations.
- Question: How would SDM lead to the I/RG reaching consensus?

- *Answer: The SDM framework breaks goals down into very specific and achievable pieces. The SDM framework is mostly an analytical tool, and the Mid-Columbia steelhead would be an opportunity to test out the whole decision-making process.*
- Multiple members noted that working actively with NOAA would be required to successfully delist the Mid-Columbia steelhead. Others noted that other agencies such as Bureau of Reclamation and United States Fish and Wildlife Service would need to be actively engaged as well.
- One member clarified that heat maps would be a widely used tool in the SDM process.

The I/RG members did not express any concerns with proceeding to explore the SDM proposal. Liz summarized that the I/RG would move forward with piloting an SDM framework and pull together a work group to look at info available, assess where there are gaps, and determine how to move forward with a goal of delisting Mid-Columbia steelhead.

## Next Steps

Liz facilitated a discussion on next steps for the CBC, including work planning for the remainder of the year, future work groups needed, and next steps for implementing recommendations. Liz shared that additional work groups suggested in the past included recommendation implementation, CBC funding, external communications, and abundance and trends updates. Liz asked the group to consider what is realistic for the group and where the I/RG wants to prioritize efforts.

- Several members shared support for continuing to move forward with the SDM process. One member stated that the SDM process could provide an opportunity to show progress as a collaborative and would be worthwhile focusing on for the next six months.
- Members agreed to form a work group on abundance and trends that would focus on how to quantify and assess progress that the group is making towards achieving the CBPTF goals.
  - Members suggested sharing resources that already exist, including StreamNet and indicators being developed by Northwest Power and Conservation Council (NWPPCC). Members shared about other efforts happening elsewhere and that it is important to build on those efforts and not duplicate them. One member noted that the NWPPCC is revisiting their Fish and Wildlife Program through a public process in 2025, and the CBC should stay coordinated with that effort.
  - Members suggested that the goal would be to look at populations for which goals were established and evaluate progress towards achieving those goals.
- Members also expressed that the I/RG should be tracking federal funding opportunities for supporting recommendations and decided to dedicate time during the next I/RG meeting for this topic. Many funding sources require identifying a lead implementing entity, and that will require discussions. Members agreed to form a work group to look at securing a source of funding to ensure continued support for the CBC process.
- Members confirmed that they are not going to focus on developing new recommendations in the next few months.

## Confirm Upcoming Topics, Next Steps, and Summary

Liz confirmed the work for the next six months that the CBC will focus on. I/RG members will meet in smaller groups before the next I/RG meeting to explore the Structured Decision Making process, look into internal funding opportunities, and develop a plan for Abundance and Trends Updates to the I/RG.

The group also decided that the next I/RG meeting should be held in the Fall, no sooner than October.

### Action Items

- All: Complete this I/RG Feedback Survey to share your feedback on the meeting and weigh in on meeting cadence by **end of day, Friday, July 12**.
- KW: Circulate tribal representation project team changes to the I/RG once finalized.
- KW: Convene a sub-group of I/RG members to further explore Structured Decision Making to developing recommendations and report out at the third quarter I/RG Meeting.
- KW: Convene a work group of I/RG members to look into internal funding opportunities.
- KW: Convene a work group of I/RG members to develop a plan for Abundance and Trends Updates to the I/RG.
- KW: Draft a 6/26-6/27 I/RG Meeting Summary and circulate to the group by 7/19.
- KW: Circulate a scheduling survey for the third quarter I/RG Meeting in fall, 2024.

Scott Hauser, Fort McDermitt Shoshone and Paiute Tribes, provided closing remarks. Scott thanked everyone for meeting in Boise and for the good work that everyone is doing.

*The meeting adjourned at 12:00pm MT.*