

# Columbia Basin Collaborative Hydropower/Blocked Areas Work Group

## Meeting Summary

Thursday December 1, 2022 from 9:00am – 12:00pm PT/10:00am - 1:00pm MT

### Attendees

**Work Group Members in Attendance:** Adam Storch (Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife), Andrew Gingerich (Douglas County Public Utility District), Brandon Weems (Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde), Casey Baldwin (Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation), Conor Giorgi (Spokane Tribe of Indians), Dan Rawding (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife), David Bain (Orca Conservancy), David Doeringsfeld (Port of Lewiston), Dennis Daw (Fort McDermitt Paiute and Shoshone/Upper Snake River Tribes), Eric Rothwell (United States Bureau of Reclamation), Erick Van Dyke (Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife), Glen Spain (Pacific Coast Federation of Fisherman’s Association), Guy Norman (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife), Haley Ohms (Trout Unlimited), Jay Backus (Port of Clarkston Commissioner), Jay Hesse (Nez Perce Tribe Department of Fisheries Resource Management), Jennifer Riddle (Tidewater Transportation and Terminals), Jens Rasmussen (AgriNorthwest), Jerry Rigby (Rigby, Andrus & Rigby Law, PLLC), Joe Maroney (Kalispel Tribe of Indians), John Simpson (Idaho Water Users), Jonathan Ebel (Idaho Department of Fish and Game), Keely Murdoch (Yakama Nation Fisheries), Kieran Connolly (Formerly with Bonneville Power Administration), Leslie Bach (Northwest Power and Conservation Council), Liz Hamilton (Northwest Sportfishing Industry Association), Mark Bagdovitz (United States Fish and Wildlife Service), Mark Martin (Idaho Outfitters and Guides Association), Megan Kernan (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife), Norman Semanko (Quincy-Columbia Basin Irrigation District), Ritchie Graves (National Marine Fisheries Service), Scott Hauser (Fort McDermitt Paiute and Shoshone/Upper Snake River Tribes), Stephen Waste (Columbia River Research Laboratory Western Fisheries Research Center), Tim Copeland (Idaho Department of Fish and Game), Tom Iverson (Yakama Nation Fisheries), Tracy Bowerman (Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board)

**Observers in Attendance:** Anna Brady (Attorney for Colville Tribes), Brooke Moore (Wheeler Soil and Water Conservation District), Cathy Kellon (Northwest Power and Conservation Council), Dennis Rohr (DRohr & Associates, Inc.), Elaine Harvey (Yakama Nation Fisheries), Erich Hester (United States Department of Energy), Jeffrey Kallstrom (Snohomish County Public Utility District), Kevin Malone (Public), Liz Fortunato (Desimone Consulting Group), Stacy Horton (Northwest Power and Conservation Council), Steven Pfeiffer (Idaho Rivers United), Ted Knight (Attorney), Stuart Crane (Yakama Nation Water Resources Program)

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

### Welcome, Agenda Review, and Updates

Samantha Meysohn, Kearns & West, welcomed the work group members, provided the meeting guidelines, and reviewed the meeting agenda. Agenda topics included: 1) Hydropower – Actions to Address Needs, 2) Blocked Areas – Actions to Address Needs, 3) Confirm Next Steps, Upcoming Meeting Topics, and Summary.

## Hydropower – Actions to Address Needs

Samantha invited group members to review a list of prioritized, tier 1, needs related to hydropower in the Columbia Basin which was compiled during the work group meeting on November 2<sup>nd</sup>. The list was separated into Columbia Basin needs and Internal Work Group needs. Samantha emphasized that these needs represented a first tier of needs, and that other identified needs could be explored at future meetings.

Before beginning the recommendation process, the work group refined the list of tier 1 needs. The following points of clarification were discussed by the group:

- The group clarified that the recommendations will focus on achieving Columbia Basin Partnership Task Force (CBPTF) goals.
- Navigation is an operation that will be impacted by changes to dams, and the US Army Corps of Engineers – Engineer Research and Development Center (USACE-ERDC) should be considered a stakeholder in the future navigation landscape.
- A need for the Internal Work Group is to understand the current conditions and the cost of doing nothing.
- Baseline information is still needed regarding the number and location of all blockages in the basin.
  - Work group members were invited to share data in support of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA's) efforts to create a comprehensive anadromous species-wide barrier database.
- The need for fish and wildlife managers to have a greater say in fish recovery and restoration work may be outside the scope of this work group.

The group first discussed actions to address the need for federal and non-federal dam operators to shift management objectives to target Partnership goals.

Group members discussed ideas for how to address this need. One group member asked the group to consider ways to build understanding amongst operators that the CBP goals are preferable to focusing on ESA regulatory requirements of avoiding jeopardy, and that there is importance in understanding what a pathway towards a shift in current goals would require. Group members discussed whether it was feasible for dams to do more with regards to spill rates, and that current high spill rates are still in an experimental phase with impacts to smolts still uncertain. The need for additional actions, outside of those focused on the hydro system, was raised as an essential piece of meeting abundance goals, such as the development of new life cycle models. Group members highlighted the importance of securing sustainable funding and institutional support to ensure recovery efforts are continued in the long term. The challenge of turning concepts into actions on the ground was also raised.

Samantha asked the group members to volunteer to join small groups that will focus on building out individual recommendations before the next work group meeting in January. Each small group will outline suggested actions in the Columbia Basin Collaborative (CBC) Action Form, which will be sent to the Integration/Recommendations Group (I/RG) and/or the Science Integration Work Group (SIWG). The small groups would meet to develop steps to address the following initial recommendation ideas:

- Fill data gaps regarding current objectives for federal and non-federal dam operators, gaps in current agreements resulting in inadequate protection for salmon, and determine the role of dam operations in recovery relative to other impacts.

- Develop improved life cycle models to demonstrate the hydro piece of the salmon lifecycle as a tool to educate stakeholders.
- Measure smolt-to-adult returns (SAR) and use them as a management metric.
- Modeling and simulation of dam operation changes for navigators through the US Army Corps research and development center in Mississippi.
- Meet with stakeholders (electricity, flood control, irrigators, navigation, work group participants, owners of dams) to understand needs, provide education, identify impacts, and build consensus around ideas for operational changes.
- Create an institutional system to achieve goals in the long-term.
  - Understand pathway for federal operators to shift objectives from avoiding jeopardy to the Columbia Basin Partnership (CBP) goals.
  - Insert language through the Water Resource Development Act to acknowledge the CBP goals.

Samantha noted that work group members shared existing recommendations related to this need, and encouraged the small work groups to look at these, as well.

### Blocked Areas – Actions to Address Needs

Samantha invited group members to review the Blocked Areas list of top tier needs, that was compiled during the work group meeting on November 2<sup>nd</sup>. This list was also separated into Columbia Basin needs and Internal Work Group needs. Work group members were again asked to review the list and provide comments before working through each need and developing recommended actions. Work group members clarified that although some specific blocked areas are identified in the list, recommendations can address blocked areas generally.

The group first discussed actions to address funding needs for the Upper Columbia United Tribes (UCUT) Phase 2 Implementation Plan.

Group members discussed which funding sources have not yet been utilized by UCUT, what actions are currently being taken, and whether the work group could support existing efforts. The group discussed federal, state, and regional funding sources as well as potential legislative actions. Since federally funded entities cannot lobby Congress for additional funding, the group revisited the potential power of the CBC to advocate for additional funding.

Samantha asked the group members to volunteer to join small groups that will focus on building out individual recommendations before the next work group meeting in January. The small group would meet to develop steps to address the following initial recommendation ideas:

- Explore funding through the Northwest Power & Conservation Council (NPCC) Fish and Wildlife program.
- Explore funding through the Columbia River Treaty (CRT).
- Explore funding through the State of Washington.
- Explore funding through federal funding and congressional authorizations, including the possibility for a Columbia basin geographic specific Act comparable to legislation that funds work in the Great Lakes or the Puget Sound.
- Seek out funding through a National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) grant.

Next the work group considered the need to discuss developing a regional effort for the blocked areas above the Hells Canyon Complex.

Group members discussed existing challenges in building buy-in among users in the interest of creating a durable and lasting funding effort, as well as the importance of building on existing programs established by the Upper Snake River Tribes Foundation (USRTF), and the State of Oregon. Members emphasized the importance of bringing impacted and necessary entities together in a forum. It was also noted that, within the region, unique passage and environmental issues will need to be addressed by basin. A group member also stated that any successful reintroduction effort above the Hells Canyon Complex will hinge on the identification of a donor stock of fish, and the development of facilities to manage those fish. It will also be essential to include the Nez Perce Tribe in any discussion and consider the tribe's fish passage and reintroduction positions.

Samantha asked the group members to volunteer to join small groups that will focus on building out individual recommendations before the next work group meeting in January. The small group would meet to develop steps to address the following initial recommendation ideas:

- Develop educational efforts focused on how anadromous fish recovery efforts would impact user groups
- Examine existing fish management plans and consider the following actions:
  - Build upon the existing Upper Snake River Tribes fisheries management plan.
  - Consider opportunities presented by the State of Oregon's call for fish passage to be included as part of 401 certification.
  - Consider the tribes' fish passage considerations.
- Bring USRTF, Nez Perce, Oregon, Idaho, Power companies, and the Bureau of Reclamation together to coordinate, develop and fund a durable and lasting effort.
  - Include adaptive management and prioritization to move this forward.
  - Explore passage and environmental issues to address in addition to exploring reintroduction.
- Consider the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) license process as a part of this issue.

The final discussion focused on the need to increase resources for Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) Fish and Wildlife Mitigation Program.

Work group members defined "increase resources" as specifically related to funding and identified that additional funding would be necessary to carry out projects while still meeting needs around the basin. In addition, group members discussed looking at existing funding for programs and whether those programs are meeting their intended goals. Members shared that funding varies greatly across the basin and it would be important to understand how funds are currently used when advocating for increased resources. Group members also identified the need to develop a dedicated, broader framework for how the region will fund projects, not solely focusing on BPA's Fish and Wildlife Program. Members shared an interest in expanding the focus to look at increasing resources for all blocked areas.

Samantha asked the group members to volunteer to join small groups that will focus on building out individual recommendations before the next work group meeting in January. The small group would meet to develop steps to address the following initial recommendation ideas:

- Address the current data gap regarding where federal funding has been directed for work on anadromous fish in the blocked areas of the basin, and where efforts have been meeting intended goals.
- Explore increasing funding from BPA.
- Explore funding through the NPCC Fish and Wildlife Program.
- Explore funding through the CRT
- Explore funding through federal funding and congressional authorizations, including the possibility for a Columbia basin geographic specific Act comparable to legislation that funds work in the Great Lakes or the Puget Sound.
- Seek out funding through a NMFS grant.
- Explore funding through affected States

### Confirm Next Steps, Upcoming Meeting Topics, and Summary

Samantha reviewed next steps for the work group. She thanked the group for their participation and confirmed the following action items:

#### Action Items:

- **Small Groups:** Work to develop complete recommendations and bring them forward for the January meeting. KW will follow-up with small groups with more direction early next week.
- **All:** Complete a brief Hydropower/Blocked Areas Meeting 3 survey to share feedback on the meeting by **end of day 12/9**
- **All:** Please complete this Doodle Poll with your availability for a December meeting by **end of day 12/9**. Let us know if you need more time or assistance to complete the poll.
- **All:** Share data for NOAA's inventory on blocked areas barrier database with Morgan Bond
- **KW:** Draft a meeting summary and circulate to the group by end of day **12/20**.

*Meeting adjourned at 12:00pm PT/1:00pm MT*