

Columbia Basin Collaborative Assessment & Trends Sub-group

Meeting Summary

Tuesday, August 20, 2024, from 11:00am – 12:00pm PT/ 12:00pm – 1:00pm MT

Attendees

Sub-group Members in Attendance: Eli Asher (Washington Governor's Salmon Recovery Office), Ed Bowles (Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife), Liz Hamilton (Northwest Sportfishing Industry Association), Jay Hesse (Nez Perce Tribe), Kris Homel (Northwest Power and Conservation Council), Tom Iverson (Yakama Nation Fisheries,) and Art Martin (Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife)

Facilitation Team: Sarah Davidson (Kearns & West), Liz Mack (Kearns & West), and Samantha Meysohn (Kearns & West)

Welcome, Agenda Review, and Context

Sam Meysohn, Kearns & West (K&W), welcomed members to the first Assessment & Trends sub-group meeting as part of the Columbia Basin Collaborative (CBC). Sam reviewed the meeting guidelines and provided an overview of the agenda. The topics included: 1) Metrics for tracking progress towards CBP goals and 2) Review next steps and action items.

Since this is the first meeting of the sub-group, Sam began by reviewing the Assessment & Trends sub-group workplan to lay out the groundwork and expected timeline for the sub-group. She noted that the sub-group will meet again before the upcoming I/RG meeting, sometime in October.

Sam then gave a recap of the most recent Integration/Recommendations Group (I/RG) meetings, noting interest in monitoring how the basin is doing to meet the Columbia Basin Partnership Task Force (CBPTF) goals. Sam also shared that at the June I/RG meeting, there was a presentation of high-level stock assessments and a discussion that followed. Sam explained that existing information can be leveraged, such as: StreamNet, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) 5-year reviews, Northwest Power and Conservation Council (NWPPC) indicators, and non-governmental organization (NGO) developed reports (such as Idaho Rivers United). Sam also reported that the I/RG decided more conversation was needed to determine how to monitor progress and that there was interest in hearing general status updates on the trends to reflect the CBPTF report, though resource needs and capacity constraints should be considered.

Metrics for Tracking Progress Towards CBP Goals

Sam opened this segment of the meeting by asking sub-group members about the information and level of detail needed to monitor progress towards the CBPTF goals. Sam used a Miro Board – a virtual, interactive whiteboard – to begin conversation on this topic. The Miro Board also included resources for sub-group members to reference ([Vision for Salmon and Steelhead](#) CBPTF report). Miro Board discussion included posing questions such as: 1) What information is needed and at what level, 2) What existing

information can be leveraged, 3) What level of effort is required to produce this and 4) Who can provide this information?

A summary of the discussion is below:

- Many sub-group members shared interest in focusing on stock level status.
- A sub-group member noted that Columbia Basin info should be reported and presented first at stock level rather than population level, showing current status relative to low-, medium- and high-level CBP goals. A fourth comparison bucket could be comparisons to quasi-extinction goals. A consolidated spatial scale was suggested, using tables that present numbers specific to different areas of the Columbia Basin (for example, Lower Granite abundance) – not using aggregated population numbers but using numbers specific to each part of the Columbia Basin. It was noted that resources like this already exist for some parts of the Columbia.
- Sub-group members noted it would be beneficial to understand the confidence intervals around estimates, since different kinds of information is used to generate estimates for different stocks was suggested, and there is no standard across the basin.
- Several members shared an interest in looking at stocks in a longer-term time context. For example, one person suggested a 5-year plan average. Another sub-group member shared an interest in looking at the stocks in the context of longer-term timing and trajectories. It was also noted that the key to success for many stocks is natural productivity, and the group should consider tracking productivity metrics such as recruits per spawner for lifecycle, segmented survival/mortality rates, egg to smolt, smolt to adult analyses. hatchery
- It could be helpful to track specific actions to advance the partnership goals, since it may take time to see resulting responses in abundance data.
- In addition, looking at indicator stocks could be beneficial.
- Another sub-group member noted that attempting to track data across the Columbia Basin is a long-running effort. The group should focus on leveraging existing information and data gathering efforts, rather than expending limited time and resources on data collection. For example, the NWPCC leads a basin-wide effort to monitor stocks across the basin. The NWPCC has been tracking metrics such as productivity and abundance and there is an overlap between the NWPCC and CBPTF goals – though there will likely be interest in redefining the goals moving forward. So, the group must find a way to denote the different types/quality of stock data, since info is generated in dramatically different ways, before comparing existing stock info at a Columbia Basin scale.
- Several members noted that StreamNet could be a helpful resource. StreamNet has stock-level data across the basin.
- Several group members noted that all the needed information will likely be hard to gather at the desired level. The general response was that some long-term monitoring data is being collected that can act as evidence on its own, but most data is collected on a shorter-term scale, at the project level and so it is necessary to figure out how to use the available data to best assess trends. If targets and goals are shifted within existing data and monitoring schemes, then this could result in a valuable set of data without having to undertake a massive monitoring effort.
- Sam then posed follow up questions to the group, asking what information is “need to have” versus “nice to have” in terms of working towards the CBPTF goals? A member noted that stock-level abundance data should be the priority, because it has not consistently been done before at the Columbia Basin level. Group members agreed with this although one member noted that it would be beneficial to also look at productivity. Sam noted that it will be important moving

forward to look at existing information to understand where this information already exists to include in this monitoring effort and better understand gaps.

- The potential value of a trend analysis was noted. However, one member shared that trend analyses can be overly technical, and an alternate approach was suggested looking at the Generational Growth Index within the NOAA Rebuilding Report.
- One member asked about the audience (I/RG, decision-makers, public, etc.) for this effort to compare data with CBPTF targets/goals, noting that when comparing abundance and productivity, abundance is easier to describe and understand, though abundance is less responsive in the short-term. Sam clarified that this information would be reported to the I/RG to dictate future work groups and recommendations. As such, the I/RG is the audience that this data will be reported to.
- Group members agreed on their understanding that the I/RG is the right target audience for this action and that preparing this information for broader, decision-making audiences is important (both technical and non-technical).

Miro Board notes are listed below:

What information is needed and at what level of detail for tracking progress?

- Focus on adult abundance.
- Look at stocks in a moment in time relative to a longer-term trajectory.
- Split natural productivity metrics (recruits per spawner, segmented survival/mortality rates and smolt-to-adult and egg to smolt) and hatchery production.
- Representative stocks that are actively monitored. If not monitored but wanted, ID gap.
- Stock level status – 5-year plan average compared to CBP goals.
- Confidence intervals around estimates- different kinds of information used to generate estimates for different stocks.
- Track actions to see resulting responses in abundance data.
- Status relative to low, med, and high goals.
- Comparison to quasi-extinction goals.
- Consolidated spatial scale - Lower Granite abundance targets, for example.

What existing information can be leveraged?

- StreamNet CAX database.
- NOAA 5-year reviews, though it was noted that this assessment could do more to capture quasi-extinction goals. This should reflect movement in the desired direction rather than the opposite.
- NOAA Rebuilding Report.
- Snake Basin assessments.
- NWPPC indicators (tracker data on MAFAC status will come from StreamNet dashboard).
- Abundance-based viability analysis in support of State of Salmon (biennial) - Washington focus.

Next Steps & Action Items

Sam noted that the group seemed to need additional discussion to develop a proposal. A sub-group member noted that it would be helpful to learn more about the existing information that had been shared and suggested a presentation from Nancy Leonard/Kris Hommel on StreamNet. Similarly, learning more about Washington's State of the Salmon could be beneficial. Eli Asher (WA Governor's Salmon Recovery Office) noted that he would be happy to put together a high-level presentation on Washington's approach. Sam noted that checking in with NOAA contacts, StreamNet contacts and

Washington state contacts would be helpful for moving forward in-between meetings. Sam thanked everyone for their participation.

Action Items:

- **Work group members:** Complete [Doodle poll](#) to schedule October meeting **by end of day Tuesday, August 27**
- **KW:** Draft a meeting summary and circulate to work group members by Tuesday, August 27
- **KW:** Circulate spreadsheet populated with responses from the Miro Board exercise
- **KW:** Reach out to point people for information sources to add to understanding of existing information

The meeting adjourned at 12:00pm PT.