

# Columbia Basin Collaborative

## Funding Sub-group

### Meeting Summary

Thursday, August 15, 2024, from 9:00am – 10:00am PT/ 10:00am – 11:00am MT

#### Attendees

**Sub-group Members in Attendance:** Erik Neatherlin (Washington State Governor’s Salmon Recovery Office), Art Martin (Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife), Jerimiah Bonifer (Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation), Scott Hauser (Upper Snake River Tribes), Leslie Druffel (McGregor Company), Tom Iverson (Yakama Nation)

**Facilitation Team:** Angela Hessenius (Kearns & West), Samantha Meysohn (Kearns & West), and Sarah Davidson (Kearns & West)

#### Welcome, Agenda Review, and Context

Angela Hessenius, Kearns & West (K&W), welcomed members to the first Funding sub-group meeting as part of the Columbia Basin Collaborative (CBC). Angela reviewed the meeting guidelines and provided an overview of the agenda. The topics included: 1) Sub-group objectives and work plan, 2) Funding needs identification, 3) Brainstorming potential funding sources and 4) Review next steps and action items.

#### Funding Sub-group Objectives and Work Plan

Angela shared the Funding Sub-group's objective, which is to recommend potential funding sources for the CBC to the I/RG. The sub-group goals include identifying funding needs and potential funding sources for the CBC. Angela also clarified that the scope for this group is focused on internal funding for the CBC, not seeking funding for implementing recommended actions.

Next, Angela reviewed the draft workplan for the Funding Sub-group. Following this meeting, which is focused on identifying funding needs and brainstorming funding options, the sub-group will meet once more in October to complete the potential funding options spreadsheet and agree on a funding recommendation that will be shared with the I/RG at the November 2024 meeting.

#### Identify Funding Needs

Angela reviewed the historic sources of CBC funding, noting past support from NOAA for the Columbia Basin Project Task Force (CBPTF). This included \$1.3 million for facilitation in addition to staff time for four people from October 2016 through July 2020. The four states (Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana) have provided \$1.5 million to support the CBC from October 2020 through March 2025. The current CBC funding will last through Quarter 1 of 2025, after which funding will be needed for continued facilitation support. Angela then opened the discussion on potential funding needs.

#### Questions and Discussion:

- What is the CBC’s designation (e.g., is the CBC a 501(c)3)?

- Angela responded that the CBC is a partnership of the participating entities rather than an official entity itself, so the CBC does not have a non-profit or any other status. In the past, members have applied for funding on behalf of the CBC.
- Another sub-group member asked if it would be beneficial for the CBC to become its own entity, and if yes, whose responsibility would it be to pursue this? Other work group members shared that this question has been raised before and the decision has been to wait to see how the Columbia Basin Restoration Initiative (CBRI) develops and if it makes sense in the long-term for the CBC to pursue its own designation.

### Brainstorm and Discuss Potential Funding Sources

The group brainstormed ideas for and discussed potential sources of funding for the CBC.

#### Questions and Discussion:

- Sub-group members discussed the need to identify a short-term funding source to continue operational support for the CBC. In recent years, the CBC has been funded through the Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery Fund (PCSRF); however, it will not be possible to use these funds again for at least a year due to the application period timing. There are different approaches that could be used to acquire short-term funding for the CBC, including applying for a grant or sourcing funding from each of the four states.
- A sub-group member asked if the four states are interested in continuing to provide funding support for the CBC. Representatives of the four states responded that they may be willing to contribute funds but that there are challenges with using PCSRF funds to support the CBC since this is a competitive grant and the states have other priority projects that they would like to use this funding for. The funding is also tiered and support for the CBC falls under the lower priority tier. Therefore, PCSRF funds should not be considered a stable and long-term funding source for the CBC.
- Sub-group members also noted that federal funding opportunities are another pathway for acquiring funding for the CBC and emphasized the importance of discussing options with federal partners. For example, the CBC could pursue funding for large-scale landscape planning and climate change adaptation planning. Sub-group members suggested that a funding recommendation to the I/RG should identify key federal agencies, projects, and line items for funding and then the I/RG can have policy conversations with federal partners. Another member suggested identifying federal agencies with discretionary funding available that they could set aside for supporting the CBC's operational needs.
- Sub-group members discussed some potential challenges and opportunities associated with grant funding. Members noted that there are resources that exist that could support the development of a grant application, including the CBC charter and the structured decision-making (SDM) pilot effort. Others noted it may be challenging to find federal grants that are appropriate for the CBC, especially considering that many grant opportunities are focused on project-specific efforts and on-the-ground actions rather than operational needs. Some members suggested having a leader who champions the effort and keeps it moving forward. NOAA, USFWS, BIA, and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) were mentioned as potential federal agencies that may have relevant funding opportunities to pursue.

- Several group members stated that to secure long-term funding and secure the CBC's unique value of regional collaboration, the group needs to solidify its identity, sense of purpose, and expected deliverables. In the longer term, the CBC will likely need to find a way to move forward with developing and operationalizing recommendations and tangible actions and deliverables. A member suggested that the CBC could serve as a forum for finding champions for specific projects and on-the-ground efforts and assisting in finding funding for those projects. Sub-group members agreed that clarifying this vision is crucial for long-term planning and securing long-term funding.

Following this discussion, Angela shared a CBC funding one-pager from 2021 and asked the group if an updated version of this document would be a helpful resource.

- Some work group members noted that refreshing this document would be helpful, as it would be valuable to have updated stock language for use in proposals and applications. Others shared that updating the document may need to be a decision made by the I/RG and that while it would be helpful to agree on common talking points, it is not an immediate need and does not need to happen before attempting to secure short-term operational funding.
- One sub-group commented that if the one-pager is updated, it could be helpful to expand the scope and perspective of what the CBC and frame it as a collaborative rather than a state-led process.

Angela introduced a spreadsheet for the group members to populate with potential funding sources. During the next sub-group meeting in October, the group will review this list and use it to develop a recommendation to bring to the I/RG.

### Next Steps & Action Items

- **KW:** Circulate federal funding resource documents
- **KW:** Schedule October meeting
- **KW:** Update fields and circulate [Funding Options Spreadsheet](#)
- **Work group members:** Populate Funding Options Spreadsheet before October meeting