

Columbia Basin Collaborative Integration/Recommendations Group

Meeting Summary

November 15, 2024, 8:00 am – 11:00 am PT/9:00 am – 12:00 pm MT
The Marcus Whitman Hotel & Conference Center, Walla Walla, WA

Welcome and Context

Liz Mack, Kearns & West (KW), opened the meeting and reviewed the agenda, which included discussing previous Columbia Basin Collaborative (CBC) recommendations and next steps for the CBC. Liz also provided an overview of the discussion from the previous day.

Next Steps for Previous Columbia Basin Collaborative Recommendations

Liz Mack invited the Integration/Recommendations Group (I/RG) members to consider and discuss next steps for the eight Columbia Basin Collaborative (CBC) recommendations that have achieved consensus from the I/RG. Liz reminded the group that the [Recommendation Tracker](#) page on the CBC website serves as a resource for tracking the implementation status of these recommendations.

Several I/RG members requested status updates on the CBC recommendations. The following updates were provided:

- **Fully Fund the Phase 2 Implementation Plan (P2IP):** This recommendation is currently being implemented.
- **Pursue Increasing Salmon Production to Support and Sustain a Stable and Dedicated Source of Fish in the Upper Snake:** This recommendation is in progress and could be considered as having reached implementation status. Language from this CBC recommendation will be used when submitting comments to the NWPCC.
- **Assess Run Timing and Entry Timing of Natural Origin Juvenile Salmon and Steelhead:** This recommendation has not yet been implemented due to lack of funding for the studies. Related ongoing work has highlighted the need for additional infrastructure.
- **Maintain and Improve Mainstem Reach Survival Estimates and Smolt to Adult (SAR) Return Data:** This recommendation has not yet been implemented. However, related work that is in progress includes the installation of passive integrated transponder (PIT) tag detection systems at key mainstem hydropower projects. At McNary Dam, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (the Corps) recently initiated an alternative evaluation for improving detection at the spillway, with a plan to award the design and construction contract in August 2025 for completion by 2027. There is also a plan at Bonneville Dam to install a prototype antenna this winter.
- **Enhance and Modify the Marine Mammal Protection Act Section 120 Pinniped Removal Program:** This recommendation has not been implemented. However, the six sovereigns intend to maximize the use of permits in the near-term to help with this effort. Potential funding opportunities and discussions about how to authorize expansion beyond the current geographic scope are also in process.

- **Manage Double-crested Cormorants in the Columbia River Estuary:** This recommendation has not yet been implemented. Some former members of the CBC Avian Predation Work Group have continued to discuss next steps for implementation.
- **Develop and Fund a Robust Columbia River Northern Pike and Invasive Non-Native Fishes Monitoring Project:** This recommendation has not been implemented. However, several groups, including the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Northwest Fishery Science Center, have launched relevant work concerning non-native species. The State of Washington is developing state legislature funding requests and working with mid-Columbia public utility districts.
 - Question: Why does Idaho Fish & Game encourage the killing of walleye except in certain areas?
 - *Answer: Certain water bodies are isolated, detached, and are popular for fishers, so that is why the killing is not encouraged.*
- **Develop and Initiate Testing of a Comprehensive Piscine Predator Monitoring and Evaluation Program (PPMEP):** This recommendation has not been implemented but the six sovereigns and the Resilient Columbia Basin Agreement (RCBA) are taking steps to initiate relevant work in the Columbia River Basin.

The group had the following questions and comments:

- Comment: Several group members noted that they plan to submit a recommendation to the Northwest Power & Conservation Council (NWPPCC) Fish & Wildlife Program amendment process regarding the I/RG recommendation to [Pursue Increasing Salmon Production to Support and Sustain a Stable and Dedicated Source of Fish in the Upper Snake](#). Other group members agreed that submitting CBC recommendations to NWPPCC through the amendment process would be valuable.
- Comment: Several group members shared how their own state and federal agencies and organizations are actively trying to implement CBC recommendations but that direct funding for implementation remains a challenge.
- Question: Are there examples of how the CBC consensus recommendations have been used to move those actions forward? Has the consensus support of the CBC for specific recommendations helped to successfully secure funding?
 - *Answer: The one recommendation that has received funding did not directly attribute the CBC. This was the recommendation to fully fund the Upper Columbia United Tribes (UCUT) and their project partners to implement the [Phase 2 Implementation Plan \(P2IP\)](#) to evaluate the feasibility and strategies for fish passage at five hydroelectric dams on the Upper Columbia and Spokane Rivers and reintroduce anadromous fish to historically occupied habitats.*
 - *The group agreed that they should prioritize highlighting the consensus-based decision-making of the CBC in the future to support advocacy and funding for implementing the recommendations.*
- Comment: Several group members expressed the desire for more information on the status of the CBC recommendations to support their lobbying efforts, noting that many of the goals of their organizations and agencies are aligned with the CBC recommendations.
 - *Response: Information on the CBC recommendations is available on the [CBC website](#). The group agreed that it would be helpful for the KW facilitation team to repackage it into a factsheet on the CBC to support outreach and funding requests.*

- Question: Can the implementation stage of any of the recommendations be changed on the website?
 - *Answer: Most recommendations are getting closer to implementation but are not being implemented yet. The recommendation to pursue increasing salmon production to support and sustain a stable and dedicated source of fish in the Upper Snake can be updated to implementing status.*
- Question: Will the proposal from the Assessment & Trends (AT) sub-group to monitor progress towards the Columbia Basin Partnership Task Force (CBPTF) goals be considered as a recommendation through the I/RG consensus process?
 - *Answer: The I/RG generally supports the concept of this proposal. However, the current language is too granular for a recommendation and would need to be revised, including editing the language on public accessibility to clarify that monitoring is the priority. Tom Iverson will develop language for I/RG member use in their individual submissions to the NWPCC Fish & Wildlife Program amendment process and KW will repackage the AT Sub-group proposal into a recommendation for I/RG consideration at a future meeting.*
 - *A group member noted that the language of the new CBC recommendation should be simple, and comments to NWPCC could include that Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) should provide funding for NWPCC to report progress against the CBPTF goals.*

Next Steps

Liz Mack asked about the timing of the next I/RG meeting and checked in on work group planning for the next six months.

The group had the following comments and questions:

- Comment: Several group members discussed making the CBC a non-profit in the long-term. Some members noted that it is much easier for an existing 501(c)(3) organization to take on a sponsor role for the CBC than for the CBC to become a non-profit itself.
- Comment: Group members reiterated the need for securing short-term funding. Several group members expressed the desire to join future funding discussions.
- Comment: Group members voiced their desire to work towards the interests of all who sit on the I/RG and echoed their commitment to collaborative decision-making and action.
- Comment: A group member suggested developing a communication plan to support outreach and fundraising. Other group members reiterated the need for an updated factsheet on the CBC.
 - *Response: KW can help with updating the CBC factsheet. Developing a strategic communication plan would require further effort and input from the I/RG.*
- Question: Are efforts towards achieving goals and implementing CBC recommendations by external agencies and organizations being documented? It would be helpful to support funding requests with existing actions.
 - *Answer: I/RG members discussed developing an internal document for I/RG members to share updates on work related to the CBC recommendations versus members coordinating directly with each other for updates. The group agreed to focus on individual communication, paired with the information already available on the CBC website.*
- Comment: A member highlighted the website tribalresilienceactions.org, an effort of the Upper Snake River Tribes, Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, Upper Columbia United Tribes,

and other partners. This website represents more than a dozen Tribes across North America and acts as a database of climate adaptation strategies and community examples to inform ongoing and new climate adaptation and resilience work.

- Comment: If funding is available, group members supported continuing in-person meetings but agreed to evaluate whether a hybrid or virtual format is appropriate for the next I/RG meeting in February or March 2025.

Confirm Upcoming Topics, Next Steps, and Summary

Liz Mack reviewed and confirmed the next steps and action items. Joel Kawahara, non-tribal fisheries, provided closing remarks.

Action Items:

- **All:** Investigate your organization's existing funding that could be used for short-term CBC funding needs.
- **All:** If fish and wildlife managers are unable to share data with StreamNet, let the I/RG members know so that the I/RG can advocate for more information.
- **All:** Reach out to fellow I/RG members to learn more about how projects fit in with implementing existing CBC recommendations.
- **All:** Send relevant materials that you would like to circulate to the I/RG to the KW team.
- **All:** Plan for the next I/RG meeting in Feb-March 2025, aiming for an in-person/hybrid meeting if funding is available.
- **Kevin:** Reach out to select Stakeholder/NGO I/RG members to brainstorm strategies for outreach.
- **Scott/Dennis:** Share a few sentences for the Upper Snake River hatchery that I/RG members may include in recommendation for the NWPCC Fish and Wildlife Addendum Process.
- **Tom:** Develop additional language to supplement the Assessment & Trends Sub-group Proposal that I/RG members may include in recommendation for the NWPCC Fish and Wildlife Addendum Process.
- **KW:** Draft a recommendation that the region should fund basin-wide reporting for tracking towards the CBP Goals and circulate to the I/RG for the consensus process.
- **KW:** Circulate links to information referenced in external forum updates.
- **KW:** Circulate names and organizations for new proposed SDM Steelhead Pilot Project Work Group members.
- **KW:** Develop materials including a 2-pager handout and slide deck summarizing the history of the CBPTF and the high-level CBC consensus recommendations.
- **KW:** Send out a call for I/RG members to participate in funding discussions at upcoming Project Team meetings.

The meeting adjourned at 11:00am PT.