

Fish Barrier Removal Board – Meeting Notes**Date: December 15, 2020****Place: Online Meeting****Summary: Agenda items with formal action**

Item	Formal Action
Meeting notes from November 2020	Approved

Summary: Follow-up actions

Item	Follow-up
Updated talking points for legislative session	Tom will get updated points out to the Board shortly

Board Members/Alternates on phone:

Carl Schroeder, Association of Washington Cities (AWC)	Matt Curtis, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)
Erik Neatherlin, Governor’s Salmon Recovery Office (GSRO)	Paul Wagner, Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)
Jane Wall, Washington State Association of Counties (WSAC)	Susan Eugenis, Washington State Association of Counties (WSAC) (Cowlitz Co.)
Joe Shramek, Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR)	Susan Kanzler, WSDOT
John Foltz, Council of Regions, Snake River Salmon Recovery Board (SRSRB)	Tom Jameson, WDFW

WDFW Staff:

Adam Fleming	Gabrielle Stilwater
Alison Hart	Gina Piazza
Cade Roler	Julie Grobelny
Casey Costello	Melissa Erkel
Cassandra Weekes	Neil Aaland, Facilitator
Christy Rains	Dave Collins

Others observing (some only signed in with short login names):

Alice Rubin, RCO	Elena Fernandez	Kristen Currens, MacKay Sposito Engineering
Betsy Lyons, City of Seattle	Eric Doyle	Penny
Brenda Aguirre	Evan Lewis, King County	Steve
Carl Bevis	Jacob Venard	Steve Helvey, GeoEngineers
Casey	James Blankenbeckler	Tracy Gilson
Christian Berg	Jeanne Abbott, GRSO	Wendy Clark-Getzin, Jefferson County
Daniel Howe	Jon Fulton	
Dave Caudill, RCO	Josh Lambert, RCO	

Welcome/Introductions/Agenda Review: Meeting started at 9:00. A quorum is present. Facilitator Neil Aaland reviewed the agenda. He explained that if anyone has public comment to offer, to e-mail it to FBRB@dfw.wa.gov. Comments will be read into the record. Tom introduced Erik Neatherlin, GSRO, as

the primary RCO member. Jeannie Abbott remains the alternate, and Dave Caudill will continue to participate as a technical resource.

Public Comment: No public comments were received.

Old Business: The meeting notes for the November meeting were approved as submitted.

Updates

1. Legislative session starts in January. There is no special session scheduled.
2. There are three subjects for the rulemaking that is currently underway: fish passage, fish screening, and climate adaptive crossings. The first set of workshops have been completed. Now developing draft language. It was decided to postpone second set of briefings till language is developed, anticipated for January or February.
3. Strategy subcommittee met December 11. Tom reviewed the three different funding provisos – transportation, capital, and operating budgets. Funding was provided but then reduced (COVID savings) so have been working on it with existing staff, which is difficult. We know the stocks that make up Orca diet. There are 400 listed runs in Washington state. \$4 billion will be spent on the culvert injunction over the next 10 years. The injunction only targets one form of barrier – culverts – under one type of ownership – WSDOT. More is needed to get to salmon recovery.

An outstanding issue is whether to focus spending on the stocks worst off or on those closest to recovery. Then decide – where are barrier removals going to make a difference? We are not going to get to Orca recovery and increased salmon harvest in the next 10 years. Might be deciding to remove a specific number of barriers. Next steps are to check-in with AWC and WSAC on the legislative approach. Timeline for work on the strategy – fiscal report and preliminary plan were due on January 15 but WDFW is asking for a delay.

4. Proviso work discussed with strategy above.

Recent Fish Passage Briefing to the Legislature

Several agencies and AWC/WSAC were asked to brief legislative committees. We are showing those presentations to the FBRB today. WSDOT led the briefing for the Transportation Committee. Paul Wagner took the lead. He covered these points:

- Reviewed current progress, including a virtual tour
- There is not a rigid prioritization system; we generally look at miles of habitat above the barriers
- They try and develop multiple projects together for efficiency
- Showed a map of current projects and discussed the design/build process being used for some projects
- Showed examples of bundled projects and partnerships
- He noted WSDOT's YouTube channel with links to different projects
- Some challenges from Covid-19 but largely continued making progress
- Summarized funding of \$275 million this biennium and request of 700 million for next biennium, which keeps them on track for the injunction

Jane Wall led the next presentation, which was made to the Transportation Committee . Points made included:

- Counties also have barriers

- They do not have a court mandate but need to correct around 4100 culverts that block significant reaches
- Average cost to correct county-owned barriers is \$1.25 million each
- Counties are currently working on inventories of their culverts and blockages
- They want to continue that work next biennium but their funding from fuel tax revenues to do this is being reduced; considering asking legislature for matching funding
- She reviewed other challenges and supports fully funding the FBRB request

Carl Schroeder then showed the AWC presentation. They have been working on culvert barrier reduction for at least ten years. They also receive fuel tax revenues. He showed some examples of city culverts and the tax revenues received. AWC supports fully funding the FBRB request and continuing collaboration.

John Foltz asked whether there is a summary table for WSDOT, county, city barriers. Jane can discuss with DFW but not sure that exists. Paul thinks that would be a complicated request.

Tom Jameson reviewed the DNR presentation made to the House Rural Development, Agriculture, and Natural Resources committee. The primary topics included DNR's Road Maintenance and Abandonment Plan (RMAP) and Family Forest Fish Passage Program (FFFPP). RMAP is aimed at large forest landowners. FFFPP is aimed at small forest landowners. They have asked for \$10 million next biennium for FFFPP, an increase from the \$5 million from this biennium.

Tom finished by summarizing the WDFW presentation to House Rural Development, Agriculture, and Natural Resources committee. They showed different efforts related to fish passage. He reviewed the FBRB work and the two pathways for grants.

Erik Neatherlin asked if there is discussion regarding communication materials heading into the legislative session. Tom explained past practices in developing information sheets and talking points and will be looking to update those for the session.

Upcoming opportunities for engagement: Tom noted there are two upcoming opportunities. First are briefings for Reps. Lekanoff and Tharinger regarding proviso status. Second is a virtual tour for Sen. Frockt, set for December 21. Tom will get talking points by the end of the week. Matt noted Dave Caudill had information in the chat box on steel prices.

Wrap-up

Meeting adjourned at approximately 11:00 a.m.

Next meeting: Tuesday, January 19, 2021 – online meeting

Meeting Notes
FBRB Strategy Subcommittee
December 11, 2020

Attendees:

Tom Jameson	Paul Wagner
Matt Curtis	Margen Carlson
Carl Schroeder	John Foltz
Jane Wall	Neil Aaland

The online discussion started at 1 pm. The notes from the last meeting in September were reviewed. Tom reviewed several recent relevant meetings:

- Annual tribal injunction meeting
- House Transportation and RDAN meetings

Tom is thinking we will show the staff presentations made at those briefings for the upcoming FBRB meeting. He noted there is a request from Sen. Frockt for a virtual tour; will happen before the end of December.

Tom reviewed what is clear about the Proviso criteria:

- The stocks that are currently limiting fisheries
- The SRKW diet
- The geographies where salmonids are listed
- Listed salmonids are only Chinook, Coho, Chum and Steelhead trout
- 400 distinct runs which cover $\frac{3}{4}$ of Washington State
- ESA delisting does have defined criteria; spatial distribution, genetic diversity, timing diversity
- Stock types: primary, contributing, supporting
- ESA delisting criteria are defined only for Chinook but not for the others
- Debate in recovery community centers upon recovering the worst off or recovering the closest to being delisted...the strongest and let the weakest runs blink-out
- The choropleth maps displaying the 4 proviso criteria do not reflect enough of what WDFW knows as of now
- Our mission is to find watersheds where BARRIER REMOVAL will make the difference in recovery
- Our proviso strategy will be built from saltwater to fresh headwaters because the fish line-up this way. Chinook, Chum, Coho, Steelhead.
- Task to WDFW- Capture assumptions of how the fish use the watersheds (Neil for your SA - Matt and Casey just completed this task on 22 DEC 20).
- FBRB should consider taking ESA out of the proviso criteria because ESA listed runs are everywhere. The Salmon Recovery Network has ESA delisting figured-out. Let's leave ESA delisting to the regions....FBRB work with the regions will be a best practice.
- Task to WDFW – Ask the regions and the tribal nations where passage is limiting the recovery of their salmon populations.

Upcoming Legislative Engagement:

Tom reviewed the timeline for requirements. A report is due to fiscal subcommittees on January 15. It is to discuss the plan and how to adaptively manage. We have not been able to make a lot of progress for a variety of reasons. Margen is concerned about this due date. She wants to clarify that the mid-January

report is a policy framework rather than a detailed plan. We would make sure there is personal outreach to legislators most interested. She asked what other members think. Comments and questions:

- Jane is comfortable with that
- John Foltz wonders if we got an initial response from legislators on our earlier progress report [No, no response other than “thanks for submittal”]
 - Tom got an email from Myra Baldini asking whether it has been submitted; apparently she was not in the formal loop

Carl has talked to Rep. Lekanoff; she understands the delay and is interested in seeing work when ready. Carl suggests we continue to work during the session and get as far as we can on the four proviso items being requested.

Tom said there was a meeting on Dec. 3 with the Fish Program. They reviewed the proviso. It was noted that criteria for different runs are measured differently; that makes it difficult to track. The legislature seems to be looking for a silver bullet; in some areas barriers are not the significant limiting factor. According to WDFW’s Fish Program science staff, the silver bullet is removing large dams which would increase smolt survival for Chinook and removing natural barriers to Chinook runs which would open new pristine habitat. Large dams are the biggest problem for Chinook smolt survival. WDFW fish program suggests developing a scoring rubric/conceptual framework then apply the rubric to one or two watersheds as examples.

Tasks to WDFW: Build a list of habitat assumptions by species, learn more about recovery designations, identify several dates to meet with the fish program to continue this discussion. Passage issues at the Hood Canal bridge came up.

They are happy to help develop the strategy. They need a conceptual framework. Apply it to one or two watersheds as examples. Next steps would be to list assumptions. Need to identify several dates within the next several weeks.

Margen noted some of the topics have big policy issues. Other comments from her:

- There is interest in a map of number of proviso bullet points for each species by WRIA
- Tom’s team has already done a lot of work
- We were not able to hire a person to do analytical work
- Chinook tend to use the mainstem
- Margen wants a list of categories of observations we can make currently
- Margen wants to identify the big picture policy decisions that need legislative discussion during the upcoming legislative session

Margen asked for feedback from today’s participants:

- John Foltz can get details on recovery scenarios; SRFB has also struggled with this, the idea of “writing off populations” does not have traction; perhaps we ask for just continuing to commit \$ to ESA listed species
- Carl said chinook barriers on mainstem are outside our charge. Off channel rearing habitat should be considered. He likes the idea of making improvement toward delisting AND stop degradation

John suggested that the board needs a defined goal with this proviso. John believes that FBRB efforts no matter how funded will not lead to SRKW recovery through additional prey availability nor large increases in fisheries harvest over the next ten years. John suggest a goal of removing a specific number of fish passage barriers.

Margen appreciated these points; she cited problems in the Stillaguamish watershed. Paul is leery of a massive prioritization scheme; Margen understands that concern. Carl agreed with Paul, we are not going to be able to come up with a great prioritized list. John says need to be sure we set expectations. Do we have goal setting in our plan?

Margen said a statewide map showing that 3 criteria overlap (benefit to Orca, critical for PST, and critical for NOF) would be helpful Carl said we need to focus where passage is a limiting factor.

Wrap-up: Tom met with Erik Neatherlin, who will distribute the report to the regions. Tom would like to meet again; suggested Feb. 11 but will confirm with everyone.