

Methow Restoration Council

April 16, 2016
Conference Call

Participants:

Kristen Kirkby (CCFEG), Paul Wagner (CTCR), Amy Martin (OCD), Chris Johnson (MSRF), Pete Teigen (UCSRB), John Crandall (MSRF), Jessica Goldberg (MSRF)

Topic: SRFB Large Cap proposal

Pete – RCO is soliciting feedback on the Large Cap proposal directly from sponsors – they sent out a poll. UCSR also received separate surveys from RCO as the Lead Entity and as the Region. I previously shared the briefing memo that came from the March 6 SRFB meeting.

One of the recommendations out of last year's LEAN study was to develop a large complex project investment program. RCO is trying to look at what developing one of these programs would mean. We're trying to identify what would be best for our region, LE, sponsors, and our listed species. We're trying to get feedback from sponsors to help me formulate my feedback for the LE survey. I want to make sure that my feedback generally reflects what the sponsors think.

Timeline – they're currently working on reviewing their options. They will work on reviewing their options at the SRFB meeting in July, which will be in Yakama. They plan to develop their proposal in August and September, and then adopt it in December.

There are 7 options; it is possible that they will select an option at the July meeting or whittle the list down.

I talked with the WA Salmon Coalition folks about wanting to make sure that we also include species that are identified as endangered, not just species that are close to delisting. At the state level, they want to show successes for their efforts, which is why they are targeting delisting species.

Chris – it seems that it is inevitable that there will be less money available for the projects that don't qualify for this program. Are all of the options taking money from the regular SRFB round?

Pete – some of the options identify seeking new funding, like option 7. The majority of the sponsors I've talked to demonstrate a concern about losing funding to the region.

Chris – that is a realistic concern given the options

Pete – so I'm hearing that we wouldn't want to see a reduction in our regional allocation. I do think this is a valid concern for certain lead entities and sponsors. Obviously it takes more money to get projects on the ground in some areas, like Puget Sound. I think there are some concerns about getting some big expensive projects on the ground in our area, but I'm not sure this would be a panacea.

Chris – the CAC has consistently favored a strategy of getting more projects on the ground rather than funding only one or two that might fail. It seems like sponsors should be leveraging funds in the SRFB process to get bigger projects done rather than using this program to move the world.

Pete – there are some specific questions to answer as Lead Entity

- Obstacles to large projects
 - SRFB funds used to leverage other funding
 - Large complex is dollar amount, infrastructure, landowner – types and multiple
- New program only if new money that doesn't reduce current allocation
- No loss of local control
- Target species nearing extinction

Amy – there are limitations for funding monitoring, even for implemented projects. I would like to be able to monitor our projects to identify projects that are successful. If we want to prove success, that is probably the method to do it

Chris – also, adaptive management programs don't fund well, but if you're looking at something that addresses a disincentive for private landowners to participate, or if SRFB wants to address project effectiveness, funding for adaptive management would be an important thing to fix. There is a fear in the community that there is no money standing behind projects to address failure, to learn from them, and to improve upon them

Jessica – monitoring, adaptive management, and maintenance of existing projects is also important; we may need to adjust perceptions of success, and recognize that smaller investments in existing projects may contribute as much to recovery as a big shiny new project somewhere else

Pete – we've been keeping the Board updated on the LEAN study and these recommendations. We will be updating them next week at their meeting. I think Melody will work with the board to gather their feedback to provide as a region. We have to complete the survey by May 10th, and I will probably complete mine by May 8th, so if people have additional feedback get it to me before then.

Roundtable

Amy– OCD Update: with the drought declaration for the Methow and Okanogan, the Conservation Commission is trying to round up resources. If you have irrigation efficiencies projects this year or project ideas, let me or John Culp with the Commission know. The money wouldn't be available until June or July. It's based on the drought declaration for the Methow, Okanogan, and Yakama. It has to be something that will help this year's condition - irrigation water management and other things related to fish health like removing rock dams. We also hope to ramp up general outreach about opportunities.

Kristen – would it include monitoring for stranding?

Amy – it may, I will check with John Culp

Kristen – I will sent Ryan Fortier a note to have him get in touch with you.

Kristen – CCFEG Update: we're on the hunt for small wood for Hancock springs this year in the 6-12" range, both rootwads and straight

Amy – we're doing some community fire risk removal in the Methow

Pete – the Entiat Ranger district had to do some hazard tree removal and they have some wood they are trying to get rid of

Jessica – RiverBank Update: Jennifer is retiring at the end of the month and the Bureau is going to discontinue their lease of this building in August. MSRF is still working on plans for where we will land after that time, which will affect where MRC meetings will be held; stay tuned.

Pete – SRFB Update: I will send CAC meeting info; the presentation date is July 23 for Okanogan County, 25 for Chelan County

HWS Update: we need sponsors to update all project information in HWS by the end of the month. Projects closed last year, projects currently being implemented, and proposed projects. This is how the state determines funding.

Next MRC May 21st