

Methow Restoration Council

Conference Call

May 19, 2020

Participants: Pete Teigen (UCSRB), John Crandall (MSRF/RTT), Chris Johnson (MSRF), Amy Martin (OCD), Robert Warren (BEF), Chris Butler (YN), Hannah Coe (OCD), Katy Pfannenstein (USFWS), Kristen Kirkby (CF), Crystal Elliot (TU), Nicole Jordan (UCSRB), Lynda Hofmann (WDFW), Ryan Fortier (WDFW), Ken Muir (CCD), Matt Young (CTCR)

Meeting Notes:

Pete Teigen – UCSR/Regional Updates: we have a new website for prioritization:

www.ucsr.org/prioritization. The RTT is going to talk about prioritization in June

John Crandall– we're in Step 2 for prioritization; we had a meeting to go over life stage priorities by Assessment Unit, then looked at sub reaches within AUs. All that information was summarized. If you have questions about the information, Greer is the one to talk to. Process is moving quickly, and more information is being updated so it changes. Now is a good time for folks to go in and look at the priorities. It's a lot. It's good to step back and look again to see if something was missed for whatever reason. Not too late to give input, but you need to do it now and it's easy to do. A lot of AUs and all the different life stages, so a lot of choices are being made. There were probably some things that could be improved. Within Step 2, the meat of it is trying to assign what data are available to inform the life stages and AU reaches, what physical habitat is available. Next step is to assign habitat attributes to reaches and life stages. Then we will have scoring to see how the reaches break out and see what is needed, this will be where the prioritization takes place.

Pete – we're still working on the planned project forecast list for RCO that they requested. We will be following up with project sponsors within the next week to finalize this effort. We're trying to develop a list that we can submit. A similar effort at the opposite end of the spectrum is trying to close out 2019 projects in Salmon Recovery Portal (formerly Habitat Work Schedule) – these data are used by the state to help demonstrate all of the work that you have done.

Another topic on the SRFB agenda for June is a future targeted investment, potentially an investment from the legislature for large capital projects that exceed the normal amount. Last year about \$6 mil went to Hood Canal and other area. One thing they are thinking about are species at grave risk; we're talking to them about focusing investment on UCR spring Chinook. We will be discussing that in June, probably more in September. I encourage people to attend June SRFB meeting; you will have to go online and sign up in advance.

With BEF, we're going through a regional evaluation; we're going to use a third party consultant to continue that effort to do an assessment.

Robert Warren – Melody is looking at soliciting a proposal from a third party entity, this was recommended by people who responded to the survey to get more candid information

Nicole Jordan – We're going with Ruckelshaus as a sole source, but haven't finalized anything yet.

Pete – We finished our virtual site tours for SRFB last week. We got good feedback from RTT members, State Review Panel, and Marc. SRP felt like any glitches didn't hinder their ability to understand the project. People agreed that the drone footage was very helpful, in some cases more helpful than a site visit where you just stand in one spot. In future years we may look at doing a hybrid approach for site visits. Please share any thoughts or concerns about this, costs, equity, etc.

Nicole – offering support through UCSRB, people can email me with information, ideas, questions

Pete – Nicole is going to be helping with the Okanogan Outreach grant round, and she's working on helping people amend current contracts. The next round will be in June or July, so if you have questions contact me or Nicole

Chris Johnson – as we're getting closer to the construction season, is anyone through UCSRB tracking distancing regulations, creating a handbook, etc., for people to use, guidance for working with contractors?

Pete – nothing specific, we're currently using the plan like we sent out earlier, we're not tracking it right now, have a call with Marc in the coming weeks, so we will see if there's anything more substantive from the state. I will mention it to Sarah to check with BPA or other funders. We're operating under the Governor's phased opening approach

Chris J – I'm curious what happens if the phases go back and forth once we're in construction

Pete – I can touch base with Sarah about the upcoming IT meeting in June to see if we can get some funders and see what that does look like. Maybe have a conversation.

Discussion – Board and county commissioners, Pete will follow up with Melody and others

John Crandall – Outreach Update: we updated our outreach and education plan, based on a coordination meeting we had. It's a fairly broad document that contains many aspects of the outreach and education work of members of the MRC. We have a list of activities and school programs planned for the year. Obviously, a fair slice of that is basically on hold or canceled for the year. I'm not really sure how we will account for that on the far end of things. This changes the approach we need to take with outreach. I will share the document.

We're working on a State of the Riparian report as a follow up to our State of the Salmon. When we look at riparian habitat in the Methow, I'm seeing an astonishing amount of riparian clearing on private land. Not sure how to deal with it; there are shorelines regulations, but usually it just happens with no enforcement. Seeing clearing of understory and large trees, replaced with bare ground or lawn with maybe a few big trees. We're doing a lot of work to improve riparian condition with the assumption that a lot of the clearing was a mostly historical effect, but wondering if overall we're still seeing a net loss of riparian habitat. Definitely gets right to the heart of private property rights also.

Lynda Hofmann – I was just contacted by the County that they will be doing code enforcement; this is an opportunity to identify places where the code needs to be enforced. It would be good to have them at MRC, maybe an introduction.

Chris J – good idea; there is a fairly large loophole for when you have a code violation and when you don't. Unfortunately when you clear, the code only applies after you apply for a permit.

Lynda – if things are felled into the river or there is equipment in the river, report it to the sheriff. That is a hydraulic code violation, but I don't enforce that

John – I would like to map it and figure it out, somewhat contentious, come potential conflicts. Is the reporting anonymous? Clearing happens in stages. Is there a catalog of sites that have been addressed or looked into already?

Lynda – Ecology also gets involved with shorelines violations, but I don't think anyone is cataloging it

Chris J – from my experience the sheriff's office isn't interested in enforcing, County shorelines is the best route, but there is no violation of county code unless you apply for a permit. Planning commission of Okanogan county is a good place to bring it forward.

John – I will check in with some folks who may be interested in bringing it forward. I can understand why people want to make their property tidy, but as we work to restore, I'm not sure we're not still in a net loss of riparian habitat. Sad.

Amy Martin – WDFW is working on tracking some of that for critical areas, they have a tool that they are bringing here. The Critical Areas Ordinance is lacking, and there are issues with the community

understanding the regulations. We would be interested in being involved. Think their aim is to perform the exercise statewide, but it is high resolution change detection. Our county may not be included in this biennium.

John – Fishing day is canceled this year; we're still shooting for a Methow River appreciation day and cleanup, maybe Saturday the 22nd of August, or potentially the 15th. Stay tuned for details, I'm doing some outreach to different user groups like fly fishers, and the boating community

John Crandall – science paper of the Month: Carlos Polivka's paper went out to the MRC a few weeks ago; it's hot off the presses and local. This is work that Carlos has been doing for about a decade in the Entiat, somewhat related to the IMW there. This new work has looked into whether wood structures are congregating fish or creating more fish. Entiat was very well suited to their study plan. They had treated and untreated reaches, natural and unnatural structures. Not BACI, but post hoc, looking at conditions on the ground. Had areas with structures and areas with structures, and had treated and untreated reaches. The study looked at young of the year juvenile chinook and steelhead. They found that fish density was 2.5-3 times higher in treated reaches. Overall the response was higher for chinook than steelhead in wood structures in the treated reaches. Unrestored areas within treated reaches were the same within untreated reaches, so more fish at treated structures. A great little study, answers a really important question of the efficacy of installing these structures for creating more fish. The question is whether we can take this study to apply it in the Methow, think it suggests that it is good to continue to install wood structures.

Chris J – I have heard a suggestion that when we remove riprap we're also taking away fish habitat, any thought to how that fits in?

John – would need to do a study on that, it's definitely true that fish use riprap. It could be looked into

Roundtable

Chris Johnson – MSRF: People in WA have been targeted for unemployment scam where people apply for unemployment in your name; I have been dealing with this. If you have an SAW account through DOR you can check if there have been any changes, then you can check with employment security to see if anyone has created an account in your name

Pete – I went to employment security and created an account

Chris J – if you already had an account and you can't log in that is the indication that you have a problem

Chris J – MSRF staff are out on the river now using solo folks to check staff gages and piezometers to document high water around restoration sites. If you want information let us know, because we are out there doing it

Chris J – we are getting ready to award a design contract for the Twisp Rive ponds intake; we have bids out for Barkley Bear construction project, and we will be making additional outreach to stakeholders as we make alternative selections in Sugar

Pete Teigen – UCSRB: we're trying to get a better understanding of how much it costs to do drone flights, time to do the flights but also the editing, etc.

Chris J – we can share what we have paid, video is different than georeferenced, ortho photos, etc.

Jessica – outreach video is much less expensive than ortho photos/images for data collection

Pete – I'm interested in finding out how much it would cost to replace site visits with drone footage, trying to figure out who would pay for this work

Chris J – agree, and we talk with our grant managers. It's hard if it's the first grant on a specific site, harder to fit it under a budget

Discussion – using a FAA certified pilots

Matt Young – CTCR: we're doing some design this summer, social distancing

Amy Martin – OCD: we have been talking with Gene Shull and others to work on a grant through NRCS and USFS to work on planned and unfunded work on the Mission project. We have a current grant for some forest health work in Edelweiss community and in the Tunk valley. We're in the beginning stages in engaging the agencies

Kristen Kirkby – Cascade Fisheries: we're moving forward on some construction projects in the Wenatchee, and looking at when we can get a barrier crew over in the Okanogan.

Robin is just doing a final run through of the model for the Methow Barrier assessment; we should have a report in the next few weeks

John Crandall – lamprey update: working through USFWS and YN to potentially develop a small grant through the lamprey working group to look at lamprey habitat in and around wood structures in the Methow and maybe the Entiat response of lamprey and lamprey habitat in salmonid based restoration. Exciting to see where we're going on that.

Katy Pfannenstein – USFWS: Robes and I still can't go in the field, but will be reassessing in June
Pete – are they following the states guidelines?

Katy – it is regional, they are saying more likely we will be able to go to the Methow than Yakima

Nicole Jordan – UCSRB: I look forward to seeing you all in person in the future

Steve Kolk – Reclamation: Colin and I are going to be making a trip up to the Methow tomorrow to look at a few sites; we will be driving separately and maintaining safe distance

~Adjourn