

Methow Restoration Council

May 18, 2021

Participants: Melody Kreimes (UCSRB), Crystal Elliot (TU), Chris Butler (YN), Lee Bernheisel (OWL), Maddie Eckmann (YN), Nicole Jordan (UCSRB), Susan Crampton (Public), Robert Warren (BEF), Steve Kolk (Reclamation), Jarred Johnson (YN), Jamie Cleveland (BPA), Matt Young (CTCR), Jessica Goldberg (MSRF)

Meeting Notes:

Ruckelshaus Evaluation Debrief – Motivation and Commitment

Melody Kreimes – we had the *Ruckelshaus Evaluation*, funded by BEF, with some staff time funded by RCO. Our Board had a workshop on the report at their April meeting; I think it will take some time to vet the evaluation through the region. The Board wants to have conversations throughout the region with stakeholders about what we want to do with this evaluation, which things to pursue, where to start – it is a long game and will probably be on Board agenda for the next several meetings. We are starting with the outreach and engagement section of the report, manageable pieces we can start talking about, and then we will be back to discuss other sections and will request time on the next agenda for that. Will be talking with the IT, the RTT is already diving in, and we will talk with CAC. This will be a lengthy ongoing conversation, we don't want the report to sit on the shelf, it is a partnership.

Robert Warren – we're trying to understand what are the realities; the interface with the communities is important. We are in it for the longer haul to help implement some of the recommendations.

Nicole Jordan – this discussion only focused on the outreach portion of the report – outreach and community engagement. The purpose is to gather your thoughts on areas where UCSRB can support outreach and engagement.

Motivation and commitment

Jessica Goldberg – John Crandall is out this week, he is the person who tracks the education and outreach, so could probably speak to the topic. My experience and understanding is that there some fatigue in the community, even among supporters – a bit of “when are you going to be done?”

Melody – is there buy-in?

Maddie Eckmann – I think there is only about 50% buy-in, even among friends, there is fatigue, “why isn't it working” kinds of questions

Nicole – why do you think there are issues?

Maddie – it's hard to put an exact pin on it, some anti-government feelings, some anti-tribes, hard to define exactly

Robert – is lack of support currently an impediment, and what about larger, more complex projects, what is the support you need looking towards those?

Chris Butler – off the cuff, the first thing that jumps out at me is “hurry up and wait,” people don't have the patience for the time it takes to get things done. For willing landowners, on personal notes we can show success rates working with individuals, we can show them what we've accomplished, the little steps forward have a positive response, if we could show that to the public in a better way, you might get people interested.

Nicole – are there other types of support needed besides funding, ways to help the messaging – any action items?

Chris – would need to think more about it, it's like slowly putting money in the savings account, a similar message to the public, little progress steps that we could show the public

Robert – there is a lot of messaging around trying to get landowners to allow you to do projects on their property, multiple benefits for those, both to the resource and to the landowner. Do you see more opportunities to develop projects that deliver on multiple values? How can these projects be more relevant to what a greater segment of the community cares about?

What are the goals of projects and the idea that you bring folks together that are interested in things beyond salmon so you design projects that have multiple benefits, a bigger integrated approach that delivers more things that the community cares about?

Matt Young – a lot of funding agencies don't support those kinds of [outreach] projects because they don't fit into the metrics that those funders need

Jessica – timelines are also difficult. It takes a long time for a big project to get to the implementation stage, and private landowners may not have that patience

Nicole – how are the timelines messaged from the beginning?

Chris – you have to be upfront, because it can have negative consequences later if you don't

Nicole – how can we support a longer term education and outreach strategy, longer term funding opportunities?

Chris – you have to be careful with the messaging, don't want it to contradict what I'm telling the landowners, can't have the message be contradicting what we are trying to do, I know what I can deliver to that landowner, wider messaging cannot contradict

Jessica – it's also important to remember that for the most part the public doesn't differentiate between the various groups, or understand (or care) that different organizations have somewhat varied missions. We experienced that when we had the RiverBank and people would walk in off the street and ask us questions or give us their comments – to many in the community we are all “You Fish People”...

Nicole – does that extend to the irrigation districts?

Jessica – the boards of the districts know, the individual users likely may not know or care

Robert – capacity for people to engage, people often underestimate the work that it takes to develop the relationships, and maintain them. Where do you think improvements can be made?

Jessica – Methow Conservancy does a welcome packet for new landowners when properties sell, could do something similar for properties along the streams

Maddie – the MC is updating their handbook, there are opportunities to include links on their website, recommend you contact Sarah Brooks

Nicole – you can always reach out to the board staff if you have ideas of ways to improve

Discussion – outreach funding, capacity, education. The UCSRB outreach grant is helpful but not enough to build/maintain capacity. John Crandall would be a good source for information on needs

Nicole – community led approach was strongly supported in the Evaluation, how can we increase outreach resources to other interest groups like boaters, recreationalists, are there other spaces where people are getting information, how can we support outreach to those groups? When I say “we,” for UCSRB, other ways that we can support the MRC and its members, what you might need. We may be able to do some bigger outreach efforts, find different solutions

Melody – open to solutions, have the small outreach round, if there are ways/suggestions of how we can do it differently, open to that. We get 55k from RCO for outreach, we are unusual in that, I wish it could be more, always open to suggestions

Robert – this [Evaluation] process is focused on folks actively engaged in salmon recovery, the question in my mind was how would the community respond to a similar set of questions. Do you see value in doing a similar kind of explorations of perceptions in the community for the work? Or do you think you already know what those answers would be?

Discussion – it could be valuable, but could be issues with fatigue, self-selecting group of respondents may not give representative sample, recommend talking to John Crandall about that question as well.

Robert – if you have ideas don't hesitate to reach out

Nicole – the Methow has some really great outreach materials, thank you for all you have done

Jessica – one thing to point out is that one reason we have had such a good outreach program over the last 10 years is due to the funding we received from BEF (now ended) – it was predictable, flexible, and gave us the opportunity to fund many of the outreach and education efforts that are very difficult to find funding mechanisms for.

Roundtable

Nicole Jordan – UCSRB: I have an update from Greer Maier: the prioritization work group met on the 17th, next step is for RTT to approve updated results for bull trout Okanogan steelhead, and hope is to get results out to the region and web map updated by June.

Lee Bernheisel – OWL: there are some water issues still proceeding in Okanogan county, one is the Burma Shores issue by Methow, the other is the county's lawsuit against Ecology. We will wait and see...

Maddie Eckmann – (YN): we're going to construction on the Alder Creek and Golden Doe project, trying to spread the word to the community. There is a very popular beach there that will still be open to the public but there will be some access routes changed and heavy equipment in the area, July and the first half of august. We will be staging wood this week.

Robert Warren – BEF: in March we ended a 10-year Model Watershed agreement with MSRF, on an annual basis John Crandall has been developing comprehensive reports, and at the end there will be a comprehensive report for the whole project.

Susan Crampton – Public: I just came back to the Methow after being gone for a few months, and it's heartening to see the ongoing commitment to the resources.

Next MRC June 15th