

## Methow Restoration Council

November 19, 2019

| Name              | Organization/Affiliation |
|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Alec Spencer      | Methow Beaver Project    |
| Chris Johnson     | MSRF                     |
| Gene Shull        | USFS                     |
| Greer Maier       | UCSRB                    |
| Hans Smith        | Yakama Nation            |
| Jamie Cleveland   | BPA                      |
| Jaqueline Wallace | TU                       |
| Jarred Johnson    | Yakama Nation            |
| Jenni Novak       | WDFW                     |
| Jessica Goldberg  | MSRF                     |
| John Crandall     | MSRF                     |
| Kristen Kirkby    | CCFEG                    |
| Lee Bernheisel    | OWL                      |
| Lynda Hofmann     | WDFW                     |
| Maddie Eckmann    | Yakama Nation            |
| Matt Young        | Colville Tribes          |
| Pete Teigen       | UCSRB                    |
| Robes Parrish     | USFWS                    |
| Steve Kolk        | Reclamation              |
| Susan Crampton    | Public                   |

### Bull Trout Update

**John Crandall** – we have a SRFB grant to do an assessment of bull trout habitat and recommend potential habitat restoration actions using data from redd surveys. This was year 2 of the grant; we will do a year 3 because last year we were burned out from a lot of important bull trout areas. The structure of bull trout is somewhat different from other fish in the basin – they have different spawning locations. We used the spring chinook protocol for the redd surveys, the big change is a weekly basis for sampling, and we learn a lot by doing that. There are up to a dozen spawning aggregations, not all were recognized. Beaver Creek and Blue buck were thought to be extirpated. Some genetic information was done previously to identify distinct groups. Weekly samples are a little challenging, especially in some areas. We got 4 samples on each of the harder areas to get to, and weekly on the others. WDFW is involved, CCFEG, FS, and USFWS all involved. It is a partnership on trying to get a start and handle on the redd surveys. We are trying to have robust sampling and we're using eDNA samples to help define the spatial structure in areas where we didn't previously have information about where fish were, above barriers, etc. We will have over 200 eDNA samples basin-wide to help establish distribution.

This year overall the results were very low in almost every local population. In Gold Creek there were no redds, in some other areas only 2 or 3 redds where in previous years we might have had 10-15 redds. Counts everywhere were really low. There were trending low, but this year was particularly bad. In some of the strongholds like Twisp River, North Creek, West Fork Methow, etc. the numbers very low. Fires up Twisp river, environmental changes areas in areas previously important to bull trout. Lower Lost River as well, other areas in the upper Methow very low. Last year there was a big fish kill in the upper

Methow where the fish froze – 67 adult spawners, including a bunch of big females. That is the near term shift in bull trout. A lot of local populations are very low.

Chris Johnson – anything in the eDNA to show that they are using different areas, where you didn't expect them?

John – yes, we are waiting on data for this year. A resident population was found in Wolf Creek above a barrier; we surveyed all the way up to the Meadows, most of the spawning is above the diversion above the confluence with north fork, Trout Creek. This is getting us what is Critical Habitat and what is not. Found bull trout all over Beaver Creek, but also lots of brook trout, maybe more than bull trout. Stay tuned for more of the eDNA.

Kristen Kirkby – almost all eDNA samples will be about resident populations

John – yes. Most of the focus has been on migrant fish, but in terms of conservation of the species, we need to look at all populations. We may lose migrants with climate change, which is what happened in the Klamath, they spawn in very cold streams, below 10 degrees, between 5-9 degrees C.

Chris – how does this roll up with the status of the fish and USFWS?

John – this does work into the Recovery Plan. The Upper Columbia Recovery Plan has targets for bull trout abundance like with other species, but USFWS does not have targets, it is very habitat based. It's not clear how the population information influences management – the document doesn't say that it does. Part of what we are trying to do is get the information out there and have other folks weigh in on how that goes.

Chris – are we seeing a temperature dependency/limitation, after fires?

John – stay tuned, we're just getting into that. Areas where there used to be dense canopy and now is gone post-fire, like in Goat Creek, North Creek. Some areas burned really hot. We haven't gotten into the Upper Lost

Gene Shull – from a FS perspective, lower numbers can translate into our consultation when we want to do a project that has a low amount of effect; the services hold us to a higher bar against short term impacts, less take may be allowed. We can expect that with bull trout.

John – all bull trout spawning areas are in wilderness or in the Forest

Gene – typically Roadless/wilderness areas

John – some, but not all

Lynda Hofmann – it would be good to have a discussion on the proposal for brook trout eradication in Eightmile

Gene – we have a bull trout working group that looks at things like that, it's a whole topic, looking at feasibility, etc. The amount of existing bull trout use effects decisions

John – it's difficult to achieve. You could kill a lot of bull trout. It's a very cold water stream in Eightmile

Kristen – what happens to spawning surveys when SRFB funds end?

John – good question. WDFW funds some in the Wenatchee, it's unlikely that we will always have enough funds; we can break out sub-reaches in census area to make index reaches, essentially modelling. It's a worthy goal, but some areas logistically don't make sense to get an index area, not sure how it will work.

Bull trout exist in this kind of hinterland, but we haven't heard anything about implementation of the bull trout recovery plan

### **Prioritization**

**Greer Maier** – the RTT worked through Step 1, and you can look at results online in the Step 1 Web App; projects will be scored based on IP from 1-7 for whether you are in a high priority area/assessment unit. The Okanogan will be added in based on EDT results. John will look at how things would compare in the Methow from this process vs. using EDT.

John – the comments received were really helpful, but only a handful came in. I would encourage you to look into this – everything helps. Scoring rules and how everything rolls up. Comments changed some things but not others, and we're trying to track the decision making/thought process behind all of the comments. Take a look at it because it will matter. Having your input now is really important, it's easier to change things now rather than later. It's not that complicated and very transparent. You need to look at the data input, but understanding the scoring is pretty straightforward.

Discussion – use higher scores/species, John Arterburn wants to look at the results from other subbasins before adding in the Okanogan, 2020 SRFB round scoring will have the updated priorities

Lee Bernhiesel – prioritization is based on ESA stock, is anything happening with that to include other species?

Greer – if you want to look at priorities regardless of fish data, you can set those parameters to zero, and then re-sort and it should show prioritization based on the other parameters

Lee – I'm talking about a policy level; other species are also important

John – I agree, but currently all of the funding is based on ESA listings. For the others we have hatchery programs. The other anadromous fish are coho and summer chinook, but steelhead are a good surrogate for those, timing is important, but a lot of actions that you take to benefit steelhead will benefit the others.

Lee – I'm thinking of other ESA species like orca that are dependent on the chinook as a food source; it's a way to get to that without violating the way the groups are set up.

Discussion – FS does have actions for resident fish streams, prioritization is very Salmon Recovery driven, improving protections of streams has a lot of benefits, Colville Tribes has a resident fish division where they deal with other fish species, Cutthroat and Red Band trout are a priority for the Forest Service, somewhat lower priority than ESA

Hans Smith – is there a new version of the spreadsheet available for review?

Greer – this is based on the RTT meeting last week, nothing changed in the spreadsheet scores, RTT did decide to move redds at the mouth of War Creek to the Twisp, but doesn't change the scores because they are in the same bins.

Hans – not worried about that, but we gave a lot of input to Tracy on the weighting in the scoring, multipliers

John – we had to filter what we got from Tracy, because those comments came through Tracy as a short bulleted list. I would suggest that you look at the comments and see how they were reviewed and whether we need to look at again. The first step is to look at the comment sheet.

Greer – I will send it to you, they are in the RTT notes. We were limited because we didn't have your full comments and Tracy wasn't at the meeting that day.

Hans – if there is confusion, please send an email or call

John – for prioritization comments, I highly recommend that you include or cc Greer on all of that. We are changing things in Step 2 and trying to simplify

Greer – we have spent many hours tweaking those cutoffs for habitat quality, and trying to go with what makes sense; we did change some of the scoring rules based on comments we received. Brian Fisher did make some comments and suggestions about the scoring rules, and that decision may have addressed the concern.

John – and if you have a comment, backing it up with a suggested tweak is really helpful

Discussion – communication, feedback, need to work through the workgroup and not only through one member, interested people can be added to the workgroup list

John – Step 1 stuff is really easy to change, because we are on a timeline. This is iterative, and not rigid.

Greer – in the next month there will be a work session meeting to look at prioritization of life stages in the Methow to populate the next spreadsheet through the web map. Will note data sources; I would

encourage anyone with interest or knowledge to participate. The work session will be for the Methow in the Methow.

John – if you have done any fish work at all please come to the meeting. It's an important step.

### **UCSRB Updates**

#### *FBRB Watershed Pathway*

**Greer** – the RFP from the Fish Barrier Removal Board (FBRB) came out, the program has been around since around 2014; its purpose is to address non-federal culvert issues. Two pathways are available: the Watershed pathway and open Coordinated pathway. The Watershed pathway ties back to a regional process for priority watershed at the HUC 10 scale. Since 2014 we have focused on Omak Creek HUC 10 and the Johnson Creek watershed. That has been a great process. We have been talking with the FBRB about updating our priority for the next biennium. At their August meeting they accelerated the watershed pathway process from what we were expecting. We are in the process of updating the priorities. We want to know if there are priority watersheds that meet the criteria of multiple barriers in the watershed that are nonfederal, where we could work from the bottom up. We are asking partners to look at the list of candidates, give feedback. The process is that the Barrier Work group came up with a list of candidates, soliciting feedback, then the full RTT will nominate one early December, then the Board will select, and the FBRB must approve. RFP for the FBRB is due January 15; feasibility and timing is important.

Kristen – can you talk about what barriers FBRB prioritizes?

Greer – non-federal barriers (other public ok). RFP does require landowner willingness for pre-proposal, may not need lowest barrier landowner if 67% passable. Similar criteria for coordinated pathway now.

Jacqueline Wallace – they will only fund it if the lowest barrier can come out first

Discussion – leaving the lowest barrier until last makes permitting/ESA compliance easier

Chris – is there no opportunity to wait until CCFEG is done with the assessment?

Greer – it's a legislative schedule, we pitched to them in March that we would be ready to use our assessment data in April, but the timeline is what it is, we asked for an extension, but I'm hearing that we are not going to get an extension. We have the Wenatchee info, talking to CCFEG about other potential candidates. We can always reexamine in the next biennium

Pete Teigen – we just aren't quite aligned with the State's timeline

Discussion – there is still the coordinated pathway, so if you have enough information on a watershed, apply for that if you can get the application together. There will be opportunities on a biennial basis. We don't have that many barrier issues in the Methow, not a lot of barriers in the anadromous zone.

Kristen – For the Methow barrier assessment, the crews are wrapping up the data cleanup and then WDFW reviews; about 2/3 is already up on the web site, the rest should be up soon, Aspect will be running the assessment tool on the data ready by spring. I'm happy to set up a meeting to go over our data if people are interested.

Pete – any candidates that jump out at you?

Kristen- I think in the Methow it will be more piecemeal, small landowners on smaller streams

Discussion – smaller streams, some remaining issues, small and large barriers can rank well through coordinated pathway for individual barriers, comments to Tracy Hillman and Greer on the candidate watershed pathway areas by November 25<sup>th</sup>, full RTT will consider each candidates and make a recommendation to the Board.

#### *SRFB Schedule*

**Pete** – we should have the regional process guide by January. We will have the kickoff February 12, regional abstracts/JotForm due March 1<sup>st</sup>, presentations are early this year, March 11 and 12 depending on the number of proposals. Complete applications due April 17<sup>th</sup>; they must be three weeks prior to

site visits. A complete application this year in the first submission. RCO wants everything filled in at first submission, everything will be in PRISM, with attachments. Marc Duboiski will be at the Dec 3<sup>rd</sup> IT meeting and will give a run through on the new application. The questions will be very similar, but it will be in PRISM, no more tracked changes for the final – PRISM will keep track of changes. Site visits will be May 11, 12, 13 this year. Sequencing will depend on number and location of proposals, scheduling. Final applications will be due May 29 for regional deadline. RTT will score at the June 10<sup>th</sup> meeting. CAC June 23 and 25 (TBD), final PRISM upload June 29. CAC ranking in July, regional list submitted to RCO on August 14<sup>th</sup>. Will have \$1.85 million available this next year.

SRFB is going to make funding determinations in September, so sponsors will be able to enter contracts sooner than before.

There will only be two iterations with the State Review Panel; if projects are cleared no issues, if there are issues there is one less opportunity to address than previously.

### *2020 Planned Project Forecast List*

**Pete** – RCO is asking us to work with sponsors to compile and submit a list of project needs for calendar year 2021 and 2022 to demonstrate a need to the legislature for funding. We are concerned about how to do that because we need to run our local process. [table] This is what we have to submit in the second row. We are cognizant of privacy concerns with locations, we can use a generic identifier, identify Ecological Concern, landowner type. They want a landowner acknowledgment form, but we have been clear that is unlikely. We would like to work with sponsors over the next 7 months on how we put these projects in. They want us to work under the assumption that we would have triple the amount of money per year, around \$3.4 million. We will try to work with sponsors to do this. We don't know whether this will impact our percentage of the allocation that our region receives, but we must show the need.

Chris – how do we think about potential match when we put together the list?

Pete – our plan is to continue our annual grant round as we always have regardless of our list. Most projects require 15% match. They want the list regionally vetted, so we will use the Biological Strategy to make sure they are priority actions in the Priority Areas, but it won't go through the RTT and CAC process, so these won't necessarily be the projects will be funded. There is a lot of communication that RCO will have to do to legislature

Discussion – any list will become political, projects on the list need to be feasible

Pete – they want it in HWS (now called SRP – Salmon Recovery Portal), but we can import from an Excel spreadsheet to make it easier, the key is that they need to be tagged with the year of planned application

Chris – has anyone talked about the idea of a cap on requests on SRFB funding request so that you get more projects that have the base funding from SRFB that can leverage more projects, keep the community interested in salmon recovery

Jessica – what about funding for this work to create the list? An unfunded mandate?

Pete – that has been part of the discussion; we don't know. The state does not have funding for this, we will not hold sponsors to anything, and they assure us that anything shared with the legislature will have caveats that it hasn't gone through the regional process

Pete – we had a SRFB sponsor survey for this years, sponsors indicated no strong need for a debrief, so instead of scheduling another meeting we will have some time on the IT meeting in December to go over the comments. If you have anything specific, send Pete an email.

### **Monitoring Update**

**John** – if you want to have a monitoring application in SRFB, it has to be on the data gaps list, which is available on the UCSRB website. If you want to do monitoring, look at the list. If you have a data gap,

look at the list and send it to Greer, and then it can get scored and ranked. If you want SRFB funding you have to have that nexus. Needs to be tied to one of the management questions, have relevance to Recovery. We will be updating that list more shortly.

Pete – regional monitoring projects have to have a letter of intent submitted in April by the region.

Greer – if you have a data gap send it in ideally before December because we are updating the list. We will have an annual process of identifying monitoring projects as well. If you have a data gap that has a specific project let us know so it can be reviewed and put on the list. Send it to me before December to get it on the draft list.

## **Roundtable**

*Steve Kolk – Bureau of Reclamation:* the Sugar Reach is having a PDT meeting this afternoon to go over Goals and Objectives

*Greer Maier – UCSRB:* please register for the Science Conference – you can always enter zero dollars if you can't pay.

I talked to John Arterburn about sediment monitoring in the Twisp, if Gene can get a list, they can try to work it into their contract with RCO.

Sediment monitoring will take place around the watershed to help define EDT outputs, talk to John A if you want to be part of that.

*Jacqueline Wallace – TU:* our big project is still Barkley irrigation improvement, construction is underway, hope to be done within a year.

We had a lot of interest in drought leasing this year, but because of quick turnaround we only ended up with one, but we hope to be able to move more quickly in the future. I'm working on closing a water transaction in lower Methow. Also working on efficiencies. Crystal is working on suction dredging and BDAs

We have updated the Landowners Guide to WA Water Rights handout and I have some available

Chris – on Barkley, you have a lot of chipped cottonwood, do those have a plan for disposal, or could they be used by project sponsors for mulch?

Jacqueline – I will ask Aaron/Dan

Gene – have you thought about putting up a sign to let people know what is going on? People drive by and see it and they are angry about the tree cutting and dirt disturbance

Discussion – a MV news article might be helpful

*John Crandall – MSRF:* we have at least one meeting of the outreach group of the MRC to update our outreach plan and what we are doing; we will have a meeting in December. If you want to be on that list, let me know; it's for anyone doing education and outreach

The sixth graders' salmon stakeholder town hall event will be November 25<sup>th</sup> in the cub gym at 9 am, posters, very cool event

Chris – Methow Beaver Project is working with others on an EPA grant to highlight groups working together

*Gene Shull – USFS:* our Twisp Restoration Project is in scoping right now; there is a link to the scoping letter: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/okawen/news-events/?cid=FSEPRD679417>. Went out as a public notice, and we have a public meeting this Thursday night in the gym 5-7, will have project maps up. There will be a summary of the project, q and a, breakouts for timber, fuels, aquatic, etc. The Twisp Restoration Project is the same type of project as Mission, goes from south side of Mount McClure,

Twisp River, Thompson Ridge, Rader ridge, Wolf Creek/Virginia Ridge. Crescent fire changed how we approached this project.

Chris – what does the challenge on Mission project do to the Twisp process?

Gene – we got a notice of intent to sue from Alliance of the Wild Rockies on that, they are concerned about harvest, how we did ESA consultation, etc. We have until the end of this week to get responses back, if we can't meet their concerns it will go to court.

There are parallels in the Twisp process, if we have to do something different we are early, we are doing a different approach that is condition based vegetation management. We're moving ahead with a big aquatics package.

Scoping runs 30 days, if there is a project that is not in there that you want to see, there is time to write that in. On a fast timeline, but we anticipate adding some more aquatic stuff in there

Gene – Volstead road is going to go away next summer. We will be decommissioning it. It took a big lift to get the county commissioners on board, but they understood that the road is not cost effective, and in the future there is another route available to reconnect it

Pete – they need to have local support to close or decommission roads, so if you know of any appropriate options it is important to voice your concerns and give feedback

Chris – anything we need to know as we plan our restoration downstream of Volstead?

Gene – there is some pretty severe headcutting going on there; Jenn Bountry with Reclamation gave some input that was really helpful; we will use full BMPs where possible. There will be some adjustment for a period of time. At this time we aren't planning on doing anything for the headcutting, can talk more about that.

Discussion – timing, eight or nine culverts remaining

Gene – the Tonasket Ranger District is going to the Colville National Forest, so starting in 2021; we asked where is the boundary, and they did not have an answer. They manage a little piece of the Pasayten that will come to the Methow, don't know about other areas, at least half my workload will go away.

Hope to know by spring where the boundaries will be. No cuts to staff planned in Tonasket.

Hope to get programmatic NEPA any day/week for the region. Would like to talk to partners about small cheap and cheerful type project with interested folks

*Matt Young – Colville Tribes:* Kieth Kistler has left CTCR, his position is going to be filled

*Jarred Johnson – Yakama Nation:* we completed Beaver Creek Reach 5 project with WDFW from RM 9-7, Lester Road turnoff downstream. I recommend taking a look at it, 500 logs in two miles; we worked with the county to build revetments to protect the road in case there is movement, very different than what we have done in the past, all public lands

We did a small repair project at Old Schoolhouse property to construct a series of weirs to address changes post-fire. Added wood, hope to see vegetation regrowth and instream habitat, series of plunge pools.

*Chris Johnson – MSRF:* we're finishing up an alternatives analysis on stretch of Beaver Creek from Balky hill to the Marracci diversion to address the issues from 2017 to ensure diversions at Batie and work to prevent issues with the county road.

We're working on analysis on the Sugar Reach project with Interfluve and Reclamation

*Alec Spencer – Methow Beaver Project:* the MBP is looking at education and outreach funding through EPA, BDAs with the Forest Service, coexistence/in-place management for beavers, and maybe getting wood in the creek up Texas creek with DNR

Chris – they did a low dollar project on Frazer Creek dragging wood into the stream to help address incision; they took existing wood that wasn't interacting with flows and put it in the stream

*Pete Teigen – UCSRB:* Barb Carillo has left UCSRB, so if you have anything you can reach out to me for things that she would normally handle; we will be filling her position

*Jessica Goldberg – MSRF:* the kids' block print calendar is here; this is the earliest we've ever had them ready.

Chris – we are working on new web sites for MSRF and MBP