

## Methow Restoration Council

November 16, 2021

**Participants:** Dave Hecker (UCSRB), Melody Kreimes (UCSRB), Chris Johnson (MSRF), Crystal Elliot (TU), Camden Shaw (MSRF), Kristen Kirkby (Cascade Fisheries), Ryan Niemeyer (UCSRB), Steve Kolk (Reclamation), Susan Crampton (Public), Matt Young (CTCR), John Crandall (MSRF/RTT), Jessica Goldberg (MSRF)

### UCSRB/Regional Updates

**Targeted Investments:** RCO has been working on this, this biennium the priority is Southern Resident orca recovery. Additional funding, not coming out of our annual allocation. Will be more federal money coming with infrastructure bill, but these are state dollars

Dave Hecker – *Overview of the Targeted Investment program:* \$3.7 million for targeted investment prioritizing Southern Resident orca recovery. Proposals that benefit orca prey species (fall and spring chinook) based on NOAA Fisheries and WDFW SRKW Priority Chinook Stocks report. Projects that benefit both fall and spring chinook with score higher. Fall Chinook ranked 8 out of 10 and Spring Chinook ranked 7 out of 10. Some region runs have scored 10/10.

Melody Kreimes – each region can only submit one proposal, so we would be competing against other regions that have a higher priority. Highest prey is ranked as 10/10.

Dave – *Application Process:* each region will select a project for SRP scoring, and they will select one project to fund in September 2022. Final regional application due in PRISM on 6/27/22. Region will consider all TI proposals put forth by sponsors, application process will follow the annual SRFB grant round timeline. SRFB review process will be used to assess, score, and promote one project for SRP consideration.

*Discussion* – how the region could select a project, gets complicated quickly, may not be a good fit for our region but it is an option, whether this could be something that the IT could weigh in on, there may be project sponsors that are already planning on a proposal. Potential that for a future round that RTT could put out an RFP

Dave – there would be two stages: first the JOTFORM submission, then the final selection will be uploaded to PRISM that would go through SRP scoring. Project match would be minimum 15%, can use other SRFB funds. RCO will update guidance in December.

Timeline: This is draft until we get the updated guidance in mid-December. Kickoff early February. Pre-application JOTFORM due March 1, March 9-10 RTT presentations, April 21 Complete applications due (JOTFORM or PRISM, TBD) on April 21. Site Tours May 9-13, CAC presentations June 20-24, June 27 Submit final application in PRISM. July 13-14 SRFB Review Panel Scores and ranks, SRFB awards in September 21-22. RTT scoring and CAC ranking will occur before June 27. Will be aligned with SRFB grant round process. The scoring criteria and Resources will be in Manual 18 Appendix J (Targeted Investments), currently in draft.

### Implementation Schedule

Melody – we have the annual Implementation Schedule (IS) and report to NOAA. IS includes the look back/completed and planned projects. This is our opportunity to show sponsors what is listed in Salmon Recovery Portal, and if sponsors would like to add anything, please let us know. We review at December IT meeting, and then our board reviews and approves at their December meeting. We have talked quite a bit about how the IS is done, and now that we have prioritization, looking at AU names, etc. In the future we would like this to be more robustly developed if project sponsors want to. This is what we are seeing from funders, asking

for out-year planning/projects. They are asking for planned project forecast list, and looking back to see if projects implemented were on the planned list. Need feedback from project sponsors before Wednesday the 24<sup>th</sup>. For now Tracy Bowerman is managing this and working with RCO. Tracy can make changes in SRP for you, but if you make changes let her know.

Dave – we added AU and priority rankings since Jessica sent it out, and separated out the basins, so we can resend and make sure we are on the same page.

Melody – would also like to pick up the conversation about the next stage of prioritization, the so-called feasibility screen, don't want to tangle it up too much. Ryan will be our staff lead as he was involved the other stages of prioritization, will be working with people about how we harness the feasibility information and find a way to integrate that knowledge and information. It wouldn't change the biological priority, but will influence the "implementability" so we can know why things aren't happening or if the board can help remove barriers. That is a step that we feel would be really helpful to make the implementation schedule more robust and reflective of our knowledge of the region. Would not be a quick process, but we are working on it.

Chris Johnson – sometimes it takes time for a landowner or opportunity to change. In the past there has been a disconnect between the perception that if a project is protected by an easement it isn't a priority for acquisition.

Melody – is there a value in identifying that?

Chris – yes, but there is also a need to discuss with the reviewers/funders, especially with funders about how many flavors protection comes in and how that impacts feasibility

Melody – the more we can daylight the issues, the more we can find ways to make a difference, like the issue with adaptive management funding, which is now currently almost all the way up the ladder, which would allow sponsors to seek funding for adaptive response.

Chris – agree, will need to work on the definitions

Ryan Niemeyer – need to look at how it is represented in the prioritization, still figuring that out

Melody – and we will need sponsor to help us do that, to craft what are the things we need to look at

Chris – and also need to make sure that you aren't creating barriers to implementation

Dave – I will send out the updated IS spreadsheet with a date for updates – COB on the 24<sup>th</sup>. Also if you have any comments on the draft annual reports also can send those

## **Roundtable**

*Matt Young – Colville Tribes:* the Colville Tribes still have a position open and are actively recruiting a habitat biologist in the UC watershed. If you know anyone who is interested share with Matt or find it on CTCR Website

*Chris Johnson – MSRF:* we are working on adaptive project at Upper Beaver Creek, in construction as we speak, thankfully UBC is not showing significant changes in flows (the way the Methow and other rivers/stream have). Spent some time talking with Rick Alford, we have a record number of Coho this year. Following completion of our Barkley Bear project this summer, where we reconnected Bear Creek to the Methow River, we have

spawning in Bear Creek all the way up to the road culvert. The large coho run (combined with unusually high river flows for the time of year) is also creating a public messaging challenge, as coho are finding their way into marginal habitat and then being stranded as flows come back down; we need to be able to put that into context for the public.

*Crystal Elliot – Trout Unlimited:* we've been working with FS trying to get some of their key projects done. Ben Canyon AOP (Aquatic Organism Passage) is going out to bid in early December. The South Fork Beaver Meadows BDAs project was completed in November.

*Camden Shaw – MSRF:* we have a project we are working on in the Middle Methow, looking at a feasibility study for enhancing floodplain connections and instream/off-channel habitat enhancements.

*Dave Hecker – UCSRB:* the Floodplains by Design grant program through Ecology is open, this year is available to our region. Pre-application through January 14<sup>th</sup>. Floodplains by Design: <https://ecology.wa.gov/About-us/Payments-contracts-grants/Grants-loans/Find-a-grant-or-loan/Floodplains-by-design-grants>

*Melody Kreimes – UCSRB:* Marc D is no longer our grant manager, we now have Ameer Bahr; she is familiar with the work and is a good resource

The RTT did review the priority watershed for the FBRB, keeping the same one, Beaver/Chumstick/Wenatchee watershed. You can still apply if it isn't in the priority watershed.

RTT review of SRFB design projects, there has been a lot of discussion about that, optional this year. The RTT will flag design projects that it wants to provide feedback when it scores in June. We will be working on what that process looks like to provide feedback, to make the process useful for sponsors. More to come on that in the coming months so sponsors are getting really clear direction about what the feedback is.

*Kristen Kirkby – Cascade Fisheries:* we had coho spawning in Hancock this year. I have done some outreach and education work this fall, and John Crandall and I will be sending out a new installment of the State of the Salmon Report focused on Hatcheries.

We are still in the process of updating the barrier prioritization model working on integrating RTT feedback, will have results for the Methow and the region completed this winter, will present it to the MRC when it is complete.

John Crandall – (MSRF): we completed a limited amount of bull trout redd surveys in September with CF and WDFW. We were affected somewhat by fire closures, especially in the Chewuch, but we were able to get upper Chewuch done, Eightmile and Lake Creek were closed. This year was the first year that the Twisp River did not have the most redds of any local population. After the 2018 fires the numbers were down, last year rebounded, but this year back down below 30. We are seeing some significant declines in local populations.

This summer we worked on an assessment of LW structures put into the river to benefit salmon how those provided habitat for larval lamprey. MSRF worked with YN, CF, USFWS, Cascadia, surveyed many wood structures in the Methow and Entiat, were not able to get up into the Chewuch because of the fires, so will finish the field work up this summer, and then write up a summary report. Saw lots of larval lamprey, encouraging results to date, multi-species response to salmon projects

Last one is a project that MSRF is working on to look at cold water patches in the Methow, we went through the 2009 FLIR data to field/ground truth cold water patches that showed up in that data, we were curtailed by area closures up the Chewuch so will go up there next year. Selected sites that had a 2 degree temperature

differential. Got out all over the place, some interesting locations on the landscape. Some sites were gone, some new sites were found. Seeps seemed to follow a pattern, so looked for those and probed with thermometer to map them. Think it was a successful and interesting effort. Working on developing a landowner outreach component to get folks thinking about what the cold water situation is in the Methow and how we might protect/restore some of these cold water sites. There were some that we went out to find and the whole river was dry, need to think about what those dry reaches mean

**Paper of the Month:**

John Crandall – this month's paper is *Climate change and vulnerability of bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentis*) in a fire-prone landscape* published in the Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Science. Done by Falke et. al (2015). They selected bull trout because they have a more narrow tolerance to habitat especially in terms of water temp. They wanted to look at how to link changes in fish landscape, connectivity, water temp, habitat quality, and how those would change in different wildfire and also climate change scenarios, and how these factors affect vulnerability of bull trout. They looked at the Wenatchee, a Bayesian network approach to look at vulnerability, how different variable interact and affect population vulnerability/trajectory. A model. Looked at different fire, climate, and also different forest management scenarios. They were looking at habitat connectivity, temperature, habitat quality, fire size, and things like that. Their conclusion was that bull trout are vulnerable to those changes, and over time it gets worse because of climate change. They did see that management practices that reduce fire size and improve connectivity are very good for bull trout and improves their change of persistence over time. So if these issues are unaddressed, the trajectory of bull trout is not great over time, but that management choices and actions can minimize/lower some of those factors. An interesting paper, and relevant here, because we are a fire prone landscape, and this is having a significant influence on our bull trout populations. Many populations are small, and even our most robust local populations are vulnerable. We had burn through three of our populations this year: Cedar Creek, Upper Wolf Creek, and Eightmile, and all burned pretty severely. An interesting paper and very relevant to what we are seeing here in the Methow.

Chris – do you think we should modify our monitoring of structures this year after the fires?

John – need to get in and see what happened to the Chewuch structures, some may have burned. The effects of wildfire on streams are pretty well documented, a lot of literature. Responses like we saw in Beaver and Frazer are very common; as the veg grows back and things stabilize the flashiness stabilizes over time.

**Next scheduled MRC: December 21, 2021**