



Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board

April 2, 2021
Board Meeting
Conference Call/Webinar

Minutes
Approved: May 7, 2021

Present: Dan Cothren, Paul Greenlee, Lee Grose, Richard Mahar, Hal Mahnke, Gary Medvigy, Todd Olson, Gary Stamper, Don Swanson, Olaf Thomason, Dennis Weber, Del Wilson, and Rudy Salakory, TAC Chairman

Absent: Taylor Aalvik and Jade Unger. Chairman Olson excused the absent members.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: No announcements.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: No public comment.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Director Manlow stated that staff sent out a written report at the end of March with updates on current issues.

- **Legislative Update:** Director Manlow stated on 3/17/21, the new state revenue forecast was released and it is better than original expectations. For the 2021-2023 biennium, there is an increase of approximately \$1.94 billion in the overall state budget. There is a slight increase in the Family Forest & Fish Program (FFFP) funding for this next biennium which helps to fix culverts and barriers on small forest operator lands. Similar pattern with the Fish Barrier Removal Board and the WA Coastal Restoration Initiative (WCRRI) to help get work done in the lower region. One interesting note regarding the WCRRI funding, we applied for a grant with them last year to help with Habitat Status and Trends Monitoring, if the WCRRI funding budget comes in at \$10 million, then our project would not be funded. But if it came in at \$15 million, then it would be funded. Director Manlow encouraged the Board to talk with their legislators to address the importance of the WCRRI program.
- **House Bill 1117:** Director Manlow stated this piece of legislations relates to updating the Growth Management Act (GMA) to include salmon recovery as one of their goals. Including provisions that relate to net ecological gains. The hearing on the bill is scheduled for next week.
- **Bills Relating to Permit Streamlining:** Director Manlow stated there a few bills relating to permit streamlining. One is focused on DOT barriers and another would create a pilot program relating to streamlining efforts. Both bills would bode well for salmon recovery. There is a proviso that the bills could fund a permitting position at the USACE to help speed up permitting for salmon recovery projects. This relates directly to the 404 streamlining permit work that he has been doing with the Council of Regions (COR) and Salmon Coalition.
- **Predation Committee Meeting:** Director Manlow state the committee had a meeting on 4/1/2021. He noted that the meeting was productive and discussing where we are on the predation control on the Lower Columbia. WDFW's operating budget proposal has funding included to implement the updates to the Marine Mammal Protection Act.
- **Governor's Salmon Recovery Board (GSRO):** Director Manlow stated Governor Inslee has appointed Megan Duffy as director of the RCO to replace Kaleen Cottingham due to her retirement. Ms. Duffy has a long history of working for agencies in the state, including DNR and GSRO. From the Regional Organization perspective, she will bring a lot of prior experience to the position and is supportive of the work we do. She will begin her new position May 1, 2021.

- SRFB Retreat: Director Manlow noted the SFRB will be holding a retreat this summer to plan their work and establish upcoming priorities. We have requested that as part of their discussion, they consider the Lead Entity capacity issue for a more equitable distribution of Lead Entity funding across the state. Especially for regions like ours, the Snake, and Yakima where we are not in line with funding that goes to other regions when it come to our Lead Entity functions. The other thing that is on the SRFB agenda is Landowner Incentives and willingness that Board member Wilson and Grose have been working on. Board member Wilson stated he would like to speak with other Lead Entities before too long in order to prepare the letter to the SRFB for their retreat discussion. He added that he would like to present to the letter to the Board prior to the SRFB retreat. Director Manlow agreed adding that we could take the information received from landowners and translate those into key messages or requests for the SRFB.
- Section 404 Streamlining Permit Process: Director Manlow stated we are moving ahead on the streamlining. He has been leading this effort with the WSC and COR and starting to make progress. Entities have had a series of meetings to identify the key things we can do to help get our projects through the federal permit process. Currently, we are at the point of where we are identifying high priority actions, ranging from workshops, guidance documents, and improving coordination.
- Hydro: Director Manlow stated Travis Nelson from Tacoma Power is on the call today. Staff has been in discussion with Tacoma Power to run their CRR grant round. In 2018, we did one year of reviews then there was a shift in committees, so we backed off until the group could regroup and figure out how to make the program work. Since then, we have had multiple discussions with Mr. Nelson on what the program should look like. We have begun to hone in on some of the details of a potential agreement would look like to meet the needs of Tacoma Power and the LCFRB. If agreed upon, staff would bring this back to the Board in the near term if we want to enter into an agreement.
 - Chairman Olson asked what the size of the CRR program is. Specifically, the number of years and the amount of funding. Director Manlow stated there is approximately \$15 million available. However, it isn't all for habitat work, it also covers hatchery related projects. Mr. Nelson added that there is a little more than \$15 million available and is intended to expire with the license in 2037.
 - Board member Grose stated he talked with Director Manlow regarding the Lake Creek project near Morton. He stated he felt it was a worthwhile habitat project, great for fish recovery and as a public relations move, a highly visible project but for some reason Tacoma Power isn't interested in it. Board member Grose suggested that Tacoma Power take a look at it. Mr. Nelson agreed that is was a good suggestion.
 - Board member Stamper stated he and Board member Grose have been working on this (near the airport and Davis Lake) and feel it is a great project. In addition, the City of Morton would like to see something done in the area since it's in their jurisdiction. Board member Stamper added that he is open to meetings with Mr. Nelson, Board member Grose, and Director Manlow to discuss what could be done. Mr. Nelson stated he is open to the discussions, and a field trip when we are not under COVID restrictions. Director Manlow will coordinate with the interested parties.
- TAC Member: Director Manlow stated Sam Lohr, USFWS, is retiring the end of June. A request has been received from USFWS to replace Mr. Lohr with Jared McKee and that request has to be approved by the Board. The TAC has reviewed Mr. McKee's resume and staff will bring the appointment to the Board at the next meeting.
 - Chairman Olson thanked Sam Lohr for his time on the TAC. As you know, the TAC members put a lot of time into helping the Board with not only projects proposals, but everything we do. He asked Director Manlow to express the Board's appreciation to Mr. Lohr for his work on the TAC.

- LCFRB Legislative Representative: Ms. Smee stated nominations for the legislative seat on the Board closed on 3/31/21. One nomination has been received for Senator Ann Rivers. Ms. Smee stated she will send out electronic ballots next week to all the legislators for their vote. In addition, Ms. Smee will email Senator Rivers and invite her to our next Board meeting.
- LCFRB Priorities: Ms. Smee stated staff have developed a letter to send to the legislators on LCFRB priorities. The letter includes a map, statistics, and budget requests for the priorities of the region. She will forward the letter to the Board members in case they want to send it to their legislators and added that members could modify the letter to fit their organizations.
- State of the Salmon: Ms. Smee stated she will mail out hard copies of the State of the Salmon report to all Board members.
- COVID Funding: Ms. Smee stated there have been discussions at the state level that there will be COVID funding available. However, it is unclear who will manage them and how much will be received. Some cities have been notified they will receive funding. Ms. Smee stated she would continue to monitor this to see if we can get funding for reimbursement of the equipment we purchased for remote workstations.
- Backup & Security: Ms. Smee stated she has been looking into different backup and security systems for the office. Currently, we are using a backup tape for our server. The IT contractor we had retired a few years ago. We have used a local company when issues have risen. However, we are looking into using an online backup and security system. She has a meeting next week with a company to set up a demonstration on their system including backup and recovery. The backup system has security built into it, so if a hacker got in and started corrupting our files, the system would recognize it and stop it, then we could restore our files. The cost for backup and security is approximately \$700 - \$1,300 per year depending on the size of backup we need. This would include backup for our email which currently is not backed up.
 - Board member Greenlee stated he would like to see a physical backup that is off site and not online. He stated there have been a few cases recently where Ransomware got into Cloud storage of agencies/people who thought they were protected but weren't. Ms. Smee stated she agreed. During her research, she learned that there is a 3-2-1 Rule, where you have three copies of your data at all times, keep it backed up on two different types of storage, and have at least one copy off site. The company we are looking at has this method in place and we could continue to use our existing external backup tape.
- Printer/Copier: Ms. Smee stated we are looking into purchasing our printer/copier that is being leased from Pacific Office Automation at a cost of almost \$3,000 per year. We won't see any savings until 2022, but it would offset the cost of backup and security for the office.
- Landowner Initiatives: Chairman Olson acknowledged Board member Wilson for his effort working on this issue. Board member Wilson is meeting with sponsors and gathering information that will be very valuable to the Board as we put together our concerns to share with the SRFB at their retreat. As the information becomes available and we start to look at it, there will be additions and contributions from the Board to help the issue move forward. Chairman Olson asked the Board to contact Board member Wilson with any questions.
 - Board member Grose stated a few years ago, the Board was encouraged to be more active. He added that anyone is welcome to join the group.
 - Chairman Olson stated if there is another issue that a Board member has an interest in and get engaged in, let's set up those side discussions and set up the sub-workgroups.

BUSINESS MEETING

Item #1 Consent Agenda

Ms. Smee stated as a new item to the Consent Agenda, staff will include a balance sheet. This will give the Board a visual of the funds received and disbursed each month. Usually the Finance Committee reviews expenses but staff thought this would be good information for all Board members. Board members stated their interest in continuing the balance sheet report each month.

Board member Weber moved and Board member Greenlee seconded to approve the Consent Agenda as submitted. No discussion. Motion carried.

Item #2 Authorization to Apply to Sea Grant for Funds to Finalize CSFP Reporting

Director Manlow stated staff is requesting authorization to submit a final proposal to WA Sea Grant for \$9,850 to be used to finalize the Conservation and Sustainable Fisheries Plan (CSF) report. This plan was adopted in 2017 and outlines monitoring and fishery/harvest management efforts that will be implemented to achieve ESA delisting goals while sustaining fisheries. Staff would contract with one of our existing contractors who is working on the Focused Habitat Investment Strategy (FHIS), Mr. Ray Beamesderfer of Fish Science Solutions, to finalize the report.

Questions and comments from the Board:

- Chairman Olson asked when staff would know if the grant was awarded. Director Manlow stated he was unsure and asked Ms. Johnson to address the question. Ms. Johnson stated staff should know in the next week or so if the application is good to go or if suggested edits are required, then it will take 30 to 45 days to process.

Board member Greenlee moved and Board member Cothren seconded to apply to Sea Grant for funds to finalize CSFP reporting. No discussion. Motion carried.

Item #3 LCFEG Project Amendment on Grays River Project #18-1411

Director Manlow explained the LCFEG is requesting a cost increase for the Grays River project. The amendment includes cost and scope increases. All amendments need to be routed through the TAC and Board for approval then forwarded to the RCO since they are the contracting agency. The increase in funding would cover the Grays River and Fossil Creek berm removals to better help restore watershed processes and enhance fish habitat in the lower Grays River. This request was sent to the TAC for review and comments were due yesterday. Overall, the TAC is in support of approving the amendment. Director Manlow stated the increase in funds would come from SRFB return funds and not the LCFRB budget.

Questions and comments from the Board:

- Board member Cothren stated the berms have been an issue for a long time causing flooding in the area. Director Manlow added that the landowner are in support of the berm removals.

Board member Greenlee moved and Board member Swanson seconded to approve the project cost increase of \$84,250 on Grays River Project #18-1411. No discussion. Motion carried.

Item #4 Financial Policies and Procedures

Ms. Smee presented the item to the Board. She stated that staff have been going through all of the Boards policies. Currently, the LCFRB does not have any written financial policies and procedures and it hasn't been an issue with the state Auditor as of yet. The longevity of the former and current financial staff have enabled procedures to be implemented with consistency and accuracy, and in compliance with the State Auditor's office.

Ms. Smee reviewed the policy and called attention to the three highlighted areas.

- The Board does not accept cash payments.
- Approval by two members, either Finance Committee, Executive Director, Program Manager, or designee must be received prior to submitting claims and payroll to Clark County.
- When the Board approves a project contract, they are approving the budget and activities within the scope of work.

Questions and comments from the Board:

- Board member Grose asked if this was an either/or situation. Ms. Smee stated yes. If two of the three the Finance Committee members respond in a timely manner, then they are giving approval to submit. If we are having difficulty getting a second Finance Committee member, then the Director or Program Manger could approve for submission to the County.
- Board member Greenlee stated, as a finance member for the City of Washougal, he stated the policy makes sense to him.
- Chairman Olson thanked staff for their work on the policy. Adding that since we went through the audit not too long ago, having this document now in written form will definitely help us in the future. He thanked staff for their work on continued great audit results over the years.

Board member Greenlee moved and Board member Weber seconded to approve the proposed Financial Policies and Procedures. No discussion. Motion carried.

Item #5 2021-2023 Biennial Work Plan

Director Manlow stated the 201-2023 Biennium Work Plan was presented at the February meeting. At that meeting we weren't ready to ask the Board for approval because there were questions regarding Board priorities. Staff added a prioritization piece to the Work Plan since the last meeting using colors. Staff has used green to focus on the high priority actions and yellow for medium priority actions. However, a lot of the actions that are in the Work Plan are not graded by color but rather are required as a recovery organization, Lead Entity, and Lead Agency under the Watershed Planning Act. They are routine tasks, ongoing programs, or contractual obligations with RCO.

Questions and comments from the Board:

- Board member Weber stated in the past we have talked about various restoration projects upstream from permanent barriers that seem to make the project a waste of money. Coordination with

downstream parties is necessary to make sure when we open up downstream habitat fish can still get to it. Director Manlow noted you would not find that specifically in the Work Plan. It would be addressed under the project evaluation criteria as benefits to fish, certainty of success, cost, and how cost relates to benefits. When evaluating projects, we follow the recovery plan priorities very closely.

- Board member Grose stated, on a personal note, he had a culvert that needed to be replaced. However, there was a smaller culvert downstream from him and WDFW stated his couldn't be replaced because the downstream culvert was blocking fish passage even more. Director Manlow stated those situations are looked at closely. A project would have to address one of our focal species to be funded by the SRFB. If it doesn't, there are other funding programs available to sponsors.
- Board member Grose noted there was a project in Clark County many years ago that the SRFB spent about half a million dollars on to clean up the habitat mid-stream but the problem was that the stream below was not cleaned out because the property owner below did not want to participate. In that scenario, staff would be hard pressed to recommend funding the project without participation from downstream landowners. TAC Chairman, Rudy Salakory, agreed noting if you go through the application materials a lot of that is looking at the mapping and work done by WDFW to locate barriers up and downstream. Over time, some projects have fallen through the cracks but he stands by the TAC's ability to judge that to be fundable.
- Board member Grose added that we have come a long ways from that time.
- Board member Greenlee stated his experience is that we have gotten a lot smarter on funding projects.
- Board member Wilson asked if pinniped and landowner incentive projects will be included into the Work Plan or where would they fit into the Plan. Director Manlow stated they would fall into the standard activities. He suggested the items be called out specifically as focal areas under Board Administration in the next biennium.

Board member Grose moved and Board member Weber seconded to approve the approved the 2021-2023 Biennial Work Plan as submitted.

Discussion:

Board member Greenlee suggested an amendment to include Pinniped Predation and Landowner Incentives as part of the Work Plan.

Board member Wilson moved and Board member Greenlee seconded to approve the 2021-2023 Biennial Work Plan and to include Pinniped predation and Landowner Incentives. Motion carried.

GOOD OF THE ORDER:

General discussion as to getting back to participating in in-person meetings. Board member Stamper stated Lewis County has been holding in-person meetings. He feels the Board needs to start looking at each other again with face-to-face meetings. He stated Lewis County is set up host any upcoming meetings.

The Board members shared their thoughts on meeting in-person.

- Board member Weber stated that Cowlitz County is adjusting to a new normal by making sure public meetings are held remotely and in-person. In the post-pandemic world this format could provide the opportunity for additional participation.
- Board member Grose stated he that counties have spent enough money on IT that they should be able to make it work.

- Board member Stamper stated Lewis County is well equipped to handle in-person meetings in their hearing room. The room can hold 35 – 38 people and has PowerPoint available for presentations.

Ms. Smee stated the Board would still have to make online meetings an option for people who do not want to attend in person. There are some logistical issues that have to be looked into regarding running both an in-person and virtual meeting at the same time. Ms. Smee state she is looking into this.

The meeting adjourned at 2:20 p.m.

/lc

Approved in open session on 5/7/2021.


Signed: _____
Todd Olson, Chairman