



## Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board

June 5, 2020  
Board Meeting  
Conference Call/Webinar

Draft Minutes  
For Approval: August 7, 2020

**Present:** Taylor Aalvik, Paul Greenlee, Lee Grose, Richard Mahar, Hal Mahnke, Gary Medvigy, Todd Olson, Don Swanson, Dean Takko, Olaf Thomason, Jade Unger, Dennis Weber, and Del Wilson.

**Absent:** Mike Backman and Gary Stamper. Chairman Olson excused the absent members.

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**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:** Congratulations to Amelia Johnson and her husband, Miguel Acuna, on the birth of their daughter, Ramona Acuna on May 22, 2020.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** None

### DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Manlow discussed the following statewide issues:

- **Statewide Budget:** Given the unknown financial impact of COVID-19, the Governor has asked state agencies to take a 15% reduction, along with weekly furlough days for employees starting in July. The LCFRB works under the RCO umbrella for funding. The RCO's reduction equates to approximately \$244,000. RCO is trying to figure how best to address the required reduction in 2020 expenditures.
- **5-Year Status Review:** NOAA published the Federal Register Notice for the next Five Year Status Review on October 1, 2019. We recently provided updated data and information on recovery progress since the last review, including results of the East Fork Lewis Program Review and the CSFP report, land use program accomplishments (e.g., Forest and Fish RMAP), and completed SRFB projects.
- **Columbia Basin Partnership (CBP):** Current efforts include working with the NOAA technical team to provide the technical foundation for modeling efforts aimed at developing basin-wide scenarios for getting beyond ESA delisting, and to "healthy and harvestable" goals that also meet mitigation, commercial/recreational harvest and tribal fishery needs. Phase two is nearing completion, and our joint regional "recovery scenario" has been integrated into the final documents.
- **Statewide Strategy Update:** The Governor's Salmon Recovery Office (GSRO) has started the process of updating the Statewide Strategy, "Extinction is not an Option". Work is currently focused on a series of workshops and meetings with stakeholders and Tribes to solicit feedback on what is working, and what is not, with regard to implementation and recovery. The goal is to have recommendations to the Governor this fall/winter on what an updated strategy might look like.
- **Hydro Update:** We are still working with Tacoma Power on the fisheries and hatchery management plan update on the Cowlitz River. Our goal is to make sure that the final product acknowledges and incorporates the recovery plan priorities and goals for the basin.
- **Fish and Wildlife Commission:** The Commission is working to update the state hatchery policy and as part of that update they have conducted a science review relating to hatcheries.
- **SRFB Grant Round:** The grant round is going well in light of COVID-19 constraints. Meetings with TAC and sponsors have been via conference calls and webinars. On June 8<sup>th</sup>, staff will have a conference call with the SRFB Review Panel to discuss any potential Projects of Concern. Final applications are

due in PRISM on June 29<sup>th</sup> and TAC scores are due on July 10<sup>th</sup>. The Board will review/approve the list at your August 7, 2020 Board meeting. Staff submitted two monitoring projects on behalf of the Board in this grant round.

- Planned Project Forecast List (PPFL): The SRFB requested Lead Entities look two to three years into the future to identify potential SRFB projects, to help demonstrate funding need to the legislature. Staff is working with sponsors to identify planned projects, and with Inter-Fluve to prepare the list for submittal to the SRFB.
- Habitat Work Schedule (HWS): Staff is working with the RCO to transfer SalmonPORT and HWS data into the SRFB Salmon Recovery Portal (SRP), which is replacing HWS. This is a larger statewide effort to track projects over time. The SRP will make information accessible to the legislators and public. Chairman Olson asked Ms. Smee to give a presentation to the Board when this is completed, and she agreed.
- Monitoring Projects: We are working with the RCO and GSRO on potential changes to how monitoring proposals are reviewed and approved statewide. The goal is to give the regions more flexibility with funding for monitoring proposals. There has always been a funding gap regarding monitoring projects. Director Manlow, John Foltz, Director of the Snake River Recovery Board, and Alex Conley, Director of the Mid-Columbia Recovery Board, have been working together and with RCO on changes to the statewide grant manual to support the effort.

## **BUSINESS MEETING**

### Item #1 Consent Agenda

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

### Item #2 Letter to Fish and Wildlife Commission

Director Manlow expressed concerns that the current direction on the hatchery policy could slow recovery progress for ESA listed species. He stated the staff's proposed letter address both the Commission process and lack of public engagement opportunity, and the direction the policy update is going relative to what our recovery plan and the Conservation and Sustainable Fisheries Plan (CSFP) says.

Director Manlow noted that the draft letter is attached for Board review. He explained that the Commission is trying to maintain fisheries and recovery at the same time, and there is a tension in that balance. What we are trying to highlight for them is what they have already committed to do in the Lower Columbia - making sure the Commission follows through on their commitment to manage hatcheries in accordance with the recovery plan. Director Manlow stated it is important to get on the record our concerns about maintaining the department's commitment to recovery on the lower Columbia River.

Comments and questions from the Board members:

- Board member Greenlee stated that one of the things that appears to be a concern is that the proposed hatchery actions would not only slow down recovery but might actually damage some ESA listed species. If that were to happen, then it could be a federal intervention, either from NOAA or one of the interested groups going to federal courts. He added that if you ramp up hatchery production, a habitat has a carrying capacity, and if you flood it with hatchery fish, then the native species can collapse.

Director Manlow stated the proposed letter would address concerns of the policy update process, as well as technical and policy implications of the recommended policy update language relative to the Board's Recovery Plan and Conservation and Sustainable Fisheries Plan. The letter also focuses on the important role of hatchery production. For instance, regarding Spring Chinook, we are relying heavily on our hatcheries to support the reintroduction programs. In the Lewis River, we are starting with hatchery origin stock and using those to repopulate the upper watershed. Hatcheries can be important to recovery and our goal is to maximize production to get fish coming back. He added that the biggest challenge we are seeing in the region is Fall Chinook. We have quite a few watersheds where up to 85% of the fish on the spawning grounds are hatchery fish.

Board member Greenlee moved and Board member Aalvik seconded to approve submission of a letter to WA State Fish and Wildlife Commission (FWC) on the proposed update to the statewide Hatchery and Fishery Reform Policy C-3619.

No discussion. Motion carried.

#### Item #3 Approval of the Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership Project Amendment #17-1070

Director Manlow stated this amendment relates to the Ridgefield Pitts Design project located in the EF Lewis River, from 2017. The sponsor is requesting a time extension and an increase in funding due to the complexity, both socially and physically, of the project. There were complications with this project because there was another project proposed in the same area that was folded into this project. It took more time to work on design issues with the stakeholders given the number of interested parties in the EF Lewis River. The LCEP formed a 25-person stakeholder group to help with project development and review designs.

Director Manlow stated the additional funding for the project does not come out of the LCFRB budget. The increase would come out of Recreation Conservation Office funds. They maintain a pot of funds for project amendments, from dollars returned from other projects. The LCFRB TAC reviewed this request on May 13, 2020 and voted unanimously to endorse the sponsor's request for a time extension and increase in budget.

Board member Greenlee moved and Board member Mahnke seconded to authorize both a cost increase and time extension on the Ridgefield Pitts Design, Project #17-1070. No discussion. Motion carried.

#### Item #4 Update on COVID Response and Return to Work Plan

Ms. Smee gave an update on the COVID response and return to work plan. She stated she has been working with the WSDOT safety officer, Monique Rabidoux, on new rules and procedures for the building. Ms. Smee stated that in discussions with the DOT Safety Officer, DOT employees will not be returning to the building until August and that could be extended.

Director Manlow added that staff will continue to telecommute through June but go into the office on an individual basis as needed about once a week and following DOT procedures. All personnel are required to wear masks when walking around the building but they are not required at work stations. The building is still locked to the public and has been since March.

Ms. Smee reviewed the Office Safety Plan while in the SWR-HQ Building during COVID-19 Pandemic:

1. **Emergency Exiting** – In the event of a fire, earthquake, or other emergency, please use the closest exit point and proceed to the evacuation meeting area in the parking lot.
2. **ADA Access** – ADA access will remain unchanged throughout the building. Others should give those with ADA needs the right of way while maintaining social distancing.
3. **Entering the Building** – Look for directional arrows and follow to your destination. Maintain 6ft distance with other people at all times.
4. **Hallways** – Be mindful of and follow the arrows on the floor directing one way foot traffic, stay to the right side of the hallway if it is not marked as one way directional to maintain social distancing.
5. **Stairways** – Be mindful of direction of traffic that signage is dictating for travel. Maintain 6ft. distance from others. (WSP may come down the east stairway in emergency situations.)
6. **Elevators** – One person per elevator at a time.
7. **Restrooms** – No more than two people in each restroom at one time. Be mindful of others exiting when you are entering. Back up to let others out before entering. Announce you are coming in. Keep 6ft distance to others at all times.
8. **Proceed to Work Area** – Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces such as your desk, keyboard, and telephone in your work area with Clorox wipes or equal. Avoid using other employees' phones, desks, offices or other work tools.
9. **Meetings & Breaks** – If gathering for meetings or break time, maintain 6 ft. distance from others. Disinfect meeting area tables with Clorox wipes or equal after use. Only one person at a time in the coffee areas on the second and third floors.

Comments and question from the Board members:

- Board member Weber asked if staff has regular communication/meetings with other tenants in the building regarding the spread of the virus through the building. Have there been any reported cases of COVID-19? Ms. Smee stated she has not had meetings with other tenants but has been working with the building safety officer. There have been no confirmed cases of COVID from the building.
- Board member Aalvik asked about the air circulation system of the building. Is the air re-circulated or filtered? He noted their office has a neutralizer installed to help cleanse the air. Ms. Smee stated she has not asked about the air system but she will follow up. Director Manlow noted that the HVAC system does have a very efficient and high turnover rate, and does not have a disinfectant system, which does make him nervous. Ms. Smee stated she would check with the building safety officer to see if DOT has any plans to upgrade the system.
- Chairman Olson asked if the office is generally working from home with staff using the office as needed. Director Manlow stated yes, the office is not back to full staff on a daily basis. Director Manlow stated we are making use of conference call and webinars to continue to conduct daily business. Chairman Olson added that staff has been available when needed.

**Executive Session:**

At 2:00 p.m. the Board adjourned to Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter. Given the webinar format of the meeting, Chairman Olson stated he would like all staff members to log off the webinar and conference call and he would text Ms. Smee to let staff know when to rejoin the meeting.

At 2:26 p.m. staff was contacted to rejoin the meeting and the Board returned from Executive Session.

Board consensus was to continue the discussion on Director Manlow's performance evaluation and merit raise at the September 2020 Board meeting due to the unknown financial impacts that COVID-19 will have on funding.

**GOOD OF THE ORDER:**

- Board member Greenlee stated that funding comes in different "colors". With regard to the significant budget pressure due to COVID, his personal view is to protect staff as much as possible even over projects. He stated he is an economist and the initial economic modeling of job and business losses suggested a depression era collapse. However, since then, the modeling has gotten more sophisticated and consumers make up 75% of the economy and consumer income is actually up over the last year. He added that much of that is due to the CARES funding and federal stimulus. Spending is down and savings are up by roughly the equivalent amount. Given that, WA State, who is heavily dependent on sales tax, is in better shape than other states dependent on income tax because CARES funding is not taxable.
- Board member Greenlee stated he is part of the Washougal Business Association. Surprisingly he is finding that more than half of the members are unaware of the websites that have all of the information about the status of businesses and employees as they come back online. For more information, go to [www.governor.wa.gov](http://www.governor.wa.gov) and look for Safe Start Washington and review the "Review Workplace and Employer Resources and Recommendations".
- Board member Mahnke asked if there is a preliminary project list the Board could review. Director Manlow stated at this point the TAC members have not done their scoring of the projects. Scores are due on July 10, 2020. The ranked list can be sent out once the TAC comes to consensus on the list at their July 15, 2020 meeting. In the meantime, Director Manlow stated he could send out the list of unranked projects so the Board can see if they have been deemed cleared, needs more information, or a project of concern by the SRFB Review Panel.

At 2:33 p.m. the meeting adjourned.

/lc

Approved in open session on \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Todd Olson, Chairman