



## Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board

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October 1, 2021  
Board Meeting  
Conference Call/Webinar

Draft Minutes  
For Approval: November 5, 2021

**Present:** Dan Cothren, Paul Greenlee, Lee Grose, Richard Mahar, Gary Medvigy, Todd Olson, Ann Rivers, Rudy Salakory, Don Swanson, Olaf Thomason, Jade Unger, Dennis Weber, Del Wilson

**Staff:** Steve Manlow, Denise Smee, Amelia Johnson, Steve West, and Lorie Clark

**Absent:** Hal Mahnke, Chairman Olson excused the absent member.

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### **ROLE CALL:**

The Board held a moment of silence to honor the passing of Board member Gary Stamper on September 29, 2021. He passed away after a five week battle against COVID-19. Board member Stamper has been the Lewis County BOCC representative for the LCFRB since 2015.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

New Cowlitz Tribe Representative: The Cowlitz Indian Tribe has named Rudy Salakory as their new representative to the LCFRB. Mr. Salakory will also remain the TAC Chairman. Mr. Manlow note these positions will give a strong coordination between the TAC and the Board. Mr. Salakory clarified for the record that he is Tribal employee and not a member of the Cowlitz Indian Tribe.

Finance Committee Vacancy: Ms. Smee stated that former Board member Aalvik was a member of the Board's Finance Committee and with his resignation in August, he left a vacancy. Staff asked for volunteers to fill this position. Ms. Smee stated this doesn't require a lot of time but would require reviewing claims twice a month. Board member Salakory volunteered for this position and stated if another member is interested, he wouldn't want to deny them the opportunity. Chairman Olson thanked Board member Salakory for volunteering and noted staff will move forward if no other nominations are submitted in the next week.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

- No public comments were given.

### **PARTNER REPORTS:**

- Landowner Engagement Presentation, Board member Del Wilson
  - Power Point presentation is available upon request.It was noted that Board member Wilson will give this presentation to the WA Salmon Coalition on October 12, 2021.
- Focused Habitat Investment Strategy Update, Director Manlow
  - Director Manlow suggested in the interest of time, he could move the Focused Habitat Investment Strategy update to the end of the meeting. The Board members agreed.

## **BUSINESS MEETING**

### Item #1 Consent Agenda

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

### Item #2 Cowlitz Restoration & Recovery (CRR) Documents

Director Manlow presented the item to the Board, and explained that as indicted in the action summary, this is a follow up to the action the Board took in May 2021. Staff is recommending the Board adopt the 2021 CRR fund appendices and reference forms as an addition to the LCFRB's Salmon Recovery Grants Manual.

Director Manlow stated there is no negative fiscal impact to the Board as Tacoma Power will be providing \$75,000 per grant round to the Board to administer and manage the CRR program and contracts. In May, the Board granted authorization for Director Manlow to enter into contract with Tacoma Power for management of the funds. He explained that since that time, staff have been working with Tacoma Power to address contract and insurance requirements, and anticipates finalization of the agreement by the end of October.

Questions and comments from the Board.

- Board member Grose asked if Tacoma Power is turning over the funds to LCFRB for disbursement or will funds be parsed out piece by piece? Director Manlow stated Tacoma Power would be using the LCFRB as a contractor to manage the grant round adding that there would be a check in with Tacoma Power to approve the recommended projects. Tacoma Power would provide part \$3 million per grant round for habitat projects annually. Board member Grose stated it is refreshing to hear Tacoma Power is letting go of the reigns and allowing folks with their feet on the ground to evaluate projects.

Board member Grose moved and Board member Greenlee seconded to adopt the 2021 Cowlitz Restoration and Recovery Fund (CRR) Appendices D and E, and referenced forms, as an addition to the LCFRB's Salmon Recovery Grants Manual, while allowing staff to make minor, non-policy related edits and clarifications.

Discussion:

Board member Weber stated he noticed that the application is 12 pages long. Director Manlow responded stating that staff had to tack on additional forms for the CRR process so that sponsors could address the priority issues and questions that Tacoma Power has laid out in their program. Motion carried.

### Item #3 Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Recruitment

Director Manlow presented the item to the Board, noting this has been an ongoing effort to rebuild the robustness of the TAC with a broad range of expertise. He noted that traditionally, the Board has had a Forest Service representative on the TAC but hasn't for several years, and that Mr. Jones' nomination has been reviewed and vetted with the TAC.

Director Manlow stated that staff will have more TAC appointments for the Board to consider at the next meeting.

Questions and comments from the Board:

- Chairman Olson stated Mr. Jones previously served on another TAC in the Upper Columbia Basin so he knows what he is getting into.

Board member Greenlee moved and Board member Swanson seconded to appoint Joshua (JD) Jones to the LCFRB's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). No discussion. Motion carried.

#### Item #4 SRFB Targeted Investment Program

Director Manlow presented the item to the Board. He explained that the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) adopted a policy enabling Targeted Investments in September of 2020. This is a program that will address a SRFB-identified priority to accelerate progress towards achieving salmon recovery. Staff is asking for approval of the proposed *LCFRB Request for Proposals: Lower Columbia River Fall Chinook Habitat Projects*, for the SRFB Targeted Investment program and authorize staff to distribute the Request for Proposal (RFP) document and implement the program activities in conjunction with the 2022 SRFB grant round.

He further noted that in June 2021, the SRFB selected Southern Resident orca recovery as the policy priority for the program, and that our RFP is designed to steer project sponsors to the areas that are more competitive and will do the most for regional recovery, as well as feed the orcas. Funds for these projects would come from the SRFB Targeted Investment Program fund in the amount of \$3.7 million for the 2021-2023 biennium. He explained the SRFB may only request project proposals for the Targeted Investments Program if funding remains after allocating the annual statewide status quo of \$18 million.

He noted that for 2022, the Lower Columbia will consider projects that target Tule Fall Chinook as a primary species and Spring Chinook as a secondary, and that each region will be able to nominate one project to the SRFB. The SRFB will make a selection statewide on what they will fund for the Targeted Investment Program.

Questions and comments from the Board:

- Board member Weber stated he is surprised that a region like ours that is a major source (of Chinook), can only submit one project. How asked how that would fill the Governor's desire to feed the orcas. Director Manlow indicated the SRFB is hearing the same concern from other lead entities. Our populations are quite important to killer whales and there are others around the state as well. He noted that we still have to work within the parameters that have been set by the SRFB, and that our goal is to come in with the strongest proposal possible so we can compete well.
- Board member Weber stated in reference to the Map on page 54, it shows the Toutle subbasin being a high priority for fall Chinook, and asked about impacts from the USACE's Sediment Retention Structure (SRS). Director Manlow stated the NF Toutle is where the SRS is located. The NF Toutle has a sediment plain and SRS that causes fish passage problems, as well as a fish collector. He noted that our focus area refers to the SF Toutle, which is not encumbered like the NF Toutle. He added that sponsors have done a good job of laying out long term restoration plans that would benefit Tule fall Chinook and potentially some Spring Chinook in that system.
- Board member Greenlee asked if the SRFB envisions they would fund priority projects until they run out of funds, or whether funds would be distributed around the regions. Director Manlow stated his understanding is that the SRFB is looking for one large scale robust project that can be completely funded, rather than partially funding multiple projects. He noted fund leveraging will also be important.

Board member Greenlee moved and Board member Rivers seconded to approve the proposed LCFRB Request for Proposals: Lower Columbia River Fall Chinook Habitat Project, for the SRFB Targeted Investment Program and authorize staff to distribute the document; and, authorize staff to implement the program activities in conjunction with the 2022 Salmon Recovery Funding Board grant round. No discussion. Motion carried.

Item #5 Letter of Support for an Increase in PCSRF Funding

Director Manlow presented the item to the Board. He commented that the timing on this item isn't good given budget decisions could be made at any time. He noted that in the currently proposed federal budget, there is an increase of \$400 million in PCSRF funding. Those funds are spread across the western coast states and are matched with state dollars. The average allocation, when you look across the years, is approximately \$74 million per year. Recently, in the past 6-7 years, it has been \$65 million. This year, our share was \$4 million of the PCSRF that was distributed to regions across the state. He explained that additional funds would be an opportunity to get some robust restoration work done in our communities. From a staff standpoint, we feel it is important to the mission of the Board to seize this opportunity that we don't see very often. Staff worked with the Chair to prepare a draft letter for Board consideration to be sent to our congressional delegation. He noted Lead Entities across the state are submitting letters of support as well. As a note of clarification, Director Manlow stated that Jeannie Abbott, Program Coordinator for the GSRO, submitted comments in the chat that the additional funds would be distributed over a five year period. Director Manlow thanked her for the clarification.

Questions and comments from the Board:

- Board member Rivers applauded staff for being proactive on this funding opportunity. She added that so many times legislators do not know what the needs are and to be able to put a face on this for our federal delegation is very important. Additionally, this provides the opportunity to allow them to engage in a bipartisan activity that benefits all constituency.

Board member Rivers moved and Board member Greenlee seconded to authorize the Chair to sign a letter of support for the proposed increase in funding for the NOAA Pacific Coastal Salmon Restoration Fund (PCSRF) to be sent to Washington State senators.

Discussion:

Board member Greenlee asked if the letter would be more effective if the entire Board and the positions they represent, signed the letter and not just the Chairman. Director Manlow stated if this is the direction the Board wants to go, staff could add electronic signatures to the letter of member that want to sign and their affiliation.

Amended motion:

Board member Greenlee offered a friendly amendment to include all Board members that want to sign the letter of support with their represented positions, should contact staff. Board member Rivers accepted.

Motion carried.

## **CONTINUED PARTNER REPORTS:**

- Focused Habitat Investment Strategy Update, Director Manlow
  - Power Point presentation is available upon request.

## Questions and comments from the Board:

- Board member Grose stated if there is a species that can be delisted, then let's start with them and then move on to the more problematic issues.
- Board member Grose stated we should prioritize the species, and then go to the sponsors and have them submit projects that focus on those species. Board member Salakory stated this is an impossible decision to make because there are a lot of factors to consider. He added if there was one species in particular that was in peril and we invested a bunch of money into that species, but couldn't remove threats to that species, then it could never be delisted and we still wouldn't get to delisting.
- Board member Salakory stated he wanted to commend staff, workgroup members, and consultants for gathering the information that has been paired down for the presentation today. This process is not going to be easy or without controversy.
- Director Manlow stated that one of the projects that was funded this year by the SRFB was the Steelhead Abundance Monitoring project and it will be running parallel to this effort.
- Board member Medvigy stated as an observation, this is a holistic approach. It is very difficult to measure success by understanding contributions from habitat restoration and hatchery work, and where we get the most bang for the buck. He noted it is an enormous investment and we really don't know the impact of predation on salmon. He commented that all of our recovery efforts are being eaten by seals and sea lions on the Columbia.
- Board member Medvigy stated he would like to see the Tribes in charge of hunting, not euthanasia or poisoning, but a hunting season on seals in order to improve our recovery efforts.
- Board member Rivers stated that sea lions are a federal issue. She stated she had a bill last year that was largely constructed in partnership with the Tulalip Tribe because they do use pinnipeds in some of their rituals as a food source. She added she thinks we will see more favorable discussion on this as time goes on and we should include the cormorants because they are decimating salmon populations as well.
- Chairman Olson suggested asking Kessina Lee to give an update to the Board on predation since WDFW has finished the recent season of work.
- Chairman Olson complimented the discussion regarding the targeted investments, noting it is going to take thought and board engagement as we move forward. Board member Wilson added that after working with staff on the Landowner Incentive Program, the LCFRB should be in more control of where we spend our project funds.
- Board member Salakory noted how complicated these matters are. He noted salmon recovery is currently looking to habitat restoration to fix all of the salmon problems, but we have to be mindful of all the factors that went into the habitat loss including the effects of the hydro system on salmon.
- Chairman Olson asked what the LCFRB can do within our span of control. He noted we need to do the best we can while being cognizant of everything else that is going on.
- Director Manlow stated as part of this process we are looking at what is driving the population status. In addition, if we are finding threats or challenges, that is a cue to staff to work with the Board on the issues and how to address them. We are starting to see "off ramps" as we dive into population drivers that lead to the other all "H" programs aside from just habitat investments. He reiterated that we have an all "H" recovery plan and it addresses all factors for recovery.

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT:** Please let Director Manlow know if you have any questions on the Director's Report.

**GOOD OF THE ORDER:**

- Board member Weber noted that he remembered seeing/reading something from FERC regarding a change in rules and regulations regarding the in-lieu mitigation program that has been turned down. Chairman Olson stated he cannot discuss this issue. Director Manlow stated it was the announcement from the Services that they were withdrawing their preliminary fishway prescriptions which puts us back in the mode of fish reintroduction into the reservoirs on the loon. He concluded by stating there is still a lot of process ahead of this that other parties may pursue.

The meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

/lc

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

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Todd Olson, Chairman