



Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board

April 1, 2022
Board Meeting
Conference Call/Webinar

Final Minutes
Approved: May 6, 2022

Present: Dan Cothren, Lee Grose, Marylyne Kostick, Richard Mahar, Hal Mahnke, Gary Medvigy, Todd Olson, Rudy Salakory, Don Swanson, Olaf Thomason, Jade Unger, Dennis Weber and Del Wilson

Absent: Ann Rivers, Chairman Olson excused the absent member.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Chairman Olson welcomed Marylyne Kostick to the Board as the new Lewis County Citizen Representative. Ms. Kostick introduced herself to the Board. She stated she is originally from Lewis County and currently resides in Chehalis. Ms. Kostick holds a Master's degree in Public Health from the University of Alaska where she studied the epidemiological implications of environmental impacts on fish and wildlife. She moved from a Research Associate position with the University of Alaska to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game as the Division Assistant working with a technical workgroup to study fish consumption, habitat restoration, and environmental conservation. Ms. Kostick has since returned to Lewis County and took a position as the Epidemiologist with Lewis County Public Health and Social Services. The Lewis County Citizen Representative position was previously filled by Lee Grose who stepped into the Lewis County Commissioner role at the end of 2021.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- No public comment was given.

PARTNER REPORTS: *Conservation and Sustainable Fisheries Plan (CSFP), Amelia Johnson, LCFRB*

Ms. Johnson explained that the Board has been working on the Conservation and Sustainable Fisheries Plan (CSFP) report for a number of years. Staff has been working with Ray Beamesderfer to finalize the first progress report on the Plan, which is intended to address hatchery and harvest impacts identified in our Recovery Plan. She noted the CSFP was published jointly in 2017 by the LCFRB and WDFW and lays out a number of strategies, actions, and different management practices for DFW hatchery and fishery programs across the Lower Columbia and ocean fisheries as well.

Ms. Johnson noted the goal is to publish the report in the fall so we can include this information in the next State of the Salmon report at the end of this year. This presentation is available upon request.

Questions and comments from the Board:

- Board member Weber asked if the report addresses the treaty status for achieving certain goals for Native American partners. Ms. Johnson stated no, because the original plan focused specifically on WDFW's hatchery and fisheries programs. Director Manlow added that the Fisheries chapter in the CSFP will address how allocations are made. He also explained that harvest and hatchery actions are supporting Treaty obligations.

- Chairman Olson asked what the various designations mean in Progress Report Viability slide. Ms. Johnson clarified the coding on the slide related to viability, VL = Very Low, M = Medium, H = High, and VH = Very High. Chairman Olson stated, then in looking at the graph, there has been improvement and no back sliding since the time of listing. Ms. Johnson agreed.
- Board member Swanson asked, on the PHOS slide, what would be the difference between the coast and other parts of the region. Ms. Johnson explained that across the river in Oregon we have the SAFE fisheries, which result in a lot of hatchery releases to support harvest in the coastal watersheds, and that this results in strays from Oregon.
- Board member Swanson stated in reference to weirs, he wouldn't mind seeing a smaller river being subjected to terminal fishery and sort out what is going upstream by taking the smaller fish out and letting the larger ones move up the stream. This could possibly have a good impact on the river. Director Manlow stated if the Board is interested, we could have WDFW give a presentation on weirs.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Manlow stated he prepared a written report that will be sent out after the meeting. Director Manlow highlighted the following:

- Landowner Incentives Initiative: Staff has been working with Board member Wilson on this. Ms. Smee has been working on carrying this effort forward with the Washington Salmon Coalition (WSC). She worked with the WSC to create a Landowner Engagement Committee with others across the state. The Landowner Engagement Committee met this week to review the report. Staff will be presenting it to the LCFR Board in May for formal approval. The Committee is also collecting information on other existing landowner programs. Ms. Smee is also working with the WSC Training Committee to develop education and training sessions. Ms. Smee stated the WSC Training Committee is putting together a matrix of actions that will be reviewed by the Coalition members at their April 19th meeting. She asked that when the Board members review the report, to consider the action items and provide feedback. Chairman Olson encouraged Board members to review the actions, consider your constituency/local community and provide feedback to Ms. Smee and Board member Wilson.
- Senate Operating Budget: Director Manlow stated he wanted to thank Senator Rivers for the work she did to include a capacity increase for the regions across the state. Unfortunately, the House had other priorities and the increase did not make it into the final approved budget signed by the Governor. Director Manlow stated the increase would have addressed a long standing gap in capacity funding for organizations like ours and across the state who are trying to put project dollars on the ground. Additional conversations with the Senator, she passed on ideas on how to include this in the 23/25 biennium and talking with other regional directors in the Columbian Basin to make a request to RCO for a lift in the budget.
- LCFRB New Neighbors: Director Manlow stated that the Lower Columbia Fish Enhancement Group have become our new neighbors in the WSDOT building. In addition, the Clark Conservation District is also looking at space in the building.
- SW WA City Representative: With Paul Greenlee stepping down the end of 2021, we are looking to fill the position. Currently, we have two candidates, Troy McCoy from City of Battle Ground and Brian Wood from City of Kelso. Ballots are going out to the cities with ballots.
- Grant Round Update: We are currently running three grant rounds, SRFB (16 projects), CRR (3 projects), and SRFB Targeted Investments (2 projects). Beginning next week we will be starting our virtual site visits and project review. Related to this, the WA State Legislature has appropriated an additional \$75 million in the operating budget for restoration projects in the state. Of that \$75

million, \$50 million is for projects over \$5 million and \$25 million is for projects less than \$5 million. This is one of our agenda items for discussion today requesting some of that funding be added to the 2022 grant round.

- USACE Streamlining Permit Efforts: The matrix of actions has been finalized to include permitting. The USACE has included a time table to do training sessions around the state.

Questions and comments from the Board:

- Board member Medvigy stated he has been working on Lacamas Lake. All of the additional work being done on Steigerwald will create habitat for salmon recovery. The bank potential is with Lake Vancouver on the North end and added that he has been trying to get the USACE reengaged over the last few years. He encouraged sponsors to start thinking about Lacamas Lake as a project area because there is nothing happening north of the dam. Board member Medvigy stated the county currently has an RFP out to restart the study on Lake Vancouver. Board member Salakory stated he has been invited to that workgroup but doesn't know what their goals are. He offered to work with Board member Medvigy to exchange information.

BUSINESS MEETING

Item #1 Consent Agenda

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

Item #2 Juneteenth Holiday Approval

Director Manlow presented the item to the Board. He stated this is an administrative action. In June 2021, it became an officially recognized federal holiday starting in 2022. The holiday has been adopted by four of our five Board counties. The Board operates under Clark County as our fiduciary and we align with their administrative policies for holidays.

Questions and comments from the Board:

- Board member Medvigy stated Clark County Council was one of the first in the state to adopt the new federally recognized holiday. He added that there was very little impact to the County other than some overtime for Corrections.

Board member Grose moved and Board member Mahnke seconded to authorize the addition of the federally and state recognized Juneteenth holiday to the list of paid holidays for employees. No discussion. Motion carried with 10 members approving, 2 members abstaining, and 1 member opposing.

Item #3 Support Letter for Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership and Lewis County Conservation District Barrier Assessment Applications

Director Manlow presented the item. He stated this year we have two applications for barrier assessment projects. Our existing barrier assessment was completed in 2005 so we don't have a sense of where all the

barriers are in the Lower Columbia. We have been working with the Estuary Partnership and Lewis County Conservation District to secure some funding for a region wide barrier assessment. If these projects are funded, they would be considered assessments. Therefore, the LCFRB is required to sponsor or co-sponsor assessments. If funded, staff would work closely with sponsors to help guide decisions and participate in workgroups.

No questions and comments from the Board.

Board member Weber moved and Board member Cothren seconded to authorize the Chair to a sign letter of support for Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership Project 22-1212 and Lewis County Conservation District Project CRR-2022-01. No discussion. Motion carried.

Item #4 Budget Increase for CSFP Contract

Director Manlow presented the item. This is a request to add an additional \$10,000 to our CSFP contract with Fish Science Solutions to complete the report and framework. Director Manlow stated that staff did budget for professional services in the 2022 annual budget that was approved in December. This increase would be covered through the approved budget. Included in your packet are the existing scope of work, timeline, and budget and where the additional funding would be expended. Director Manlow stated this is the only one of these efforts in the state where recovery regions are working to report on the other “H’s” like hatchery and harvest.

No questions and comments from the Board.

Board member Grose moved and Board member Mahnke seconded to authorize an additional \$10,000 to the contract for Fish Science Solutions, to complete the Lower Columbia Conservation and Sustainable Fisheries Plan (CSF Plan) report and framework. No discussion. Motion carried.

Item #5 Letter to RCO for Funding to be added to Grant Round

Director Manlow presented the item. This relates to what was mentioned in the Director’s Report regarding the additional \$75 million approved in the 2022 supplemental budget. Staff is recommending the Board authorize the Chair to sign a letter requesting the SRFB add the \$25 million piece of the \$75 million allocation to the 2022 grant round with the ability to carry that funding over to 2023 if the region did not expend all of the funding in the 2022 grant round. Per the GSRO and RCO requests, the regions have been working hard over the last few years to develop long term project lists. With the anticipation of a larger PCSRF allocation, regions were asked to identify larger scale projects that could move the dial on recovery.

Director Manlow stated this is a topic that he has been working on with the other regional directors in the state and they are all in agreement. He added we may want to send a joint letter with all of the regional logos to the SRFB on this request instead of a standalone letter from the LCFRB. The SRFB will ultimately make the decision on how this money is spent. He stated he would like to present this as an alternative to help shape how this money would be spent to the SRFB before they get too far in developing alternates of their own.

Questions and comments from the Board:

- Chairman Olson asked if there is a timeline on spending the additional funding. Director Manlow stated he doesn't have a good answer to the question. Basically, the funds are project dollars but they were added to the operations budget for the RCO but earmarked to go into the salmon account. He believes the salmon account gives the SRFB some flexibility of when to spend it. He stated he could get additional clarification on the end date of the funding.
- Chairman Olson stated some concern that if the funding has a short amount of time that it has to be spent, would there be enough projects to use the funding. Director Manlow stated there are several big ticket projects this year that would be able to use the funds.

Board member Wilson moved and Board member Mahnke seconded to authorize the Chair to sign a letter along with the other regional directors requesting that the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) allocate an additional \$25 million from the additional \$75 million of SRFB project funds approved in the 2022 supplemental budget. No discussion. Motion carried.

Item #6 Letter to Congress for Pinniped Management Funding

Director Manlow presented the item. Staff is recommending the Board authorize the Chair to sign a letter to the Washington and Oregon Congressional delegation supporting appropriation of approximately \$3.6 million in federal funding for ongoing pinniped control efforts in the Columbia River and tributaries. This would be a continuation of the good work we have seen by the tribes and agencies on pinniped control. Included in the action summary is an excerpt of what this money would fund.

Ms. Kessina Lee of WDFW has given a few presentations to the Board on pinniped removal efforts. The Board was approached by WDFW and Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (CRITFC) for the letter and they have requested a letter from each of the Columbia Basin Regions. If the Board authorizes the letter, they would go out this afternoon as they are time sensitive.

Questions and comments from the Board:

- Board member Grose asked what happens to the animals. He noted that a sea lion had washed up on shore near his beach cabin. Ms. Kessina Lee, WDFW, stated when lethal force is used, the animals are removed from the area under strict condition of the federal permit. Carcasses are disposed of under federal protocols. However, there are some sea lions in the Columbia River that die of natural causes or boat strikes and sometimes wash up to shore.
- Board member Medvigy stated measuring recovery is a huge challenge across the board and this is one area where limited measurement has occurred and showing how successful the program is towards recovery. He added that this is a program that works effectively.

Board member Medvigy moved and Board member Grose seconded to authorize the Chair to sign a letter to the Washington and Oregon Congressional delegation supporting appropriation of approximately \$3.6 million in federal funding for ongoing pinniped control efforts in the Columbia River and tributaries. No discussion. Motion carried.

GOOD OF THE ORDER:

- Board member Weber stated his appreciation to the members of the Board and staff who participate on a project called the Spirit Lake Toutle Cowlitz River systems collaborative that was created to work with federal, state, and local agencies in managing the sediment issues from Mt. St. Helen's eruption. The Lower Cowlitz valley is still dealing with a lot of sediment working its way down from Mt. St. Helen's. Part of the overall recovery is to reestablish a natural outlet to Spirit Lake if conditions allow it. The group has been meeting for over a year and has secured funding from the legislature to continue with a facilitator.
- Board member Mahnke stated as of February 2022, he has retired as president of the Lower Columbia Fish Enhancement Group board but will remain on the Board. He added that Brian Davern took over as the new president.
- Board member Mahnke stated the LCFEG office has officially moved to the WSDOT building effective today.
- Board member Wilson offered his assistance to the Board if anyone has questions on the Landowner Engagement Program.
- Board member Swanson stated HB 1838 and the Senate companion bill are horrendously bad for recovery efforts. He is in favor of adding trees for shade in the areas that you can get them but when it is forced on landowners, you will get the opposite reaction from individual landowners and their neighbors. It is a \$10,000 fine per day if not in compliance. He added he would like the Board to consider writing a letter to the Legislature stating agreement with the concept of protecting habitat but they are going about it the wrong way. He suggested the Board discuss a draft letter be presented at the May meeting.
- Chairman Olson stated Ms. Smee shared a report from Thurston County from a landowner that lives along the waterways. There was some interesting information regarding the level of riparian buffers and plantings. We may be able to use the information to couch what we have learned and the need to find a balance for benefits to habitat and landowners.
- Board member Swanson stated the shape of the river has a lot to do with riparian areas. The river has a lot of energy and can tear up riparian plantings.
- Board member Grose stated he visited the Onalaska High School Aquaculture program this morning, which is overseen by WDFW, the students released 100K plus Coho and 35K Steelhead into the Newaukum River. This is a program that other schools could model.

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

/lc

Approved in open session on _____

Signed: _____

Todd Olson, Chairman