



Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board

December 3, 2021
Board Meeting
Conference Call/Webinar

Minutes
Approved: February 4, 2022

Present: Dan Cothren, Paul Greenlee, Lee Grose, 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:

- Ms. Smee asked the Board for a group screen shot of the meeting attendees, for a “group picture”.
- Chairman Olson stated the Board will go into Executive Session after Agenda Item #3, Review and Approval of the 2022 Annual Budget, to review Director Manlow’s performance. He noted the session will last 15 minutes.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- No public comments were given.

PARTNER REPORTS:

- No partner reports were given.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Director Manlow stated a written report was not provided for this meeting given the bulk of work has been on the agenda topics. Director Manlow stated he wanted to provide a brief update on some of the federal budget items.

- The bipartisan infrastructure bill has been passed by the senate and those funds would be distributed over a five year period. He noted that key elements for salmon recovery include:
 - A national culvert removal replacement grant program that would be established via the U.S. Department of Transportation with approximately \$1 billion to be used for culvert corrections;
 - \$172 million for NOAA’s Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund, a grants program that provided funding to States and Tribes to protect, conserve, and restore west coast salmon. He noted PCSRF is our “bread and butter” for habitat restoration work, and would include \$34.5 million per year for five years. However, it is not known what the Lower Columbia allocation would look like for projects or if it would include capacity funding;
 - \$400 million in Fish Barrier Removal grants and is a community based restoration program focused on fixing fish passage barriers;
 - \$79 million for the Columbia River Estuary Program. This is a large bump in funding and could be routed through the Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership for implementation;
 - \$491 million via NOAA centered on Coastal Resiliency to combat climate change; and,
 - \$492 million from NOAA to establish for a Coastal Security grant.

- He noted that other element of the federal budget is the Build Back Better Plan. This is still being negotiated, but could include \$1 billion in grants for salmon habitat restoration, \$6 billion for Coastal Resiliency, \$400 million for hatchery upgrades, and \$500 million for better stock assessment, research and climate change.

Questions and comments from the Board:

- Board member Swanson asked about the national culvert program that equals \$1 billion, and how funds would be allocated. Director Manlow responded that he is unsure how those funds would be distributed.
 - Board member Greenlee stated in New England there are anadromous fish that we typically do not think of, like shad and Atlantic salmon, so he feels it would be nationwide program.
- Board member Swanson asked about staff’s capacity to manage more projects. Director Manlow stated it would be a challenge for staff and for sponsors to come up with meaningful projects, noting that as a regional organization and lead entity we are already capacity challenged. He also noted that sponsors have capacity challenges as well.

Ms. Smee presented the 2022 LCFRB meeting schedule to the Board. Board members approved the schedule.

2022 LCFRB Meeting Schedule	
1/7/2022	Proposed cancel
2/4/2022	
3/4/2022	
4/1/2022	
5/6/2022	
6/3/2022	
7/1/2022	Proposed cancel due to Independence holiday
8/5/2022	Review/Approval of Ranked Project List
9/2/2022	Proposed cancel due to Labor Day holiday
10/7/2022	
11/4/2022	
12/9/2022	Proposed 2nd Friday due to Thanksgiving holiday

Chairman Olson asked about the Landowner Initiative and where things stand with the work. Director Manlow stated that Ms. Smee has been working with the WA Salmon Coalition to set up a subcommittee for landowner engagement and the members of the committee have been confirmed.

Ms. Smee stated the subcommittee for the Landowner Initiative and will be meeting in February. In addition, she has had discussions with staff at the Conservation Commission on potential program changes to address concerns raised by landowners. She noted the Commission is working on a pilot project based around CREP in the Skagit that includes looking at changes to engage more landowners. Director Manlow stated staff will work with Board member Wilson to finalize the report so it can be distributed.

BUSINESS MEETING

Item #1 Consent Agenda

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

Item #2 Approve Salmon Recovery Grant Manual and Authorize Opening 2022 Grant Round

Director Manlow presented the item to the Board, and noted staff is recommending adoption of our 2022 Salmon Recovery Grants Manual as it has been updated, and is requesting authorization to open the 2022 grant round, and make up to 10% of regional allocation available for monitoring projects. He explained that this year staff has folded in the CRR grant round as discussed at the last meeting. From a fiscal standpoint, these will be pass through dollars from PCSRF and CRR. He noted there is a potential for an increase in project dollars.

Director Manlow explained that each year we go through the process of re-visiting the grant round - staff talks with sponsors and TAC as a "lessons learned" review and adjusts approaches for the next grant round. Director Manlow walked through the key updates from the action summary, which are incorporated by reference.

Questions and comments from the Board:

- Chairman Olson asked Board member and TAC Chairman Salakory if he was comfortable with staff moving forward with the changes. Board member Salakory stated yes and added the TAC is comfortable with the recommendations in the manual. He added that staff would bring any concerns to the TAC and Board if necessary. Chairman Olson commended staff on their work to continually improve the grants manual.
- Board member Greenlee stated he wanted to commend staff as well on the consideration each year to improve the process.
- Board member Weber asked what would be the evidence in a year to know how these changes improved the process. Director Manlow stated staff is making the process more streamlined. He noted that we rely on feedback from the TAC, sponsors, Review Panel and RCO on the process to know if it has been improved from the previous year. Board member Salakory added that success would mean that you we had enough good projects that pass the state review panel as fundable, and all organizations, including the LCFRB, had spent less personnel time on preparing those grant applications and presentations. He indicated he is seeing the efficiency by putting in less time and still delivering high quality projects that are funded and implemented.
- Board member Weber stated the number of sponsors seem to be less than it was ten years ago. Board member Salakory noted that cultivating and increasing the sponsor base and capacity has been a perennial problem, especially when funding amounts are unknown on a year to year basis. He added that he is conscious about increasing the sponsor base but is unsure how to do it.
- Director Manlow added staff has reviewed the grant manual annually for a long time and we are at a point going forward where it might behoove us to invest in some overall editing to see if we can translate a lot of it into more simple speak and be more direct and concise - not by changing the process, but rather how information is presented.

Board member Greenlee moved and Board member Mahnke seconded to recommend adopting the 2022 Salmon Recovery Grants Manual, authorize opening the 2022 grant round, and making up to 10% of the regional allocation available for monitoring projects. No discussion. Motion carried.

Item #3 Review and Approve the 2022 Annual Budget

Director Manlow introduced the item to the Board. He asked Ms. Smee to present the budget.

Ms. Smee reviewed the areas of the budget. She stated the 2022 budget revenue is based on unspent grant funds received during the prior year and anticipated grant awards in 2022. Ms. Smee stated the only capacity funding the Board receives is \$80,000 in Lead Entity and \$456,850 in Regional Organization funding each year from RCO. However, in 2022, we will have eight other funding sources including five new grants.

Ms. Smee highlighted the following areas of the budget:

- General Account Unreserved;
- General Account Reserved;
- Grants Unreserved;
- Grants Reserved;
- Salaries and Benefits;
- PTO Payout;
- Office and Operating;
- Professional Services; and,
- Small Grants Program.

Questions and comments from the Board:

- Board member Weber stated the SAO operates out of Vancouver so they shouldn't be charging for travel. Ms. Smee agreed but there is a concern that some of the audit team members could be from the Olympia office.
- Board member Unger asked if the SAO has their own budget. Ms. Smee stated yes, but when the SAO performs an audit, they charge for their services. She added that the Board gets audited every other year and is expected to have a Performance Audit Spring 2022 for the calendar years 2020 and 2021.
- Board member Greenlee stated the City of Washougal has an audit every year due to the amount they spend in federal funding and every year there is a different auditor assigned.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

At 1:55 p.m., Chairman Olson called for the Board to adjourn into Executive Session for 15 minutes, and stated the Board would reconvene at 2:10 p.m. All staff and members of the public exited the call for the executive session.

At 2:10 p.m., the Board reconvened from Executive Session.

Board member Greenlee moved and Board member Swanson seconded adopt the calendar year 2022 Combined Budget with modifications. No discussion. Motion carried.

Chairman Olson stated as a follow up to the Executive Session, he will be following up with Director Manlow directly in an individual conversation.

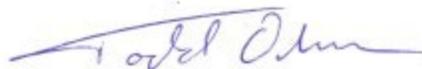
GOOD OF THE ORDER:

- Chairman Olson announced that this will be Paul Greenlee’s last meeting as a Board member. He thanked Board member Greenlee for his participation and engagement outside of meetings. Mr. Greenlee stated this has been a wonderful experience and he appreciates the level of commitment, engagement, and professionalism the board and staff bring to the LCFRB.
- Happy holidays!

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

/lc

Approved in open session on 02/04/22.



Signed: _____

Todd Olson, Chairman