



Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board

February 4, 2022
Board Meeting
Conference Call/Webinar

Final Minutes
Approved: April 1, 2022

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

Absent: Gary Medvigy and Ann Rivers. Chairman Olson excused the absent members.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS: No announcements were made.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- Chairman Olson stated that public comment will be added to the end of the agenda.

PARTNER REPORTS:

Erik Neatherlin, GSRO Director gave an update on statewide initiatives and the legislative session, highlighting the following:

- The update to the Governor's Statewide Salmon Strategy has been released. He noted that Governor Locke put a salmon strategy in place in 1999, called *Extinction Is Not an Option*, and that it hasn't been updated in any substantial manner since then. He explained that the strategy is now 20 years old, and that the GSRO has embarked on the process to update it over the last 18-24 months. He explained that the old strategy doesn't encompass emerging needs such as climate change, predation, orca recovery, and the need to address fisheries, including obligations for Tribes. He noted that based on the 2020 State of the Salmon report, as much as 70% of the threatened and endangered salmon are not making progress or are in crisis mode. He highlighted the following focus areas for the update:
 - Protect and restore vital salmon habitat. This includes fully funding recovery plans, looking at regulatory backstops, and improving riparian habitat;
 - Investing in clean water infrastructure. Focus on fixing fish passage barriers and gaining access to historical habitat;
 - Building climate resiliency through enhancing the adaptive capacity of natural systems and ensuring clean cold water as well as reducing greenhouse gases;
 - Aligning harvest, hatchery, and hydro power with salmon recovery, and working with and honoring the co-manager process between the State and Tribes;
 - Addressing predation in the Columbia River and across the state;
 - Enhancing commitments and coordination between GSRO, agencies, and recovery boards;
 - Committing to science in order to get the outcomes we want to achieve; and,
 - Additional items that were not in the original strategy, including honoring Tribes and their unique role, ensuring our federal partners are at the table, and addressing environmental justice, diversity, and equity.
- Mr. Neatherlin explained that the Governor's strategy formed the basis for his 2022 legislative agenda, which addresses the following:

- Riparian habitat and protection for \$124M. This includes a riparian grant program administered by RCO.
- Clean water investments for \$9M.
- Addressing low flows and cold water for \$6.7M.
- Harvest, monitoring and enforcement by increasing the quality and/or access to this information by the public for \$27M.
- Hatchery improvements for \$7M.
- Looking at hydropower actions for \$6M.
- Fish passage and prioritizing barriers for \$600K.
- Science, accountability, and implementation categories for \$6.5M.
- He also noted that the cornerstones of the Governors agenda included House Bill 1838 and Senate Bill 5272, called the Lorraine Loomis Act, and explained that HB 1653, which references GSRO and a salmon advisory cabinet, is currently stalled.

Questions and comments from the Board:

- Chairman Olson asked, what if any, proposed legislation is in conflict with the Governor’s strategy. Mr. Neatherlin responded that the Lorraine Loomis Act (House Bill (HB) 1838 and Senate Bill (SB) 5272) were a request by the Governor, submitted by his office. He noted that HB 1653 was introduced by Representative Lekanoff, but is stalled. He explained that HB 1117 is another bill that promotes salmon recovery through revisions to the state’s comprehensive planning framework, but was unsure whether the Governor has an official position on it.
- Board member Swanson stated that he has reviewed SB 5272 and noted it is a huge taking of land and added it would be detrimental to our work with landowners.
- Board member Wilson stated he has issues with HB 1838 because he is a landowner, and questioned whether people involved with this legislation realize the impacts on property owners. He also noted that he has serious concerns about the outrageous riparian management zones (RMZ) being proposed, and that he will have difficulty facing his constituents with this legislation going through. Mr. Neatherlin responded that the House and Senate have put this legislation aside and it is not going forward as it is currently drafted.
- Chairman Olson asked Mr. Neatherlin is he knew when the cut off dates are/were for proposed legislation. Mr. Neatherlin stated he was unsure of the date but thought it was this week. Board members Cothren and Weber stated the cutoff date was 2/3/2022 to leave the Committee of Origin.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Director Manlow provided a written report ahead of this meeting. He stated Mr. Neatherlin addressed some of the key legislative proposals that he was going to be cover. He added the following:

- Regarding HB 1838 and SB 5272, there were a lot of questions on the Lorraine Loomis Act regarding the regulatory piece and what it means to riparian landowners.
- HB 1117 is a carryover from last legislative session, and has been updated to call for coordination with regional recovery organizations.

Questions and comments from the Board:

- Board member Weber gave a “shout out” to Director Manlow and Steve West on their presentation to the Cowlitz County Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) and on the Collaborative working to improve sediment management in the Toutle Valley.

BUSINESS MEETING

Item #1 Consent Agenda

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

Item #2 Election of Vice Chair

Director Manlow presented the item to the Board. He stated with Paul Greenlee stepping down in December, the Board has a vacancy for the Vice Chairman. Chairman Olson stated for the record how much he appreciated Paul Greenlee's role and participation as Vice Chair over the last few years.

Chairman Olson opened the meeting for nominations:

- Board member Weber stated it was nice to see Board member Grose back, although not for the reason he is. Board member Weber nominated Board member Grose to serve as Vice Chairman since he has experience with the Board. Board member Grose stated he was going to nominate Board member Weber who is on the Finance Committee.
- Board member Grose stated for the record that this will be his last year on the Board. The Vice Chairman position will need to be filled again at the end of the year.
- Board member Mahnke nominated Board member Grose.
- Chairman Olson asked Board member Grose if he would be willing to serve this year as Vice Chairman. Board member Grose accepted.

Board member Weber moved and Board member Salakory seconded to approve the Board's nomination for Vice Chairman. No discussion. Motion carried.

Item #3 Update on the 2022 Annual Report

Director Manlow stated in the past, he has done a long written report. He noted that this year, Ms. Johnson took the initiative by working with staff to modernize the Board's reporting and used a visual platform. Director Manlow asked Ms. Johnson to present to the Board.

Ms. Johnson stated staff has been working to move from the planning phase of the recovery program to a progress reporting phase by sharing the information with the Board and our recovery partners across the state. She noted that we are working to answer the following questions:

- What progress are we making in terms of viability improvements relative to our recovery goals for our salmon and steelhead populations?
- Where are we in terms of threat reduction targets for an all H Recovery Plan?

Ms. Johnson walked through the online report. The 2021 Annual Report link is available on the Board's website located at <https://www.lcfrb.gen.wa.us/copy-of-watershed-planning-1>. Ms. Johnson stated this is our first attempt at an annual report and that we are open to suggestions on how to improve the story map to convey information.

Questions and comments from the Board:

- Chairman Olson stated this was a job well done. He asked the members of the Board to take some time to review and offer any suggestions to staff.

Director Manlow asked Ms. Smee to walk through some of the changes that have been made to the Board's website. Ms. Smee walked the Board through the website online stating that we are trying to make it a more useful tool to find information. Ms. Smee added that our website has a lot of information on it because we work with 82 different partners in our Recovery Plan.

Ms. Smee highlighted some of the new tabs on the webpage:

- Under Programs, there is a new Monitoring page including links to reports;
- The Library section is a work in progress. Once we have updated the section, staff would like to work with partners so they know where to find information. Ms. Smee encouraged members to cruise around the website, think about something you might be looking for, then try to find it. Ms. Smee would be interested to know if you were able to locate the information and if it was easy or difficult. She asked Board members for feedback;
- Under Habitat Studies, the Habitat Studies and Watershed Assessment Reports have been included in one section; and,
- Under SalmonPORT, this is where the regional habitat strategy is located, as well as map and project data. We are moving our project information to the statewide Salmon Recovery Portal (SRP) and will add the link once it has been completed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Chairman Olson opened the meeting for public comment asking speakers to limit their comments to three minutes per person.

Robert Sudar: Mr. Sudar stated in terms of the Governor's salmon plan, it has been very hard for members in the commercial fishing industry to get any detail. He stated the plan has \$16.7M assigned to buy out commercial fisheries on the river, and it is really frustrating. He noted there has been talk of license reduction efforts with WDFW, but this bill was not developed in conjunction with their fishery members. He explained that the commercial fleet is not a risk to salmon recovery and there is a lot information to support that conclusion. He stated that gill netters stay within all of their guidelines, from the state to the National Marines Fisheries Service (NMFS), and provide hundreds of thousands, and in some years millions, of meals to the public. He explained that they have the smallest share of the ESA impacts as well.

Mr. Sudar stated he would like Mr. Neatherlin address the following questions:

1. Why do they think this is important for salmon recovery when commercial fishers don't pose any threat to salmon recovery? Mr. Neatherlin responded stating that the \$16.7M encompasses two pieces, to purchase the inactive and active licenses. He stated this would be a voluntary program, and purchase would not be required.
2. There was mention that along with buying out the licenses, there was a reduction in the state share of impacts based on licenses that were bought out. He noted that impacts aren't owned by the state - they are determined by NMFS and are available to all user groups. Mr. Neatherlin responded that there is language in the proviso for extinguishing or reducing some of the allocation based on the purchase of licenses. He stated he would follow up with Mr. Sudar on those details.
3. Why does that state think they cannot let someone else use those impacts? Mr. Neatherlin stated that in some of the materials that have been circulated, there is mention of alternative gear but there is no funding in this budget item.

Mr. Sudar stated this is a real concern to those he represents, and asked why the state would spend this much of the public's money to buy out an industry that is working for the public and providing no risk to salmon recovery. He added that the amount is almost 10% of the Governor's budget plan, and that while he realizes it's voluntary, the proposed plan is much different than what was agreed to with WDFW. Mr. Neatherlin agreed this is much different than what the agency submitted. Mr. Neatherlin stated he would like to have WDFW in the conversation as well as someone from OFM to discuss the details. Mr. Sudar stated he would send Mr. Neatherlin his email address so a meeting could be arranged.

Brice Divine: Mr. Divine introduced himself as a commercial fisher on the river and advisor (to the department) regarding license reductions. He stated he was blindsided by the legislation and would like to have a conversation with Mr. Neatherlin to find out what they want to accomplish and what the voluntary language really means. Mr. Divine stated he would send his contact information to Director Manlow.

Jerry Katt: Mr. Katt introduced himself as a retired fish biologist with ODFW. He stated he received a news release regarding the open position of Lewis County Citizen Representative for the LCFRB. He stated he lives in Rochester WA which is located in Thurston County and asked if his residential location prohibits him from submitting his resume to the LCFRB. Chairman Olson stated he would follow up with staff.

GOOD OF THE ORDER:

- Director Manlow stated he wanted to address the license buy back noting that staff has questions and concerns on this well. He explained that the overall goal of our federally adopted Recovery Plan is to recovery fish while maintaining viable tribal, commercial, and recreational fisheries. He explained that he understood the program was intended to establish a buyback program that would right size the fleet for voluntary sellers to make it more economically viable to participate in commercial fisheries. He noted that it is now represented in the Governor's budget as a conservation measure and that is not the original intent.
- Chairman Olson thanked everyone for their engagement.
- Chairman Olson thanked Board member Grose for accepting the Vice Chairman position.
- Chairman Olson acknowledged the amount of work in store for Board member Salakory and the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) on the upcoming grant round.

The meeting adjourned at 2:20 p.m.

/lc

Approved in open session on _____

Signed: _____

Todd Olson, Chairman