

Lead Entity Advisory Group (LEAG) Report

Salmon Recovery Funding Board meeting

December 5, 2006

Reflections on Round 7 and Recommendations for Round 8

LEAG has been discussing how Round 7 has been progressing and plans to have a conference call on Dec. 11 to start developing recommendations for Round 8. We began the discussion at our November meeting. Some key points we covered were:

- The critical need to start the SRFB round earlier next year so that there is more time for the lead entities and project sponsors to develop and submit their list of projects and more time for IAC staff to coordinate the state's review of the lists.
- Potential policy clarification needs related to SRFB policies and Review Panel/staff interpretation of policies.
- Questions about how regional allocations would be determined for the next round.

At our December conference call we will be working on a list of recommended decision points that it would be important for the SRFB to address at next year's January and March meetings. Our hope would be that Round 8 policies could be finalized in the March meeting in order to enable an earlier start to the Round.

We greatly appreciated the offer from IAC Salmon Grants Manager Rollie Geppert to provide LEAG with a draft 8th round schedule to discuss in our Dec. 11 conference call. We feel this will help reduce potential conflicts and enable LEAG and IAC staff to develop a joint 8th round schedule proposal for SRFB to review and adopt.

LEAG organization and structure

LEAG is discussing reorganizing its structure and decision making process. The discussion began with the training workshop last summer and has continued over the next three LEAG meetings. We are looking at expanding LEAG membership from the current structure of 9 appointed members to 26 members – one for each lead entity area. This is to help ensure all lead entities feel that they have an equal voice at the table when LEAG is making important recommendations in its advisory capacity. It also is a reflection of the fact that the new Council of Regions is filling the role of representing the salmon recovery regions across the state and LEAG's role can now be more focused on representing the views of Lead Entities across the state. We are also working to increase the communication lines with the Council of Regions so that we can try to develop common viewpoints where possible.

LEAG is also discussing its decision-making process to see if there is any way we would like to recommend revising it to ensure that we are accurately and fairly representing the views of lead entities across the state while at the same time being able to respond quickly to requests for a LEAG opinion. We are discussing potential options with WDFW and we will be developing a white paper and talking about it again at our February 13 meeting.

State Permitting process – looking at opportunities to streamline

LEAG is interested in supporting the formation of a new committee to look at ways state permitting processes for salmon habitat projects could be streamlined. The timeline for permitting projects through the state and federal processes usually adds a year to the timeline for salmon habitat restoration projects. If this time period could be reduced it could help all of us focus more of SRFB's dollars on actual project work. We appreciate the work that the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office is doing to try to streamline the federal permitting process and we would like to launch an effort to look at opportunities in the state permitting process.

The proposed charge of this committee would be to collect and examine both positive and negative examples from project sponsors and lead entities across the state to look for common threads or specific places where state permitting processes could be improved. There would be a focus on constructive specific recommendations.

Members of the committee would include representatives of lead entities and project sponsors, regional recovery organizations, state permitting agency representatives, and a representative of the state Office of Regulatory Assistance. We are also open to other types of committee members that might be suggested.

Lead Entity Day at the Legislature – March 23, 2007

We are very excited to participate in the Lead Entity Legislative Day organized by WDFW for late March. We appreciate the work WDFW is doing to make that happen. It will be a great opportunity to educate our state legislators about the important role lead entities play in making sure high priority salmon habitat projects that are consistent with local community values get done in our local areas. We have also been discussing at LEAG ways that individual lead entities might be able to work with their local legislators to inform them of the work that is being completed in their districts and how the decisions they are facing this legislative session could impact future work.

Recognition of IAC Assistant Director Neil Aaland and his work with LEAG

We learned at our last meeting that Neil is leaving his position at IAC. We wanted to publicly recognize and thank him for the work he has done, especially the time he has spent attending LEAG meetings and working with LEAG to get feedback on IAC/SRFB activities.