

SALMON RECOVERY FUNDING BOARD MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING

October 16, 2009 • Natural Resources Building Room 172 • Olympia, Washington

SALMON RECOVERY FUNDING BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Steve Tharinger (Chair)	Clallam County
Harry Barber	Washougal
David Troutt	DuPont
Don "Bud" Hover	Okanogan County
Bob Nichols	Olympia
Carol Smith	Designee, Conservation Commission
Melissa Gildersleeve	Designee, Department of Ecology
Scott Anderson	Designee, Department of Transportation
Sara LaBorde	Designee, Department of Fish and Wildlife
Craig Partridge	Designee, Department of Natural Resources

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Chair Steve Tharinger opened the meeting at 9:06 a.m. Chair Tharinger determined that the board met quorum.

Kaleen Cottingham introduced Lucienne Guyot, the new Administrative Assistant for the Salmon and Conservation Sections.

Kaleen highlighted the following late additions to the board notebooks:

- Suggested amendment from the Conservation Commission for the August meeting minutes
- Draft minutes for the September special meeting
- Letter sent to Governor on behalf of the SRFB on Transforming the Natural Resources agencies
- Letter sent to Patty Murray about the Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery Fund

Chair Tharinger presented the agenda. The board approved the October 2009 agenda as presented.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 2009 MEETING MINUTES

Carol Smith suggested an additional change to the amended August minutes, changing "Conservation Districts" to "Conservation Commission" on page 20, item #12, paragraph five.

Bud Hover MOVED to approve the August minutes as amended. Bob Nichols SECONDED. The board APPROVED the August 13-14, 2009 minutes as amended.

David Troutt MOVED to approve the September minutes as presented. Bud Hover SECONDED. The board APPROVED the September minutes as presented.

ITEM #1: MANAGEMENT STATUS REPORT

Kaleen Cottingham, RCO Director, presented this agenda item.

Kaleen Cottingham asked if board members had questions about the content of the management report. The board did not have any questions.

Kaleen noted that RCO Policy Specialist Megan Duffy is conducting an assessment for Substitute House Bill 2157, an effort to examine coordination between Lead Entities and the Watershed Planning Units. The assessment report is due to the Governor's office on December 1, 2009.

Kaleen provided an update on the status of the effort to reform the Natural Resources agencies. RCO bundled a series of letters from each of the boards and submitted them to the Natural Resources subcabinet. Bob Nichols noted that the cabinet is reviewing external comments, and two or three subcabinet meetings have been scheduled. He stated that recommendations based on submitted comments would be ready by December. Chair Tharinger asked if regions and lead entities have provided comments to the committee. Kaleen responded that regions commented in a letter signed by Executive Director of the Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board and Council of Regions member, Jeff Breckel. She added that Phil Miller created a document to help regions and lead entities respond, and that the GSRO would be submitting its own comments as part of the RCO package.

ITEM #2: SALMON RECOVERY MANAGEMENT REPORT

Brian Abbott, Salmon Section Manager; Phil Miller, Governor's Salmon Recovery Office; Ken Dzinbal, Monitoring Forum Coordinator; and Rachael Langen, Deputy Director presented this agenda item.

Grant Management and Project Presentations

Brian Abbott gave an overview of the 2009 grant round, noting that the grant round commenced in March, slightly earlier than previous years. The Review Panel met on September 28 and 29 to evaluate 177 proposed projects, 45 of which were requesting Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration Funding. The review resulted in 58 projects of concern (POCs). This year, the Review Panel chose not use the Need More Information (NMI) category, which explains the increased number of POCs. The panel met with each of the Salmon Recovery Regions for presentations on proposed projects during the week of October 12. Discussions with the regions answered many of the Review Panel's questions, resulting in the number of POCs being cut in half. This total is similar to past years. Brian stated that this year's project review went well, and applications were cleaner than in past grant rounds.

Brian added that the RCO is updating their metrics in the PRISM database to comply with federal Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery Fund (PCSRF) requirements. Staff is preparing to roll out a progress report module in PRISM, which will help produce more complete final reports.

Tara Galuska and Jason Lundgren, Salmon Outdoor Grant Managers, gave project presentations. Tara presented the Nisqually Estuary Restoration project. The \$2.4 million dollar Nisqually project is the largest grant that the Salmon Recovery Funding Board has ever given to a project. The funds came out of collaboration among several lead entities.

When the project is completed, it will open up over 700 acres of estuarine habitat, 37 acres of surge plain, and 264 acres of newly created freshwater habitat.

Bud Hover asked whether removing one dike and creating another dike to protect the freshwater habitat is creating artificial habitat, or if it is correcting the construction that was done in the past. Tara responded that historically, the area was all estuary and the current construction is a compromise to protect the refuge, including the trail, historic barns, and multiple uses of the land.

Chair Tharinger asked Tara to outline where the old dike used to be. Tara traced the old dike on the map of the Nisqually Refuge in the project presentations.

David Troutt, Nisqually Tribe, added the project is opening 22 miles of slough habitat. Project construction was completed at the end of September. The Nisqually Wildlife Refuge will hold a public ceremony on November 12, 2009. David thanked the board, and noted that their hypothesis is that this action will double the survival of fall Chinook in the Nisqually River. Chair Tharinger asked about monitoring efforts associated with the Nisqually. David responded that finding money to do monitoring is difficult, but the tribe is working with the United State Geological Survey (USGS), which will be contributing to monitoring efforts. Bud Hover asked if they had good baseline data. David responded yes. Scott Anderson added that estuary restoration projects lend themselves well to the assisting with the natural return of native habitat because there is generally a strong dormant seed source for saltwater marsh so restoration of native vegetation occurs very quickly.

Jason Lundgren presented the Cashmere Pond Off-Channel project, sponsored by Chelan County. The project built a 1,200-foot channel and improved a 2-acre pond for off-channel rearing for threatened species in the lower Wenatchee basin. The goal is to prevent fish stranding and improve water quality. The project cost \$282,555, and included partners from the Bonneville Power Administration, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the Department of Transportation.

David Troutt asked if they found warm water fish. Jason responded that they did find catfish and a couple other non-native warm water fish. The project was recently completed, and the County expects the project to provide cool water summer habitat for salmonid populations. Tara Galuska presented the Little Quilcene Delta Cone Removal, sponsored by the Hood Canal Coordinating Council. This project was funded by Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR). The project was proposed and approved for funding at the August board meeting. Tara explained that delta cones are an unnatural buildup of sediment at the mouth of the river, caused by manmade dikes. Bud Hover asked why the delta cone was removed when the river is moving naturally. Tara responded that removing the delta cone allows the reestablished fresh water channels to move freely in the estuary. Richard Brocksmith, Lead Entity Coordinator for the Hood Canal, added that the project came in \$300,000 under budget.

Governor's Salmon Recovery Office

Kaleen noted that Phil is filling in as the interim team leader, while the search for a GSRO Director continues. Phil explained that the transition to RCO has gone smoothly, and said that he wanted to highlight a few things on his report.

First was the 2008 Federal Columbia River Power System Biological Opinion (FCRPS BiOp). In September, the federal defendants filed additional documents that respond to questions raised by Judge Redden. These documents include a more extensive Adaptive Management Implementation Plan and an Estuary Habitat Memorandum of Agreement with the State of Washington. Washington is a defendant intervener in the challenge to the 2008 FCRPS Biological Opinion. The parties to the litigation are awaiting further ruling by Judge Redden.

Phil explained that in September, the Obama Administration (federal defendants) submitted new materials to Judge Redden. Also, an MOU with Washington was signed, which provided supporting work in the estuary below Bonneville Dam. At this point, there is continued dialogue between the defendants and plaintiffs about that material, and the judge has yet to rule.

Implementation is proceeding, which is important to each of the four Columbia Basin regions. The estuary agreement is particularly significant to recovery work the Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board. The implementation of the biological opinion (BiOp) also highlights the Upper Columbia, Snake River, and Tucannon River.

Phil also discussed the Mid-Columbia Steelhead plan that was adopted by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in late September. This plan is the first of three. These plans are significant because they allow us to look at interdependencies across the state. Bud Hover asked who is coordinating the multi-state plans. Phil responded that plans focus on evolutionarily significant units (ESU) areas, and NOAA as a convener. The Regional Implementation Oversight Committee is overseeing the BiOp.

Bud expressed concern that the Upper Columbia's success heavily depends on other states engaging in the recovery process. He wants to ensure that other states are contributing financially to salmon recovery. He asked if other states' PCSRF funds would be spent in a coordinated way that helps Washington meet our goals. Phil responded that each state has an individual approach, and they are still working on unifying efforts, particularly outside of the BiOp.

Bob asked Phil how much effort other states are putting into the recovery effort. Phil responded that coordinated efforts have improved from the beginning of the salmon recovery effort. Chair Tharinger noted that it's the GSRO's role be the spokesperson, tracking the issues and commitments. Phil agreed that looking at interdependencies across states spotlights who is taking action and who is not. Harry Barber agreed with Bud that it would be interesting to see how Idaho and Oregon's funds allocated to salmon recovery compare to Washington State. Phil responded that there is information about PCSRF funding that goes into the report by NOAA, and that by November, the board will have a financial report from each of the regions. The information can be taken to the other states to ask questions about equal effort among the other states.

Bob Nichols explained that GSRO and Washington have led the way, in terms of funding and resources, and that NOAA is pushing from the top down to other states. Phil responded that other states have committed to staying the course by attending multistate forums, so there is a point of information exchange and a place to ask pressing questions. However, the interactions are dependent on receiving funding and maintaining staff capacity. Chair Tharinger directed Phil to ask the board for any necessary letters of support to move this effort forward.

Phil concluded his update with the announcement that there is a transition in leadership at the Washington Coast Sustainable Salmon Partnership (WCSSP). Miles Batchelder is the interim director for the WCSSP.

Monitoring Forum

Ken Dzinbal, Executive Coordinator for the Forum on Monitoring, noted that the Forum last met on September 11. At that meeting, they adopted business rules, high-level indicators for salmon, and categories for high-level indicators for watershed health. The Forum agreed to invite two new members to join the Forum, the Bonneville Power Administration, and the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (CRITFC). Chair Tharinger said that he appreciates Ken's and the Forum's work on indicators. He found the monitoring memo to be very helpful. Bob Nichols asked how many listed salmon populations there are for the state that will be included in the fish abundance indicators. Sara LaBorde said that she would get a list sent to him. Bob noted that he wants to know how each population is measured. Ken responded that in his presentation, he will go over the statewide monitoring efforts and the indicators to orient everyone in the direction that the Forum is headed. The indicators do not provide a pathway to implementation, but do point things in the right direction and help to focus on the types of measurements that will be needed. It would be good to measure the majority of populations, but for now it needs to be a representative sample. The Department of Fish and Wildlife does a lot of work to determine which populations are most important for measurement. Having everyone agree to the same indicators should make measurement easier over time.

Bob clarified that the Salmonid Stock Inventory (SaSI) report, was a comprehensive report whereas the high level indicators provide a sample of statewide populations. The board discussed the purpose and utility of the indicators as being an accessible and unifying monitoring document.

David Troutt asked if the Forum is considering other viable salmonid population (VSP) parameters. Ken responded that the workgroup recognized that the VSP measures were difficult to explain to the public, and decided to focus on the simple question: "Are there more or fewer salmon?" Ken explained there is nothing in the Forum's charter that restricts them from looking at other VSP parameters. David responded that if the ultimate goal is delisting of populations, then reported measures need to support delisting criteria. Ken agreed.

Ken presented the high-level indicators for salmon that the Forum recently adopted. He also presented the watershed health indicators that are now proposed. The Forum has adopted six categories for the watershed indicators. He hopes that they will have defined the measures by December. The protocols need to be adopted by July 2010. Chair Tharinger noted that they would discuss funding later and invited comments on the indicators. He stated that he appreciates the work of the Forum.

Budget for Lead Entity Support

Rachael Langen gave a presentation on the status of supporting the lead entity program. On June 18, Governor Gregoire directed a 2 percent reduction in funding, which equates to \$49,000 for the RCO. RCO does not have much General Fund State money, but the lead entity contracts and administration make up about half of RCO's general fund state allocation. Lead entity contracts make up 42 percent and the administration is 6.5 percent.

When the most recent revenue forecast came out in September, OFM asked RCO to indicate where they could take potential additional cuts. A five percent cut for RCO is just over \$153,000, including nearly \$56,000 from the lead entity program. At this point, RCO feels confident that it can support the lead entity program, including the lead entity coordinator and training, through the end of the biennium.

David Troutt asked what was not covered for Lead Entity Advisory Group (LEAG) that the Department of Fish and Wildlife used to cover. Rachael responded food is no longer provided at meetings, and conference calls have replaced face-to-face gatherings.

Bob Nichols asked Rachael to send the board the table showing the budget breakdown from her presentation. Rachael distributed the table after the presentation.

ITEM #3: REPORTS FROM PARTNERS

Steve Martin, Executive Director of the Snake River Salmon Recovery Board presented the Council of Regions Report. Richard Brocksmitth provided the LEAG update.

Steve Martin, Executive Director of the Snake River Salmon Recovery Board, reviewed the written Council of Regions report.

- Regions were involved in the Forum on Monitoring's determination and approval of the high-level indicators.
- COR members acknowledged appreciation for the GSRO and RCO in their effort during the organizational transition, noting that the process has been seamless and transparent.
- Should the SRFB decide to revisit regional allocations, COR would like to be included in any such discussions.
- Steve mentioned a letter of support from all of the Regional Boards regarding the Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery Fund (PCSRF) to Senator Patty Murray from all of the regional salmon recovery regions.

Chair Tharinger thanked the regions for the letter to Senator Murray, since she is a key person in moving forward legislation. Kaleen added that RCO sent the letter to Rich Innes, RCO's contact in Washington, D.C., who is drafting a house delegation letter to the Senate and will use the information from COR letter and the board's letter.

Richard Brocksmitth mentioned that the Lead Entity Advisory Group (LEAG) focus has been operations, budgeting, and planning. LEAG updated the mission and structure document to reflect the administrative move from the Department of Fish and Wildlife to the Recreation and Conservation Office. LEAG is also taking a hard look at operations, tightening their belts, and using backfill funds to cover costs in short term. Richard noted the following cost saving changes to LEAG's general operations:

- Conference calls replacing in-person meetings
- Executive committee members not being reimbursed for travel
- No food at LEAG meetings
- Fewer staff requests to RCO

LEAG hopes that the cuts are a short-term belt tightening exercises.

Agency Updates

Department of Ecology, Melissa Gildersleeve

- Ecology is awaiting the announcement of a new director as Jay Manning was asked to serve as the Chief of Staff. Polly Zehm is the interim director.
- Ecology just finished their grant workshops.

Conservation Commission, Carol Smith

- The Commission is currently developing their annual report, which gives summaries of their programs.
- There was an increase in CREP participation. In total for the last 10 years, CREP has restored a total of 700 miles of riparian stream, around 12,000 acres. Some of the CREP projects partner with Salmon Recovery Funding Board sponsors for instream work and barrier removal.
- The Commission is also working on efforts in accountability, training districts to use data systems for implementation monitoring.

Department of Natural Resources, Craig Partridge

- Funding for the Forest & Fish Program recently ended. The program received \$4 million each year from PCSRF and supported a regulatory adaptive management program under the Cooperative Monitoring Evaluation and Research Program. The legislature put in its place a B&O tax mechanism on Forest Products businesses. The fund, which finances the science side of the program, is down and created a gap for this biennium. This has raised concerns about this funding approach.
- Commissioner Goldmark convened about 20-30 people for meeting to discuss adaptive management and Forest and Fish program.
- There will be a discussion next month about the budget shortfall, which may result in a supplemental budget request to the legislature for the near term and ideas for funding the science program long term.
- DNR is moving forward with the multispecies aquatic resources habitat conservation plan that has a lot of overlap with the Puget Sound initiative. That will be DNR's third major programmatic Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP).

Kaleen asked about the habitat conservation plan's impact on potential engineered logjams for state aquatic lands. The RCO has heard that sponsors are concerned they will be charged by DNR to carry out projects on aquatic lands. Craig had not heard that concern, but he will follow up with Kaleen.

Department of Transportation, Scott Anderson

- The Department of Transportation fish passage program completed 5 stand alone fish passage projects and corrected 11 barriers. Two other projects were shovel ready, but were pushed back to next summer due to construction difficulties. Scott offered to give a presentation at a future meeting.

In response to questions from Chair Tharinger and Bob Nichols, Scott explained that the fish passage project program started in 1991. There are funds set aside in a "retrofit" budget, which is used to correct barriers from a prioritized list of projects.

Department of Fish and Wildlife, Sara LaBorde

- Phil Anderson was appointed Director. Phil led the 21st Century Salmon effort, which she feels will bode well for aligning the department's activities with the Salmon Recovery Funding Board and regional recovery boards.
- WDFW is managing a \$5 million budget reduction due to the 2 percent cut.
- The Stream Habitat Restoration Guidelines were updated in 2001-02. Revising the guidelines will cost about \$97,000. The Puget Sound Partnership has \$74,000 in unused PSAR funds, and may be able to contribute \$50,000-60,000. WDFW is looking for partners to move the project forward. The revisions will include the large woody materials piece.
- In the Lower Columbia, WDFW is wrapping up an alternative gear study. They have installed a purse seine, a beach seine, and a merwin trap to see how well they can selectively harvest fall Chinook.
- WDFW established a Hatchery Scientific Review Group contract with RCO. HSRG is going to implement a 3-5 year project to study alternative gear fishing in the Columbia River.
- Lower Columbia Salmon Recovery Board will be releasing their draft plan that points to DFW's Conservation and Sustainable Fisheries Plan.

ITEM #4: DATES FOR 2010 MEETINGS

Rebecca Connolly, Board Liaison, presented this item.

Rebecca Connolly noted that statute requires the board to publish its meetings by January 1 of each year. Staff believes the board's work can be covered in four meetings, but will add conference calls or other special meetings if needed. If the budget allows, there are two travel meetings: Bellingham in May and Yakima in October. These may be moved to Olympia depending on the state's budget situation.

Dates	Location
February 18-19, 2010	Olympia
May 20-21, 2010	Bellingham
October 7-8, 2010	Yakima
December 9-10, 2010	Olympia

Bob asked if the board is obligated to hold two-day meetings, rather than just a long one-day meeting. Kaleen responded that the board generally plans for two-day meetings, but that once the agenda is set, can cancel the second day if everything is covered in the first day. The board also discussed the benefit of two-day meetings when project tours or extensive travel by board members is required.

Bud Hover MOVED to approve the proposed meetings schedule as presented and direct staff to make the appropriate notifications. David Troutt SECONDED.

The board APPROVED the motion unanimously.

ITEM #5: EARLY ROUND PUGET SOUND ACQUISITION AND RESTORATION GRANT AWARDS

Brian Abbott, Salmon Section Manager presented this agenda item.

Brian Abbott presented RCO's staff recommendation for the board to approve funding for projects #09-1446A, #09-1379C, #09-1482A and #09-1277R as part of an accelerated grant round in the Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) grant program. The Puget Sound Partnership's (Partnership) Recovery Council and Leadership Council have approved the projects, and each project underwent review by the board's technical review panel. Kaleen Cottingham added that these projects are consistent with the PSAR allocation among Lead Entities.

Chair Tharinger asked Brian to explain the special condition added by the review panel for #09-1446A, Kiket Island Conservation Acquisition. Brian referred to the review panel's concern about the long-term plans for the State Parks-owned property, and the potential impact to the nearshore environment caused by public access to the site. He stated that the public access issue was resolved by the special condition ensuring State Parks enforcement of day-use recreational activities on the acquired site.

Chair Tharinger asked if the Klein Farm Acquisition and Restoration; #09-1482A was an example of the need for policies that address the potential issues related to managing acquisitions with farmlands in rural counties.

Brian responded that RCO staff is reviewing acquisition policies and processes in the upcoming Manual 18 updates. Staff is examining the benefits of conservation easements as compared to fee simple. Brian explained that in the case of the Klein Farm Acquisition, the Stillaguamish Tribe provided a response to the concerns of the county agricultural boards. Kaleen added that RCO has a letter of record from the Tribe, and at the local level, the advisory committee is having some discussions about the issue.

Bud asked if the Klein Farm site were approved, if the land would be taken off the tax roll. Bud followed up that question by asking if local government had been consulted regarding the financial impact to the county; and how the land would be maintained. Grant Manager Kay Caromile noted that she is not aware of any tax issues, but she stated that she was aware of the Stillaguamish Tribe's maintenance intentions for the riparian zone. Bud Hover asked if tribal land ownership takes the property off the county's tax roll. Kay offered to find out the tax implications of the acquisition and follow up with Bud. Kaleen added that there will be deed restrictions on the property. David Troutt stated that since RCO is holding a deed of right on the land, it could not go into trust by the tribe. The land would be in a fee simple ownership, and eligible for being taxed, but at a lower level.

Chair Tharinger asked Brian if the policy goal is to open habitat restoration or preserve riparian areas while still allowing other uses of the land, such as agriculture.

Brian responded that the review panel analyzes the costs and benefits specific to each acquisition, noting that funding match often affects how upland areas are addressed.

Bud added that he wants to ensure that local governments are aware of the impact on taxes when land is moved from private ownership into a conservation easement held by a state agency.

Carol Smith asked Brian if some projects come in as acquisition projects, but are really combination projects with the restoration piece not quite ready. She would like to see better evaluation criteria for reviewing the projects, to ensure the best projects are funded.

Bud Hover MOVED to approve the funding for projects #09-1446A, Kiket Island Conservation Acquisition; #09-1379C, Klein Farm Acquisition and Restoration; #09-1482A, Skagit Bay Nearshore; and, #09-1277R, Qwuloolt Estuary Restoration – Construction. Bob Nichols SECONDED.

The board APPROVED the motion unanimously.

ITEM #6: NATIONAL FISH AND WILDLIFE FUND SMALL GRANT PROGRAM

NFWF Staff Cara Rose presented this agenda item.

Cara Rose gave a brief history and overview of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's (NFWF) Community Salmon Program. Since 2003, NFWF has funded 223 grants totaling \$3.4 million in SRFB dollars. She stated that they have had \$3 in match for every \$1 of board funds. The Community Salmon Fund program helps to build partnerships among the federal government, the state government, and local communities by funding small scale salmon recovery projects.

Cara stated that, based on discussions with RCO staff regarding fund availability, NFWF was asking the board to approve \$700,000 for the Community Salmon Fund program in fiscal year 2010. Cara stated that with the federal funds, the total funding for the program would be \$1.4 million. Federal funds cannot be used for administration, so the 10 percent administrative costs come from the state funds.

The 2010 SRFB budget would provide less than half of the past funding, so the Community Salmon Fund needed an alternative way of conducting the grant rounds. The proposed solution is to distribute funds according to a "regional options". Cara explained that the distribution of Community Salmon Funds was based on the SRFB allocations. However, that approach would allocate only \$25,000 to the Northeast Washington region. The regional directors and NFWF decided the minimum for running a grant round should be \$75,000. To get the \$75,000 in the NE, they subtracted 4.02 percent from each of the divided Puget Sound regions.

Bud Hover asked Cara about long-term monitoring of the funded projects. Cara responded that the program does not have the funds for long-term monitoring efforts, but that grantees that secured project funds in earlier grant rounds can request funding for maintenance and monitoring projects. The implementation monitoring is providing baseline data.

Bud Hover asked if the Community Salmon Fund program is working with the Regional Salmon Recovery Boards. Cara responded that NFWF works with lead entities to provide technical input into prioritizing projects. Bud Hover recommended notifying the regions of Community Salmon Projects in their area for regional monitoring efforts.

Bud Hover MOVED to approve \$700,000 to fund the Community Salmon Fund program for fiscal year 2010, with funds distributed according to the regional area option presented to the board in October 2009. Bob Nichols SECONDED.

The board unanimously APPROVED the motion.

ITEM #7: MONITORING FORUM RECOMMENDATIONS ON SRFB-FUNDED MONITORING

Ken Dzinbal, Monitoring Forum Coordinator, presented this item. Jennifer O'Neal, Mara Zimmerman, and Paul Cereghino provided additional information as requested by the board.

Ken Dzinbal presented the Monitoring Forum's funding and monitoring recommendations, which they prepared in response to a request from the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB). The recommendations are intended to answer the following questions:

- Is the SRFB funding the correct monitoring programs?
- Have we learned enough to revise or update technical design, sampling details, or general monitoring program details?
- Can we improve the timing of funding cycles, avoid last-minute requests, and improve stability of long-term programs?

Ken then explained that purpose of the four main types of monitoring: implementation; effectiveness; intensively monitored watersheds; and status and trends

Bob Nichols asked about the implementation monitoring done by RCO Staff. Kaleen directed the question to Brian Abbott, who explained that after a project is closed, a grant manager develops a final report in PRISM to ensure project completion and a final inspection of the work. This information is stored in PRISM.

Effectiveness Monitoring

Ken explained how the board currently approaches effectiveness monitoring through a contract with TetraTech.

Chair Tharinger asked are there feedback loops in the effectiveness monitoring to improve the design and development of new projects. Ken responded that data are being shared to some extent, but the Forum's workgroup does not think it is sufficient. One of the workgroup's proposals will help make monitoring data more accessible to grant managers and project sponsors.

Bud Hover asked how project effectiveness is measured. Ken responded that there are different measurements for different types of projects. Bud Hover asked about the measurements for engineered logjams. Jennifer O'Neal of Tetra Tech responded that the measurements include the number of juvenile fish that are using the structure, amount of pool refuge before and after construction, and the amount of large woody debris in the stream.

Chair Tharinger noted that the board needs to consider how the monitoring information is distributed in the salmon recovery community. Ken agreed and suggested finding innovative ways to maintain the information without printing expensive reports.

The Forum provided a list of recommendations for project effectiveness monitoring:

1. Stay the course, with some adjustments to current contract
2. Finish out original project schedule and sampling matrix
3. Improve adaptive management outreach to project sponsors and lead entities
4. Forum should develop a statewide (multi-agency) approach to effectiveness monitoring

5. Migrate reach-scale effectiveness monitoring data to an existing state database

Board members discussed recommendation #3, to improve outreach, as well as the need to share the information by project. In response to a question from Chair Tharinger, Jennifer O'Neal explained that the information collected by TetraTech is viewed by category, not by project. David Troutt and Sara LaBorde suggested that the Habitat Work Schedule (HWS) is a web-based application that could share monitoring data. Ken and Jennifer responded that someone would need to evaluate how to get the monitoring information into HWS and posted to a website.

Bob Nichols asked how the board moves the Forum's recommendation to develop a statewide (multi-agency) approach to effectiveness monitoring forward. Ken responded that the Forum suggested that the board award a contract, costing no more than \$50,000, for a consultant to organize and synthesize the current monitoring data. Bob Nichols asked if the partners who will benefit from this will contribute, or if they will also need their own consultant. Ken responded that the board could ask for funding partners through the Forum and reach the Northwest Power and Conservation Council, the Puget Sound Partnership, and the tribes. He explained that if the board made the first step to support funding, it would encourage other parties' involvement. Bob Nichols suggested making the funding contingent on securing funding from other sources. Ken agreed.

Carol referred to Bob's question about what other agencies could provide funding and reminded the board that many agencies will freely provide staff time to provide data to the consultant. She also responded to Bud Hover's earlier question of how project effectiveness is being measured, noting this was a good question because what is being measured and how (i.e., monitoring protocols) differ among agencies. Chair Tharinger asked if her agency is willing to get on board. Carol answered that her agency is willing to participate, but in the past when the Conservation Commission released their plan for effectiveness monitoring, they did not receive responses. She stated that it could be related to the lack of common metrics, and people not knowing how to respond to the data.

Bud Hover added that it seems as though each of the regions and agencies are not openly sharing data. He would like to see a common language and purpose behind the monitoring efforts. Ken explained that is why the Forum is suggesting hiring someone to review all the data. Bob Nichols suggested submitting a recommendation for the \$50,000 for the consultant to the Natural Resources Reform committee to integrate it into their plan for later next year.

Harry Barber asked about the practical value of monitoring versus an academic exercise. He asked if the people who do the monitoring communicate with the people in the field, and if monitoring activities influence field work. Chair Tharinger encouraged audience members to think about responses to Harry's questions.

Ken noted that the Monitoring Forum represents 28 different organizations, and it would serve all 28 members organizations and agencies to have a consultant review current monitoring data.

Intensively Monitored Watersheds

Ken then discussed intensively monitored watersheds (IMWs), noting that it is the only type of monitoring that tells whether restoration results in more salmon. He listed three key questions for IMWs:

- Does habitat restoration produce more fish?
- Can we identify the most effective restoration efforts?
- What are the actual cause-effect relationships between habitat restoration and fish production?

To answer the key questions, the Forum recommended that the board continue project implementation monitoring for PCSRF funded projects with 2009 funds. The forum also presented the following recommendations:

- The board needs to determine whether the current IMWs are areas in which to continue investing.
- Connect IMW Monitoring staff with lead entities and regions to improve implementation of IMWs.
- The Forum should assist the board in improving the IMW program and in assessing whether to continue funding.

Chair Tharinger asked Ken about what the Forum needs from the board. Ken responded that he would like to see Intensively Monitored Watersheds (IMWs) factored into the board's review of proposed projects, and would like to see the review panel have a chance to ask about the IMW treatment's role in the review process. Ken invited Bill Ehinger, from the Department of Ecology, to help answer the board's questions about the priorities of the IMW program.

David Troutt noted that perhaps IMWs are not aligning with the primary objective of addressing high priority areas. Craig Partridge added that the board and the Forum might need help from the federal government with saving the fish and setting up the monitoring requirements. The board discussed the nexus of project prioritization and the information gathered by IMWs, and whether the board should continue funding IMWs when they are not in the highest priority areas. Bill Ehinger explained the successes and challenges of the four complexes: the Skagit, Strait of Juan de Fuca, Hood Canal, and the Lower Columbia. The current sites were chosen with the consideration of time and money, building on existing monitoring efforts; which were not necessarily highest on the recovery lists.

Ken asked the board to send him their questions so that he could make them available to discuss at the IMW workshop. Harry responded that he wants to hear Ken and Bill to give recommendations rather than have a workshop. Kaleen expressed concern that the board would not have time to discuss this issue before Ecology begins work in March of 2010.

Status and Trends

Ken introduced Mara Zimmerman to help discuss the Department of Fish and Wildlife's Fish-In/Fish-Out program (fish status and trends monitoring). Ken explained that Fish-In/Fish-Out is the only program currently supporting the high level indicators for salmon. The Forum recommends that the board continue their support of the program.

Ken concluded with the forum's final recommendation for status and trends monitoring: for the board to support the development of a landscape scale habitat remote sensing program. He explained this recommendation is a priority of the forum for the last several years and a priority of the Comprehensive Monitoring Strategy. It would fill a significant gap at the watershed level. The Department of Fish and Wildlife has been a longtime proponent of the program, and noted that Fish and Wildlife is prepared to come back in December with a proposal for the board.

David Troutt asked Ken how the development of a landscape scale habitat remote sensing program lines up with the watershed characterization work that the Department of Ecology and the Puget Sound Partnership are currently working on in the Puget Sound. Ken responded that the Partnership recently started a process to describe how they would characterize watersheds in Puget Sound. Melissa Gildersleeve offered to get Ken in touch with the point persons from Ecology.

Sara LaBorde added that she is meeting with Josh Baldi (Ecology) and Chris Townsend (Partnership) at the end of October, and one of the topics is to ensure watershed characterization and IMWs are aligned. The goal of the meeting is provide feedback to the board for how does the IMW run into the watershed's characterization and how does it connect to local governments' shoreline management updates.

Nearshore Monitoring

Paul Cereghino gave a detailed overview of the Nearshore Monitoring Recommendations and announced that there is an RFP going out for developing nearshore monitoring protocols.

Kaleen asked if Ken would be coming back to the board today or in December to approve the \$50,000 that was held by the board in 2008 for the request for proposals. Ken responded that he would come back in December.

Ken concluded his presentation with a summary of the Forum's review for the Monitoring Forum, answering a few of the key questions proposed by the board at previous meetings, as well as the total monitoring funding requests. Chair Tharinger thanked Ken for his presentation, and his work and the work of the Forum.

Bob stated that if the board approved the \$50,000 for a consultant on effectiveness monitoring, then the board should receive a follow up report on the progress. He would also like to see a letter from the chair of the Forum in support of the contractor's work.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Richard Brocksmith, LEAG Chair and Lead Entity Coordinator for Hood Canal, noted that the board is focusing heavily on state sponsored monitoring. He suggested that the statewide strategy should include smaller organizations and sponsors.

Chair Tharinger noted that this could be a change within Manual 18 to expand the monitoring data set by allowing citizen participation. The Chair noted that they first need to have a common set of protocols.

Richard added that the Habitat Work Schedule should be used for mapping progress in recovery areas.

Jeff Breckel, Executive Director of the Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board, suggested taking what agencies and organizations are doing now, and make their processes more efficient incrementally and over time. He also would like to have monitoring programs ask why some projects are not effective: was it the wrong technology, wrong design, or the system approach?

Chair Tharinger noted that there should be some common language to standardize monitoring efforts.

Bob Nichols asked Jeff if he is telling the board not to spend the \$50,000. Jeff responded that the board should focus on improving the efficiencies among agencies and be realistic about their expectations for the \$50,000 investment in coordinating monitoring efforts.

Harry asked how long-term implementation monitoring was done. He also questioned whether it would be more cost effective for sponsors to monitor projects instead of TetraTech, noting it also could provide a larger sample size. Brian responded that RCO staff does check the projects through other site visits or through local sponsors. Brian also explained that sponsors are eligible under their administrative costs to conduct implementation monitoring.

David noted that he hears Harry asking for a deliverable from the \$50,000 to maximize sample size, which would include using groups on the ground to increase sample size. Chair Tharinger responded that the board would need to discuss David's proposal because it is a policy change.

Chair Tharinger noted that he would like to have a motion to approve the \$568,000 for the October request, with the RCO director to allocate and do contracts as discussed.

David Troutt MOVED to approve \$568,000 as presented for contracts to be signed by the Director. Bud Hover SECONDED.

Bob Nichols asked for a letter of support from Chair Tharinger, on behalf of the Salmon Recovery Funding Board, and a report six months after the contract has been issued indicating how the board understands the funds will be used as part of the Natural Resources reorganization. Kaleen responded that she would like to see Ken estimate the timeline for the report. Chair Tharinger noted that Bob's suggestion was not part of the motion.

The board unanimously APPROVED the motion.

ITEM #8: DISCUSSION OF UPCOMING POLICY CHANGES

Dominga Soliz, Policy Specialist, and Brian Abbott, Salmon Section Manager, presented this agenda item

Scope Changes for Acquisition Projects

Dominga Soliz briefed the board on the proposal to change the process for scope changes for acquisition projects. The policy change is intended to clarify the definition of a "major" scope change. RCO held a stakeholder meeting, submitted a memo for public comment, and is currently collecting comments on the memo.

Craig Partridge asked if this is the same issue as Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program discussed a few years ago. Kaleen confirmed that it is the same issue and explained that that RCO is going to bring a policy for both Recreation and Conservation Funding Board and Salmon Recovery Funding Board. She added that the next recommendation will be criteria for the board's sub-committee.

Puget Sound Partnership (Partnership) Alignment

Dominga explained that there are three elements to the alignment.

- The initial proposal asks sponsors in Puget Sound to submit a letter with their application certifying the proposed project is not in conflict with the Puget Sound Partnership Action Agenda.
- The second proposal is to activate existing criteria relating to whether projects are referenced in the Action Agenda.
- The third proposal is to update placeholder language that states funding preference will be rewarded to Puget Sound Partners, without -giving less preferential treatment to entities that are not eligible to be partners. The Partnership is still determining the criteria for a "Puget Sound Partner."

RCO held a stakeholder meeting, submitted a memo for public comment and is currently collecting comments.

Craig Partridge asked if there are any projects that would be high performers in the SRFB grant process that would conflict with the Action Agenda. Brian responded that he could not name any high ranking proposed projects in conflict with the Action Agenda. Kaleen responded that this proposal is not only for the Salmon Recovery Funding Board, but also for the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board, so RCO wants a consistent policy for both boards.

Changes to Manual 18

Brian explained staff's plan for updating Manual 18, which is slated to be adopted by the board in February 2010. Chair Tharinger asked Brian to highlight the most notable changes to the manual. Brian pointed out the following revisions:

- Adjustments to the timing of the application schedule
- Clarifying the terms "private landowner" and "local partner"
- Changing the reimbursement policy for large woody debris
- Providing guidance for acquisition projects for determining whether a project is fee simple or a conservation easement
- Reviewing the appropriate split between riparian zone and upland areas for acquisition projects
- Requiring sponsors to provide at least a preliminary design in restoration projects, or creating a condition that designs are reviewed before construction funds are released

Brian concluded by noting that RCO staff would be collaborating with lead entities, regions, and sponsors to prepare recommendations for the board.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Julie Morgan, Executive Director of the Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board, expressed concerns from Chelan and Okanogan County Commissioners about land acquisitions removing land from agricultural production and consequently decreasing tax revenue for the county and county funded programs. Julie read a selection of comments from Bob Bugert, Executive Director for the Chelan-Douglas Land Trust. Bob asked the board to consider changes to Section 2, Acquisitions in Manual 18. His comments

suggested policy updates to allow projects to contain term conservation easements and long-term leases as an alternative tool for landowners who are not interested in a permanent conservation easement.

On the issue of fee simple acquisition of agricultural land, Kaleen noted that the legislature asked RCO to do an assessment of the various tools for land conservation (i.e., conservation easement, fee simple, lease, term conservation easements). It is a legal, practical, economical assessment. RCO has contracted with the Seattle law firm of GordonDerr, who has contracted with an economic subcontractor. Kaleen thanked Julie for her timely comments, noting that the report is due to the legislature by mid-December, and she will report to the board when it is completed.

Chair Tharinger asked if the board's project money could legally be used for short-term easements. Brian responded that currently policy requires the land to be held in perpetuity, regardless of whether it was acquired in fee simple or through a conservation easement.

CLOSING COMMENTS

Chair Tharinger announced that the next meeting is on December 10 – 11, 2010 in Olympia.

Kaleen asked Grant Manager Tara Galuska to introduce RCO's newest intern. Tristan Vaughn is a sophomore at Evergreen State College and will be working at RCO throughout the 2009-2010 academic year.

Meeting adjourned at 4:35 p.m.