# Salmon Recovery Funding Board Summarized Meeting Agenda and Actions, February 27, 2013

## Agenda Items without Formal Action

| Item | Follow-up Actions |
|---|---|
| Item 1: Management Reports | There were no follow-up actions. |
| Item 2: Salmon Recovery Management Reports | There were no follow-up actions. |
| Item 3: Reports from Partners | There were no follow-up actions. |
| Item 4: Report on Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program (ESRP) | There were no follow-up actions. |
| Item 5: Family Forest Fish Passage Program Presentation and Video | There were no follow-up actions. |
| Item 7: Overview of Monitoring Program | There were no follow-up actions. |
| Item 9: Monitoring Program Findings & Results | There were no follow-up actions. |

## Agenda Items with Formal Action

| Item | Formal Action | Follow-up Actions |
|---|---|---|
| Minutes | Approved Minutes from September 2012 | There were no follow-up actions. |
| Item 6: Service Recognition, Craig Partridge | Approved Resolution 2013-01 recognizing the service of Craig Partridge | There were no follow-up actions |
| Item 8: Stream Habitat Restoration Guidelines Monitoring Chapter Update | Approved use of up to $25,000 in federal fiscal year 2012 Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund (PCSRF) dollars to fund the update. | There were no follow-up actions. |

# SALMON RECOVERY FUNDING BOARD SUMMARY MINUTES

**Date: February 27, 2013**
**Place: Olympia, WA**

## Salmon Recovery Funding Board Members Present:

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| **Bud Hover, Chair** | Okanogan County | **Jennifer Quan** | Department of Fish and Wildlife |
| **Josh Brown** | Kitsap County | **Carol Smith** | Conservation Commission |
| **Phil Rockefeller** | NWPCC | **Craig Partridge** | Department of Natural Resources |
| **David Troutt** | Olympia | **Melissa Gildersleeve** | Department of Ecology |

**It is intended that this summary be used with the notebook provided in advance of the meeting. A recording is retained by RCO as the formal record of meeting.**

## Opening and Welcome

Chair Bud Hover called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and a quorum was determined.

**Phil Rockefeller moved to adopt the agenda.**
**Seconded by: David Troutt**
**Motion: APPROVED**

**Phil Rockefeller moved to adopt the December 2012 minutes.**
**Seconded by: David Troutt**
**Motion: APPROVED**

Item 1: Management Reports

Director Cottingham presented information as described in her director's report, highlighting the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund (PCSRF) grant application, PRISM online, and the NOAA situation assessment.

Policy Director Nona Snell reported that the first policy cutoff was the previous Friday, and the coming Friday was the cutoff for bills with a fiscal impact. The next milestone would be in mid-March, when bills would need to be voted out of the house of origin. On March 20, the next revenue forecast will be announced. It will be the basis for the 2013-15 budget discussions. The governor likely will be more specific about budget priorities as the date approaches, and the Senate and House will release their budgets shortly after the forecast. Session ends on April 28.

Snell mentioned a bill that would require that publicly-owned land designated for agriculture could be used only for agricultural purposes; the result would limit salmon recovery and transportation mitigation projects. The RCO has testified against it. The bill seems to be addressing some specific concerns in Snohomish County.

Item 2: Salmon Recovery Management Reports

Salmon Section Manager Brian Abbott reviewed the information from the management report. He noted that they are working on a new strategic work plan for GSRO, and anticipate completing it in the next few months. The board will be discussing the scopes of work for lead entities and regions at the May 2013 meeting, and will be asked to award funds for the contracts at that time. He reminded the board that they had approved an annual PCSRF funding request in September, so staff is working on two-year contracts with annual scopes of work. Projects approved in December are being placed under agreement, and staff members are working on a successful applicant workshop, which will be available via the Web site. RCO is working on the 2013 grant round, and is scheduling site visits and the application workshop. Abbott also discussed the PCSRF application and the upcoming project conference. Member Rockefeller noted that the Northwest Power and Conservation Council (NWPCC) and others are planning a conference in Vancouver on May 15 to address Invasive Species such as Quagga mussels.

Jennifer Johnson provided an update on the State of the Salmon Web site, which was launched in January. She explained that they tried to use as much live data as possible to keep the site fresh, and are now working on a content strategy to update information that is static. She handed out copies of the printed Executive Summary. Director Cottingham noted that sharing data is the new paradigm. Chair Hover noted that it's important to ensure that the data are aligned and integrated. It also helps justify funding.

Grant manager Elizabeth Butler reviewed the recently-completed Port Susan Bay Estuary Restoration project, which returned 150 acres to estuary, enhancing blind tidal channels, salt marsh habitats, and native vegetation. The board contributed funds for the acquisition of the site, a feasibility study, and restoration of the site. Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program also contributed funds. Butler shared photos of the site before, during, and after the dike removal. The project sponsor was The Nature Conservancy, who worked with neighboring landowners and other stakeholders.

Item 3: Reports from Partners

**Council of Regions**: Jeff Breckel presented the Council of Regions report. He noted that they have engaged with RCO on the review of the investment of monitoring funds, and they would be discussing that at the COR meeting tomorrow. They also continue to work with the state agencies more comprehensively with regard to salmon recovery.

**Lead Entity Advisory Group:** Cheryl Baumann presented the Lead Entity Advisory Group report that was sent to the board in the advance materials. Many of the lead entities are now involved in the grant round and also are focused on outreach and education to the Legislature. They did a Lead Entity Day on February 12 to visit with legislators, and had participants from across the state. They will be working on doing some site visits with officials during the summer. She noted some key staff transitions for some of the lead entities.

Derek Van Marter noted that the lead entity consolidation in the Upper Columbia was complete and successful. The final report to RCO was on its way.

**Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups:** Lance Winecka noted that the RFEGs were excited about the upcoming project conference in May. The RFEGs are working on the upcoming 2013 grant round and are participating in the Family Forest Fish Passage Program (FFFPP) process. They have four projects underway now. They are working with state and federal representatives to address their federal funding. They have received 41 percent of their allotment (about $30,000 per group), but the remainder is uncertain. He

introduced and played a video produced by the Nooksack RFEG. The video is available on the Web at http://www.n-sea.org/about-nsea-1.

**Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW):** Member Jennifer Quan noted that in December the Fish and Wildlife Commission passed new policy about fishing in the Lower Columbia and explained the details. They are hoping to bring Oregon to the board's project conference because they have passed a similar policy; the two states are working together. WDFW also is working with the Puget Sound Partnership and Long Live the Kings on a proposal to do more studies about marine survival for the steelhead recovery plans, and to advance the chapters in other recovery plans. NOAA may be interested in moving at the federal level on steelhead, but conversations are just beginning.

**Conservation Commission:** Member Carol Smith invited board members and the audience to the millionth tree planting celebration in Whatcom County on Earth Day, April 20. On April 9 there will be a conservation incentives workshop.

**Department of Natural Resources:** Member Craig Partridge mentioned the derelict vessel legislation sponsored by DNR and encouraged board members to pay attention to it.

**Department of Ecology:** Member Melissa Gildersleeve thanked Brian for his work to help Ecology distribute their federal funds to projects that are ready to be implemented. She also noted that they have had to dramatically cut back on the number of stream gages they have in place because they are paid for through the state general fund. They will need to make further cuts, and will be gathering feedback about which gages support are critical to other monitoring work.

**Northwest Power Council:** Member Rockefeller noted that the NWPCC needs to maintain a fish and wildlife program within the Columbia Basin. Starting in April, the Council will be soliciting recommendations from the federal and state agencies, tribes, and other stakeholders about how to improve the fish and wildlife program, and how to measure or monitor it for effectiveness. They will be issuing a formal letter to invite comment.

## General Public Comment

Lloyd Moody thanked Butch Ogden the Conservation Commission for their efforts to help with the transition after the passing of Mike Johnson in Pacific County. He noted additional staffing changes for the Skagit Watershed Council.

Alex Conley, Yakima Basin, thanked Jennifer Johnson for her efforts to get the State of the Salmon Web site completed. He thinks this work needs to be continued and managed on an ongoing basis.

## Item 4: Report on Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program (ESRP)

Mike Ramsey, RCO Grant Manager, and Betsy Lyons, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), presented the information as described in the memo. Lyons explained that the program is the nearshore component of the Puget Sound Action Agenda. She discussed program funding, the project selection process, and the legislative fact sheet, which was distributed to the board. The program received requests for $26 million in this application cycle; its 2013-15 budget request is $10 million. She described some proposed projects, noting that some are on both the ESRP and Puget Sound Acquisition and

Restoration (PSAR) large capital projects list. Ramsey described several completed projects throughout the Sound, noting that some projects use funds from multiple sources.

Member Troutt asked why ESRP excluded enhancement projects. Lyons responded that projects with enhancement designation tended to be seen as having less opportunity for restoring function. They might be good projects, but they just are not a good fit for ESRP.

Director Cottingham noted that legislators have asked the RCO to explain how the funding sources fit together. The RCO is trying to graphically display how they all complement each other.

## Item 5: Family Forest Fish Passage Program Presentation and Video

Dave Caudill, RCO Grant Manager, introduced Laura Till from WDFW and Michelle Peterschick from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

Caudill noted that the 2012 supplemental budget included $10 million for the program, which equates to funding for about 100 projects. They approved a list of 48 projects in May 2012, and they are working on implementing it now. They anticipate completing construction by the end of May 2013. They will allocate the remaining funds in the coming months. The program has 500 landowners in the backlog, but they do not all have high priority projects.

Peterschick noted that FFFPP has increased outreach and education, including radio and television spots, new partnerships, and the video being shared with the board. The video is available online at: www.rco.wa.gov/downloads/FFFPP.mp4

Caudill concluded by sharing before and after photos of some completed projects.

Chair Hover stated that Member Rockefeller was the prime sponsor of the legislation creating FFFPP, and congratulated him on the success of the program. Member Rockefeller noted that one issue was prioritizing the work, and asked the presenters if the program still "moves up the river." Till responded that they looked at the downstream barriers, and the amount of habitat that would be gained by replacing the culvert. She explained how they identify other barriers and work to get them corrected. Member Partridge noted that some of the bridges shown were sizable, and asked if the projects were still among the most cost effective. Caudill noted that the average project was still about $90,000. The benefit is to the juvenile salmon, not for the adults.

## Item 6: Service Recognition: Craig Partridge

Chair Hover noted the contributions of member Partridge, who will retire from state service in April 2013. The chair and members shared personal recollections of their work with Partridge, and thanked him for his service, intellect, good nature, unflappable nature, thoughtful solutions, and dedication. Partridge commented that he was grateful that he was able to serve on the board and thanked everyone for their work to implement the work to recover salmon.

**Phil Rockefeller moved to approve service resolution 2013-01.**
**Seconded by:** **David Troutt**
**Motion:** **APPROVED**

## Item 7: Overview of Monitoring Program

Brian Abbott reviewed the information from the staff memo, explaining the background of the board's current monitoring approach. Keith Dublanica provided an update on the monitoring investment strategy development, which will be completed in October 2013. Abbott noted the funding decisions that would be requested in May.

## Item 8: Stream Habitat Restoration Guidelines Monitoring Chapter Update

Brian Abbott described this request, as presented in the staff memo. He explained that the update would establish a baseline that is consistent with current monitoring protocols and would provide better guidance for implementation monitoring of board projects either by project sponsors or during RCO final inspections.

Member Quan asked if the update was part of the monitoring proposed in the 2012 PCSRF application. Abbott responded that it was part of the monitoring component, and that it was consistent with the NOAA priorities. Director Cottingham noted that they had not reformed the group to reallocate the unspent funds because they wanted to see what the recommendations of the new strategic approach to investment would be.

Member Troutt asked if it was consistent with the work being done by Ken Dzinbal at the Puget Sound Partnership. Dzinbal, who was in the audience, nodded his assent.

**Josh Brown moved to approve use of up to $25,000 in federal fiscal year 2012 Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund (PCSRF) dollars to fund the update.**
**Seconded by:** **David Troutt**
**Motion:** **APPROVED**

## Item 9: Monitoring Program Findings & Results

Keith Dublanica introduced the topic and the presenters. He provided a brief background and overview on the Intensively Monitored Watersheds (IMW) program.

### Skagit IMW

Correigh Greene, Northwest Fisheries Science Center, explained the purpose and design of the Skagit IMW. He noted that there are two aspects that limit salmon: habitat and connectivity (access). Restoration projects are designed to address both. He reviewed the baseline data collected by DFW and the Skagit River Systems Cooperative. He noted the four life history types of Chinook that are found in the IMW, and the impact of estuary restoration on them. He noted that 757 acres were restored; another 557 acres are planned for restoration. The goal is 60% increase in capacity; once the planned restoration is complete in five years, they will be at 28%. He reviewed some results, noting that data currently show that the density and abundance of delta fry have increased. The data need additional analysis before they can tell if restoration improves marine survival and adult returns.

Member Troutt noted that the research is great, but he does not think it fits with the IMW program or meets the criteria. Greene responded that it was designed to fill the gap in IMW design by looking at Chinook salmon and estuary restoration. He agreed, however, that the point is valid because it does focus on estuary restoration rather than the entire watershed.

Member Troutt asked what additional information they would get by continuing the investment. Greene responded that they would have more projects coming, and they would get the information about the effect on the adults.

Member Gildersleeve said that her understanding was that the Skagit was supposed to have a wealth of historical data, which was a part of choosing the location. Greene responded that at the time the decision was made, one criterion was the number of years of monitoring. A component of that was a freshwater outmigrant trap; this area had a number of data points.

Member Rockefeller asked for clarification about density; the charts discussed a decrease in density, whereas the conclusion slide noted an increase in density. Greene responded that the charts showed a decrease at the system level, but the conclusion slide was noting that there was a density increase at the local level. Board members expressed concern that the fish may just be moving from one area to another, and wanted assurance that there were, in fact, more fish.

Member Rockefeller asked how much restoration was needed to make predictions about fish response. Eric Beamer, Skagit River Systems Cooperative, responded that it varies based on connectivity, but is about 3,000 acres. Member Rockefeller suggested that they try to relate the results to the percent of restoration completed.

Member Troutt noted that a significant concern is that it is unlikely that they will complete all of the restoration activities. He reiterated that monitoring and research are good, and noted the components that he found most useful. He stated that he would have fewer concerns if it were managed outside the IMW. He thinks other IMWs are near 100 restoration, and doesn't think it is likely that they will see results from this IMW soon. Eric Beamer responded that while they do not have 100 percent of restoration complete, they do have enough done to get answers to the questions.

Smith noted that she likes the more limited scope, regardless of the name, and the results that are coming from the IMW. She noted that each IMW is limited by the perceived limiting factors.

Partridge noted that ultimately, the goal is to help determine where to invest in salmon recovery. He noted that even if there are constraints, if there is a positive signal from the IMW, it would seem to be useful information indicating that investments in estuaries are making a difference and should be continued.

**Straits IMW**

Bill Ehinger, Department of Ecology, stated that since the board had received a very detailed review of this IMW in June 2012, he would give only a brief update. He reviewed that purposed and design, noting the various types of monitoring and metrics collected. Ehinger shared a map of completed restorations, noting that the most recently completion was in 2012; they will need 7-10 years to see the effects. They seem to be seeing some improvement in pool habitat. They have found that larger parr have better survival. For restoration, this could mean that they need better overwintering habitat (i.e., if habitat responds to the wood treatment, then the proportion of fall migrants should decrease). It might also be a matter of food resources.

He concluded with the following preliminary results and findings:

- Initial response suggests some improving trends possibly due to restoration
- Full physical response to recently implemented restoration not expected for a few years

- Additional monitoring needed to detect biological response with statistical confidence once physical response has occurred
- PIT tagging providing useful info to confirm bottlenecks

Member Gildersleeve asked what a habitat response would be, and how long they would need to see it. Ehinger responded that habitat response will require high flows of water to move material around the wood; this can require a few years. It will then take a few years of biological response to develop confidence in the results. Director Cottingham asked if there were other recommended treatments to address the overwintering. Ehinger responded that Phil Roni was working on a report that would be due in June.

**Lower Columbia IMW**

Mara Zimmerman, WDFW, presented information about this IMW. Zimmerman noted that after the salmonids leave this watershed, they still have 50 miles of freshwater before they reach saltwater, which makes this IMW unique. She noted the types of monitoring done, noting that data collection began here in 2005. She explained the design, including focal species, life stages, and measures that they study. Zimmerman identified the restorations that have been completed, and how winter storms have changed the systems during the study period. Jeff Breckel noted that while they have been doing work in the creeks for a longer period, they have done IMW-specific restoration work only since 2009.

Zimmerman reviewed results for coho, steelhead, and Chinook. She concluded with the following preliminary findings:

- No increase in smolt production or growth following nutrient enhancement in Germany Creek.
- No trend in smolt production or growth in Abernathy Creek – additional restoration needed.
- Life stage analysis for coho salmon demonstrates growth and survival bottlenecks in summer and overwinter habitats.

The board expressed serious concerns about the lack of restoration actions and fish response. Director Cottingham asked if the report requested by the board in 2012 would be ready for the May meeting; Jeff Breckel responded that it would be.

**Hood Canal IMW**

Kirk Krueger, WDFW presented this IMW, which includes four watersheds. He explained what is taking place in the IMW, noting that although restoration is happening, more and larger projects would speed the success of the program. He showed maps identifying potential project opportunities. The potential effects of projects on habitat are beginning to be apparent; some are statistically significant while others are not. The effects on Coho also are beginning to become apparent, but many of the data points are not statistically significant and cannot be considered reliable.

Member Troutt asked how far along they are with restoration actions. Krueger responded that there is not a comprehensive plan for this IMW, so in a way, this is testing the Washington process. The lead entity will ask for suggestions about projects, but otherwise, the IMW has no control over restoration actions. This is a weakness in the approach.

Richard Brocksmith, Hood Canal Coordinating Council, noted that there is a disconnect between the IMW and the Hood Canal salmon recovery programs, because the latter is focused on the recovery plan. The watersheds in the IMW are small and have lower priority in the recovery plan. They have done projects in

Little Anderson Creek and Big Beef Creek. He said that is that if this is important, then the funding should be identified for those restoration actions.

Member Troutt asked if there was an EDT analysis for these streams; Krueger responded that there was, as well as a limiting factor analysis. The point is to determine if the correct factors were identified. There may be a disconnect between funding for restoration projects and the IMWs, but that is because the IMWs were selected for the ability collect data.

Bill Ehinger explained that there isn't a formal plan for this IMW, like there is on the Lower Columbia, but they have done some strategic planning based on expert advice and available information. Member Troutt asked if this was a good fit for the IMW program. Ehinger responded that there are a core set of things they look at and study design. The difference among the IMWs is the priority placed on restoration for monitoring versus restoration for recovery; the former may not be a priority.

Member Brown noted that it might not make sense to do monitoring if that isn't where they are putting resources. Member Rockefeller noted that the root cause of the problem is that the restoration is funded and managed separately.

Director Cottingham noted that this is a fundamental weakness of the IMW program – funding restoration and the time it takes. The board has continually rejected the notion of funding restoration separately from the project funding. She suggested that it be something that be incorporated in the monitoring assessment currently being performed.

Final Comments

Director Cottingham stated that the Governor had forwarded requests to the Senate to confirm Josh Brown and Bud Hover as members of the board.

Meeting adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

Minutes approved by:

David Troutt, Chair

5/21/13
Date