

## SALMON RECOVERY FUNDING BOARD RETREAT SUMMARY

Date: May 24, 2017

Place: LOTT Clean Water Alliance, 500 Adams Street NE, Olympia, WA 98501

### Salmon Recovery Funding Board Members Present:

---

<b>David Troutt, Chair</b>	Olympia	<b>Carol Smith</b>	Department of Ecology
<b>Nancy Biery</b>	Quilcene	<b>Erik Neatherlin</b>	Department of Fish and Wildlife
<b>Bob Bugert</b>	Wenatchee	<b>Megan Duffy</b>	Department of Natural Resources
<b>Phil Rockefeller</b>	Bainbridge Island	<b>Brian Cochrane</b>	Washington State Conservation Commission
<b>Jeff Breckel</b>	Longview		

---

### Summary of the Agreements on the Board's Role

These were the Salmon Recovery Funding Board's (board) agreements on its role and responsibilities during the 24 May retreat:

1. The board reviewed and confirmed the role it was originally given in the enabling legislation (RCW 77.85.120).
2. The board agreed that the regional process is working well and that it respects the local, project-level process.

(NOTE: During the discussion it was noted that the board has a legally mandated role and is involved in a number of activities not expressly spelled out in the legislation. The following highlights of the discussion about roles and responsibilities focused on the board's activities.)

3. Board members are interested in strengthening their relationship with the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) staff who serve in the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office (GSRO). The board expressed interest in supporting the new Executive Coordinator and complementing the efforts of GSRO staff.
4. Board members recognized the need to build long-term relationships to increase local, state, and federal support for salmon recovery. While the GSRO Executive Coordinator is the lead in strengthening existing and developing new relationships, the board sees a role for itself in helping RCO and GSRO implement this strategy. The recent visit by a couple board members to members and staff of Washington's congressional delegation is an example of their role in relationship building. The Communications and Fundraising Plans were mentioned as the vehicles through which the board might play a role in expanding the salmon recovery network.
  - a. Board members briefly discussed encouraging a new generation of salmon recovery champions. There was a sense that the champions of the future will be

found at the local level, including local elected officials, Tribal officials, and local business leaders. In addition, major corporations, such as Amazon, were also mentioned as potential allies and funders. And wealthy or prominent leaders from various walks of life might also step up to become the champions of salmon recovery and open doors for the GSRO and the board to build relationships.

- b. Another important reason why RCO, GSRO, and the board need to build and sustain relationships at the local level is to influence local decisions, including land use decisions.
5. Related to the point above, the board agreed on the need to demonstrate progress in recovering salmon. The members' interests are accountability, increasing enthusiasm and funding for salmon recovery, and learning lessons from past efforts. A potential strategy for achieving these interests was identifying and funding projects where delisting could be achieved. One reason why this strategy has appeal is because the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is placing high value on delisting to demonstrate that federal funding is being used wisely and strategically.
- a. The Board suggested that at each of its quarterly meetings, a regional leader could be invited to discuss with the board and staff how things are going at the regional and local levels. Some of the questions could focus on delisting. "What would it take to get salmon delisted in your region? What level of resources would be needed? What are the barriers or impediments to delisting?"
  - b. Because of their interests in finding out what it would take to achieve delisting, the board and RCO Director Cottingham decided to invite Steve Martin of the Snake River Recovery Board and Scott Brewer of the Hood Canal Coordinating Council to the board's next meeting in June 2017. They will ask Steve and Scott what it would take to achieve delisting within their regions, what resources would be needed, and what role RCO/GSRO/board might play in helping to foster incentives to achieve it.
  - c. At a board meeting toward the end of this year (in either September or December) the board may invite representatives of the Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board and Colville Tribe to discuss the reintroduction of salmon at the Chief Joseph Dam.
  - d. Board members also suggested that representatives of Snohomish County might be invited to a future meeting to discuss incentivizing coordinated investments.
  - e. One other idea that was briefly discussed was to develop a list of key projects where delisting or reintroduction could be achieved to share with legislative leaders. Before presenting this list, RCO and GSRO would need to discuss the concept of developing such a list to the regional organizations and Lead Entities, and which projects might be included on it.

6. Members agreed that funding from the private and non-profit sectors is needed to expand efforts and initiatives to recover salmon (or to offset cuts in funding from the federal and/or state governments, if they are forthcoming).
  - a. Director Cottingham believes that, based on her conversations with attorneys in the Attorney General's Office, board members could help raise funding from the private and non-profit sectors.
  - b. In December 2017 the board will receive a proposal from the Salmon Recovery Network (SRNet) regarding organizational options for raising funds, including, possibly, "spinning off" the SRNet to establish it as a 501C3 or C4. At that time the proposal will stimulate a more focused discussion about fundraising and the board's involvement in it.
  - c. Reflecting their interest in fundraising, board members volunteered to help research structures and strategies for soliciting and obtaining corporate and non-profit contributions to salmon recovery. (NOTE: This is repeated in the summary of the board's conversation about implementing the Communications and Fundraising Plans. See page 5.)
    - o Nancy Biery, Bob Bugert, and David Troutt will constitute a "tag team" in working with RCO staff, including the new staff lead on implementing the communications and fundraising plans, on this research.
7. While the board did not attempt to reach consensus on this point, there was a discussion about the role of the GSRO and Board in more deliberately focusing on habitat protection. The majority of funds that the board allocates goes to restoration projects, but 20% is awarded to acquisition projects to protect habitat. Board members recognized that acquisition is costly and could be extremely controversial. So some members raised the possibility of the board creating or encouraging incentives to achieve greater protection without resorting to acquisition.

### **Summary of the Agreements on the Board's Priorities**

These were the board's agreements on its priorities for the 2017-'19 Biennium:

First, the board confirmed seven priorities for the next biennium.

- Contingency planning for a major loss of state and/or federal funding.
- The LEAN Project to streamline the process of presenting projects to the board.
- The board's role in salmon recovery beyond habitat projects.
- Implementing the Communications and Fundraising Plans.
- Capacity Allocation Formula.
- Project Allocation Formula.
- Policy on water rights acquired.

Next, the board defined the priorities in more detail and suggested potential work plan actions. For each priority, here is a summary of the discussions and agreements.

## 1. Contingency Planning:

- a. *Establish a subcommittee to develop principles by December 2017.* The board agreed that a subcommittee of the board and staff should develop and recommend to the board a set of principles to guide the allocation of funding in the event the budget is reduced. The group will present its recommended principles at the December board meeting.
  - o David Troutt and Jeff Breckel will serve as the board's representatives on the subcommittee.
  - o One principle the board discussed for the subcommittee to consider is this: The capacity of the regions and Lead Entities (the organizational infrastructure) remains whole or is modestly reduced while project funding is reduced. To minimize the impact of this principle, some administrative functions may be coordinated at the regional level, thus freeing up the Lead Entities' time, energy, and money.

The board acknowledged the importance of NOAA's perspective, as well as the perspectives of other potential funders, who may not support maintaining the current level of funding for administration at the expense of funding projects.

- b. *Learn from the LEAN process.* The outlook for a stable Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 budget is good. Therefore, the board should have time to learn lessons about the allocation of resources from the LEAN Project after its completion by 30 June 2018.
- c. *Obtain funding from non-governmental sources.* The board also reiterated its interest in private and non-profit sector funding to support salmon recovery in the State of Washington.
- d. *Potential supplemental funding request.* The board and Director Cottingham speculated that if federal funding is reduced, RCO might need to request supplemental funding from the Governor and Legislature.

## 2. The LEAN Project:

- a. The board recognized that the project might present a huge opportunity to achieve efficiencies and, therefore, generate savings when there is a threat of reduced funding from the federal and/or state governments.
- b. *Establish a work group.* A large working group will develop a set of recommendations to present to the board in mid-2018. At that time, the board will review and approve recommendations and determine its role in implementing the LEAN process.

- Phil Rockefeller and Jeff Breckel will be the board's liaisons on this work group.

### **3. The Board's Role in Salmon Recovery Beyond Habitat Projects:**

- a. See the summary of the board's agreements regarding its role and responsibilities (pages 1-2).

### **4. Implementing the Communications and Fundraising Plans:**

- a. The board agreed that the communications and fundraising plans should help the regions build capacity and increase funding from a variety of sources for salmon recovery. The board also believes that the communications plan must help the agency and its allies communicate even more effectively about results, such as when board members and RCO staff travel to Washington, DC for meetings with representatives of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).
- b. Staff will submit to the board later this year a proposal for how to spend the approximately \$250,000 that is available for staffing, communications, and the SRNet. The board agreed that if this funding were devoted only to communications, the interests and goals for fundraising would fall short. So the board expressed an interest in balancing the use of the funding to achieve the goals of both.
  - Board members expressed the thought that in "an ideal world," the regional organizations would be transformed into not-for-profit organizations, each with its own development director. (NOTE: Six of eight regional organizations are 501 C3 non-profits. However, being designated a 501 C4 would allow them to actively solicit funds. None of the regional organizations is a 501 C4 today.)
- c. The board also agreed that the next Executive Coordinator of GSRO should be key to the implementation of these two plans and to achieving many other interests of RCO, GSRO, and the board.
  - The new Executive Coordinator should be hired by July 1<sup>st</sup> and may be on the job by then.
- d. The board and Director Cottingham believe that the experience and skills of the new Executive Coordinator will influence their thinking about the qualities and characteristics needed in the person or people who will be hired to lead the implementation of the two plans. But even without knowing who will become the Executive Coordinator, everyone agreed that the staff person(s) leading the implementation of the communications and fundraising plans should be a "workhorse."
  - Director Cottingham told the board members that she plans to share with them that job description and announcement. They should be ready by the time the board meets in September.

- e. The board and Director Cottingham also agreed that it will be important to identify, train, and coordinate with local spokespeople to communicate the strategic messages that will advance both plans as well as salmon recovery. In addition, local elected officials will be needed to play a vital role in communicating the messages and helping raise funds from the private and non-profit organizations.
- f. Reflecting their interest in fundraising, board members volunteered to help research structures and strategies for soliciting and obtaining corporate and non-profit contributions to salmon recovery.
  - o Nancy Biery, Bob Bugert, and David Troutt will constitute a “tag team” in working with RCO staff, including the new staff lead on implementing the communications and fundraising plans, on this research.

**5. Capacity Allocation Formula:**

- a. *Wait for Lean Project to be completed.* The work on implementing this priority will commence in FY19 following the completion of the LEAN Project at the end of FY18.

**6. Project Allocation Formula:**

- a. *Look to achieve delisting through project allocations.* The allocation of funding for projects may be the primary means for accomplishing the board’s interest in achieving delisting of salmon to demonstrate progress and results in recovering salmon. The board discussed the idea of taking funds “off the top” to direct to fund major projects where delisting is possible in the near term.
- b. *Wait for a proposal from the regions.* Regional organizations are working on a proposal that will be submitted to the board in December 2017. The board agreed to examine the project allocation formula once that proposal is made, but to communicate to the regions its interest in knowing what actions and levels of funding would achieve delisting of salmon in specific projects. The board would like the regions to answer this question in the context of the 4Hs (habitat, harvest, hatchery, and hydropower) not just regarding habitat.

**7. Policy on water rights acquired:**

- a. *Discuss in depth at the June meeting.* During its June meeting the Board will discuss how the state might appraise water rights or ease the burden on organizations to appraise them when they want to donate water rights. This discussion is scheduled to follow a detailed staff briefing.

## Summary of the Board's Proudest Accomplishments

At the beginning of the retreat, the board members and Director Cottingham identified the accomplishments of the board of which they are proudest. They cited these accomplishments:

- 1833 projects have been funded since the board was founded. The majority of projects were for restoration.
- Average investment per year: \$37.5 million.
- The board funded many projects that Brian Abbott submitted to it. Many have come to fruition since he died at the end of December 2016. They constituted an ambitious list, and we have achieved them.
- Completion of the Communications and Fundraising Plans: "Huge!"
- Establishment of the Salmon Recovery Network (SRNet).
- The board's ability and willingness to have difficult conversations around topics such as the allocation of funding. And our willingness to revisit that particular issue.
- Asking ourselves: "What will it take to delist?" This is more of a future challenge for us.
- The GSRO has become more strategic.
- Moving the monitoring panel to the board.
- The board's interest in and adaptability to improve processes and strength relationships.
- We are moving to using monitoring to determine if what we are doing is making a difference and if it is the right thing to be doing.
- Strengthening partnerships with all the major players, from Olympia across the state to other states and federal officials in D.C.
- Last month's Salmon Conference.
- We are funding worthwhile and needed projects.
- The relationship of board members to each other, with Director Cottingham and RCO staff, and with the regional organizations and Lead Entities. We trust and respect each other.
- Implementing "The Washington Way."
- We have helped to achieve healthy, open communications throughout the salmon recovery network.
- Teamwork prevails in our culture. The board most often reaches consensus, and even when we disagree, there is no bitterness and we decide and move on.
- RCO has been a very helpful forum for hosting board discussions.
- The great staff work that serves us.
- The State Legislature has added additional responsibilities to "our plate," which illustrates legislators' respect for and confidence in us, and its support for the grassroots approach.
- We have helped to create and nurture an incredible network. We turned on the light, and must continue to steward it.

## Key Takeaways from Today's Discussions

At the end of the meeting, Board members and staff mentioned these "takeaways" from the discussions of the day:

- We share a strong desire to "push the envelope." We are smarter and quicker than ever before.
- We are on the same page. We want to push even harder. We need to keep pushing the right buttons to make things happen.
- We can be enabling partner to the GSRO.
- Many of our investments are coming to fruition, which will make future decisions easier.
- As we look ahead, we share a sense of urgency and a need to be focused and take decisive actions.
- We respect the process and want to go beyond it.
- It is a good thing for us that NOAA is asking for measures of accountability. We can deliver, and achieve delisting.
- Our discussions were a good mix of practical and aspirational.
- "The SRFB still exists. That's saying something!"
- "I am optimistic about getting to delisting."
- "Thank you, board members, for being forward thinking."
- Delisting could be an illusion, a "snare in the net."
- There are untapped resources across the state that we can mobilize.

**Approved by:**



---

David Troutt, Chair

6/15/17

---

Date