

COUNCIL OF REGIONS TALKING POINTS on the SRFB Large, Complex Project Investment Program

The Council of Regions would like to offer the following observations in response to SRFB Briefing Memo #7, on Developing a Large, Complex Project Investment Program.

- 1) All the Regions agree that before developing a new Large, Complex Project Investment Program, GSRO, the SRFB and the regional organizations should conduct a needs assessment to understand how large, strategic projects are now implemented, the barriers they face, and how a new program (or revisions to existing programs) could reduce those barriers. The Council of Regions looks forward to the opportunity to compile region-specific needs and critical gaps, and relate those to the Statewide Strategy for salmon recovery and the existing state programs that implement the strategy. This will take time and coordination. We look forward to developing a shared work plan with GSRO and the SRFB for completing this effort.
- 2) There are few large projects that simply require a one-time injection of funding and can be completed in 2-4 years. To complete significant projects, all of the following must be in place:
 - a. A clear strategic framework that identifies which large projects have the greatest ability to achieve regional and statewide recovery goals and targets;
 - b. Support for the assessment and planning of technically and politically complex projects;
 - c. Stable human capacity to build understanding and reach agreements on complex interjurisdictional projects;
 - d. Support for completing essential pre-project steps rapidly when opportunities arise (e.g. acquiring lands when they are on the market, or widening a highway bridge when it is reconstructed, even if the associated project is still several years out).
 - e. Predictable financial support for implementing projects that may, by necessity, be implemented in stages over 3 to 10 years.
- 3) If SRFB chooses to initiate development of a large cap program without the needs assessment, we recommend the following:
 - a. Any SRFB program should clearly identify how it fills a gap not addressed by other existing large capital programs (in either current or modified form).
 - b. A new program should be developed only if it will clearly support large projects in ways not possible through the existing SRFB regional allocations and competitive grant process.
 - c. The State Review Panel is not the appropriate body to rank large capital projects based on how they fit into regional and statewide recovery strategies. For this reason, we do not support options 4-7 as presented.
 - d. Regional Organizations should be responsible for selecting applications to be submitted to the state (as in options 6 and 7, but not 4 and 5).

In closing, we would like to thank the SRFB for creating the opportunity to think creatively and holistically about how we can better fund salmon recovery. By starting with a thorough evaluation of each region's critical needs, and the ability of existing programs to address those needs, we can ensure that any new programs make a clear and substantial contribution to moving salmon recovery forward.

From: Krienitz, Jay A (DFW) <Jay.Krienitz@dfw.wa.gov>
Sent: Thursday, August 30, 2018 10:54 AM
To: Peter-Contesse, Tristan (PSP) <tristan.peter-contesse@psp.wa.gov>; Lundquist, Wyatt (RCO) <wyatt.lundquist@rco.wa.gov>
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Subject: ESRP boards presentation scheduling request

Tristan and Wyatt,

Great seeing you the other day. Every two years, ESRP schedules a series of presentations to the Leadership Council, Salmon Recovery Council, and Salmon Recovery Funding Board. ESRP is currently wrapping up our biennial grant competition and I'd love to get on the schedule to present the current state of the ESRP program and our draft investment plan highlights. We seek out feedback and support from these advisory bodies so we can make sure ESRP is strongly aligned with Puget Sound recovery priorities that these boards actively advise. To clarify, we don't seek an official approval for our ESRP project list from these advisory bodies, but rather, we seek the support for the ESRP program and its strategic direction. We have found these presentations to be a very useful for everyone involved!

Let me know if and when we can get on the schedule for these advisory bodies. Any time this fall/winter works for us.

Jay

Jay Krienitz
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Conservation is not merely a thing to be enshrined in outdoor museums; it is a way of living on land.
-Aldo Leopold

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STATE OF WASHINGTON
RECREATION AND CONSERVATION OFFICE

December 12, 2018

Washington Military Department
Emergency Management Division
Attn: Tim Cook
20 Aviation Dr.
Building 20, MS TA-20
Camp Murray, WA 98430

Dear Mr. Cook:

I am pleased to offer the Salmon Recovery Funding Board's (SRFB) support for the proposed Lower White River infrastructure flood damage reduction grant application proposal. This grant application proposal is being submitted for FEMA Pre-Disaster Mitigation Resilient Infrastructure Competitive funding.

Pierce County, the Cities of Sumner and Pacific, and several private companies are partnering to create a solution to a multi-million-dollar flooding problem which the City of Sumner faces during flood events. Sumner has a prosperous industrial district along the river that is important to the communities of the South Sound. This is also an important area to salmon recovery for our state and the SRFB has been investing in projects to improve and protect habitat there since 1999. The proposed project is a significant private-public partnership opportunity for the State of Washington, as it will help to reduce flooding impacts, protect critical infrastructure, and improve salmon habitat.

The board is pleased to see this proposal under consideration for funding to support important efforts which will have multiple benefits to this region of Washington State. Benefits will include a reduction in the risk of flooding to our communities, economic benefits and protections to business and those relying on this natural river corridor for livelihood, and improvements to salmon habitat in the Lower White River where there are federally listed endangered species.

The actions supported by this grant proposal are integral to ensuring the resiliency of our regional economic development, critical infrastructure, and the health of salmon and our communities.

Sincerely,

David Troutt, Chair
Washington Salmon Recovery Funding Board

cc: Lisa Spurrier, Pierce County Lead Entity Coordinator
Carly Ray, Pierce County Public Works



Dear Director Cottingham:

The Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board (WNWCB) exists to take actions and make policy decisions, and help coordinate and support the activities of 38 county noxious weed control boards and districts to address noxious weeds on private and public lands.

Noxious weeds pose a significant threat to the elements necessary to achieve salmon recovery and degrade investments made by the Salmon Recovery Funding Board.

For the purpose of increasing collaboration between the respective boards, I would like time to give a report from the WNWCB regarding state and county weed board roles and resources, and an overview of priority noxious weed species that impact salmon habitat, during the March 2019 Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) meeting.

I will brief the SRFB on the bottom-up structure of county and state weed programs, as well as county level accountability and adaptive noxious weed management pertaining to salmon habitat restoration and preservation. Through increased collaboration the missions of both organizations will benefit.

If you have any questions, or need additional information please feel free to contact me.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Mary Fee
Executive Secretary
WA State Noxious Weed Control Board
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www.nwcb.wa.gov

Dear Director Cottingham and Members of the SRFB,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on SRFB deliberations as you consider development of a new program for large, complex projects. Our shared programs are better as a result of continued assessment of our progress and finding solutions to barriers.

We continue to see a need to more precisely define the problem before picking solutions. While there has never been enough financial investment, we would like to emphasize that the existing SRFB structure and process works quite well for meeting the variable needs of watersheds for addressing salmon recovery from the grassroots perspective. We believe it would be valuable to better understand how the LEAN process identified this problem, to develop a clearer definition of the programs and resources currently available by region, with support of those conclusions from all groups. While it is true in most if not all watersheds that we need more funding to implement increasingly large, complex projects, it appears that there are existing, capable programs already in place in most if not all of these watersheds.

Creating a new program is likely to risk taking funds from existing programs that are already underfunded, which is not likely to move us toward recovery any faster, or worse. It does not appear that creating new programs in the past expanded the pie, but instead more likely came at the expense of programs like PSAR. And creating a statewide, competitive program would be very difficult generally, stretching our knowledge, existing capacity, and possibly agreements.

Once a problem with the current funding structure has been carefully shown to exist, we hope it would be possible to find a targeted solution that can be tailored to the watershed, implementable within our existing assessment and funding structure, and would not come at a loss to our current funding level.

Thank you for your diligence on this issue.

Sincerely,

Richard Brocksmith
Executive Director, [Skagit Watershed Council](#)
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WASHINGTON
SALMON
COALITION
Community-Based Salmon Recovery

WSC Feedback on State-wide Large Project Investment Capital Program Proposal

March 5, 2019

This summary of considerations was developed from the Lead Entity perspective of the Washington Salmon Coalition in response to the seven options for developing a large, complex project investment program (Item 7). There were 29 participants in the conversation, with a couple of few entities not represented. We approached this discussion with the **goal of providing perspective** to the SRFB discussion rather than to provide a consensus recommendation. While perspectives varied to a degree, the two common themes with consensus were:

1. Identification of the real issue behind the LEAN recommendation behind this discussion, and
2. Concern with the Review Panel's role in ranking of projects.

The LEAN recommendation 3.1: Develop a Large, Complex Project Investment Program stated a key finding is that "it is difficult to fund large projects through current allocation formula process". **Further investigation of the problem statement** that the LEAN study recommendation was attempting to address would help assess if the alternatives presented in the March 6 SRFB Memo (Item 7) would alleviate the problem or, in some cases, actually deter from the intended solutions. It was noted that there is a big difference in "there is not enough allocation to implement the highest priority, impactful projects" and "the allocation formula is not set up to implement the highest priority, impactful projects". Funding predictability and reliability can alleviate much of the funding bottleneck as funding consistency can assure stakeholders and planners of certainty of implementation support as they invest capacity to project development of these multi-year and often daunting reach scale, complex but impactful projects.

A seemingly underlying need is that the "right projects" are implemented/funded. We need to build confidence in both the Regional process/role and the Lead Entity process/role in salmon recovery work. **Implementation of impactful projects are increasingly complex** especially since many of the easier projects often have already been implemented. Complexity can be in the form of funding, stakeholder support, and also a suite of various other intricacies.

The Washington Salmon Coalition has been having ongoing discussions assessing implementation of impactful salmon recovery projects and possible improvements. We hope to continue these conversations to include what is working well and where we can identify bottlenecks in implementation. We truly appreciate the advanced notification of this discussion we received from RCO and we welcome any further opportunities to provide additional feedback as SRFB discusses these alternatives.

Statewide Large Capital Program

- Different large scale projects have different needs. While some need a significant increase in funding levels, others need consistent funding over multiple years, others need predictability of funding in order to develop the “right project” with the appropriate stakeholders.
- It is very likely the barriers to large project implementation are different for each region. There needs to be a hard look at highest geographic need in each region. Are there current resources that can meet the need within the region if the regional process was adjusted? Do we have to change things across the State if the current process is not working in a few regions?
- Funding over time has proven to help implement complex projects. Complex projects are often pieced together over time and need to be adjusted (adaptively managed) along the way. Funding structure tends to be a limitation in implementing the full project such as the criteria, expiration, and future unpredictability of continued funding. In particular the requirements that come along with funding from the capital budget can become a challenge in the context of complex projects that generally span far longer than smaller/less complex projects.
- Some watersheds will receive more funding than they have now.
- Shows we are implementing a state wide strategy.
- Any new program would have to reward projects that have a strategic link to critical limiting factors.
- Best projects are selected by statewide competition if criteria and address what is most important for salmon as it is different from region to region.
- Statewide proposals can result in a long list of projects with potentially only a few funded. This can create increased workload for sponsors, lead entities, review panel, SRFB.
- Not funding acquisition projects is problematic for advancing needed restoration and conservation.
- Potential treaty rights issues by pitting region against region.

Targeted Investment Program

- Showing salmon recovery success at a political level (de-listing) could benefit future salmon recovery funding.
- There is a “win” factor that can energize people.
- Be cautious about creating false expectations.
- Recovery policy perspective: investments in one perspective deters from other perspectives unless a balance is struck.
 - Focus on approaching “de-listing” or recovered status vs. at-risk species vs. species declining and may become listed.
 - Some LEs focus and communicate their progress on viability versus progress toward delisting. A focus on “viability” progress could encompass how different areas of the state view and communicate progress.
- De-listing is a political conversation.

- We also need to understand the role of habitat restoration/protection in the context of NOAA's listing/de-listing criteria before moving to focused investments. There may be other factors that are more important than additional habitat work.

Increase in Funding Dispersed through Allocations

- Status quo allocations – with amendment to option #1 of lead entity allocations to regional allocations with geographical discussions of LE allocations within each region.
 - Priority processes are used and are already in place including the SRFB Regional Allocation Formula.
 - Rather than creating a new pot for large projects, increased assurance of future funds may be more helpful to implementation.
 - Request regions document how they already enable impactful complex projects that exceed a LE's standard allocation. There is already sharing across LEs within regions to fund large projects.

Funding of Proposed Programs with Current Funding

- Possible reduction of existing funding for implementation of an additional program if no additional funding is realized with a percentage of funding to a new program.
 - Taking even a small percentage from some LEs with a small allocation would severely reduce their ability to leverage funding and could ultimately result in less implementation of large/complex projects (we get there through small projects).
 - Would be better to address the concern region to region about the concept that high priority projects are not advancing.
 - There is a need for LE base funding because consistent reliable funding (sometimes multiyear) is crucial to developing and implementing reach scale/complex restoration projects.
 - There is a need to seek additional funding sources outside of our base project funding in order to advance restoration.
 - This option still doesn't give us enough funding for project needs.

Funding of Proposed Programs only with Additional Funding

- Separate legislative ask for Large, Complex Project Program
 - Specific projects that are highlighted as separate line items in a capital request can gain traction and legislative support as a specific project list may seem more attractive to fund to legislators than a general line item.
 - Specific projects can also get buried in funding program requests.
 - Risk of legislators wanting to fund individual projects versus base allocation is a practice that can harm the long-term funding of SRFB.
 - Timelines might be difficult.
 - Doesn't reduce overall LE funding like other options.
 - Concern of being asked "Why aren't you already steering funds you are getting to that pot?"
 - Concerns about restrictions: not allowing coordination with other SRFB or PSAR funds prevents project from any advancement if specific legislative ask goes unfunded.

Ranking Process of Projects across the State

- Utilizing the SRFB Review Panel, SRFB will likely decide on priorities based on input from Review Panel.
 - The SRFB Review Panel will have a starkly different role than the current role which is to verify a project's technical proficiency.
 - There is no criteria to address limiting factors across the state.
- In order to rank projects:
 - We need priority areas.
 - Each region has their own limiting factors and priority strategies to get to recovery.
 - There needs to be discussion and consideration of how one region's priorities are evaluated against another region's priorities.
 - Ranking cost-benefit across state puts urban watersheds at a huge disadvantage.
 - Ranking natal watersheds against non-natal watersheds is difficult.
 - Ranking watersheds with listed stocks against others without listed stocks is a policy discussion.
 - May have Tribal Treaty rights implications and considerations.