

Salmon Recovery Network Facilitation

DECEMBER 15, 2021

Meeting 1 Summary

WELCOME, REVIEWING SRNET PURPOSE, AND SHARING OUR CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- Elizabeth McManus (facilitator from Ross Strategic), Erik Neatherlin (GSRO), Jeannie Abbott (GSRO), Mara Zimmerman (SRNet co-chair), and Tori Bahe (co-facilitator from Ross Strategic) introduced themselves and welcomed the group.
- The facilitation team reviewed themes from four SRNet members interviewed on their thoughts from past SRNet meetings and engagement and ideas for the future. These included:
 - More opportunities for engagement during and outside of SRNet meetings
 - Increase representation in meetings
 - More opportunities to brainstorm in small groups even in the virtual space
 - Increase strategic collaboration between members
 - Increase relationship building among members
- One SRNet member stated they appreciated the idea to shift towards engagement rather than updates. They were interested in having a shared virtual space where information could be posted.
- Members were separated into breakout rooms to catch up, discuss these themes further, and get to know each other better. Members enjoyed this exercise and recommended it be used in future meetings.

OVERVIEW OF FEDERAL INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

- Erik Neatherlin gave a presentation on Federal infrastructure funding.
- Erik noted that members can access additional information on the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act on Senator Cantwell's website that includes funding highlights for salmon, wastewater, and stormwater. Members can also refer to the summary created by the Wild Salmon Center that was distributed to members before the meeting.
- Erik reviewed the following highlights:
 - \$172 million for Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery Fund
 - \$491 million for Habitat Restoration and Community
 - \$400 million for Fish Passage Barrier Removal Grants
 - State agencies are working with federal agencies on their spending plans through the Governor's Office in Washington, D.C.
 - The Build Back Better Act currently being negotiated in the Senate has additional funding for salmon recovery.

- A SRNet member observed that one of the key bottlenecks with salmon recovery is permitting for restoration and barrier removal projects. Organizations are working with NOAA and the Governor's Office in D.C. to find a potential path forward. They urged people to echo this issue.
- Another SRNet member noted that NOAA has reduced staff capacity for permitting/permit review. They commented that SRNet should discuss how it can work with NOAA and raise awareness in D.C. on staffing needs to support timely permit review and decision making.

CONTEXT FOR UPCOMING LEGISLATIVE SESSION

- The [Statewide Salmon Strategy](#) has been released and the new proposed riparian legislation is undergoing final reviews from the Tribes and Governor's Office.
- The Governor has started to do his salmon agenda rollout with Tribes. And the [Governor's budget](#), which will include significant investment in salmon, is due to be released to the public in the next few days.
- Members brought up the following topics for discussion:
 - Governor's Office and State Agency collaboration on the [Lorraine Loomis Act](#) (riparian legislation)
 - NOAA's staff capacity to permit and initiate projects
 - Need additional staff to assist with consultation work
 - SRNet's role to communicate with NOAA and/or Congressional delegation that this is a concern
 - Backlog in ESA consultation and federal policies/rules that make hiring additional staff difficult
 - Interest in learning details of riparian legislation
 - Possibility of a new Northeast Region for salmon recovery
 - Lack of outreach to counties and the agricultural industry for the riparian legislation, and resulting concerns
- Erik noted that the riparian legislation was sent to agencies that were most likely affected. However, the Governor's Office may share it widely with other state agencies after the initial review. DNR representatives expressed interest in being engaged in this. SRNet members discussed reaching out directly (either as individual organizations or as a group) to the Governor's office with concerns about roll out of this legislation and what they might do to help.
- Erik furthered noted that the Governor's budget would include funding for harvest monitoring and enforcement, the Columbia Basin Collaborative, and a position in the Governance and Recovery Office.
- Erik responded that there is outreach to local communities to explore expansion of a Northeast salmon recovery region. There is proposed funding that would formalize the informal outreach that has been occurring on this topic.
- Erik noted that there is a need for a larger outreach effort to industries on the riparian legislation. For counties, there has been outreach by the state's Department of Commerce to understand counties' needs.

SRNET PRIORITY WORK FOR 2022

- SRNet members were placed into groups via Zoom breakout rooms and asked to answer four questions. Members were asked to write down their thoughts in a Google Slides presentation. SRNet members identified the following main themes for the following questions:
 - What opportunities do people see to address barriers in salmon recovery?

- Available funding that can be prioritized to explore a long-term, sustainable, permanent funding source
 - Opportunity to convince other funding sources to fund projects that address problems they have caused
- Emphasis on data collection and analysis for adaptive management
- Shift in political will towards salmon recovery
- The need for a strong regulatory backstop to support successful restoration
- Strengthening each region's ability and authority to implement their plans
- Identifying staff capacity in agencies that will receive funding, and opportunities to streamline implementation of funds and regional salmon recovery plans
- How could our interactions as SRNet members be used to address these opportunities?
 - Space to share information, intel, perspectives, and different political landscapes
 - Educate each other on challenges and opportunities to collaborate and communicate
 - Identify shortcomings in salmon recovery and identify potential solutions
- How should SRNet prepare? Are there specific SRNet activities that would improve access to federal funding packages? Are there specific SRNet activities that would improve implementation of the Governor's policy and budget priorities for salmon recovery?
 - Implement/reassess a group charter
 - Share information and opportunities to discuss strategies to address challenges
 - Explore a policy topic and educate each other on the issues and brainstorm how SRNet can address together
 - Be more proactive versus reactive
 - Explore permanent funding source for salmon recovery instead of having yearly discussions on how to fund the work
- What are some potential topics for the next SRNet meetings?
 - Revisit group charter
 - Briefing on statewide salmon recovery strategy and connection to SRNet priorities and effort
 - Explore connection between funding opportunity and on the ground implementation

ACTION ITEMS

- GSRO, SRNet co-chairs, and facilitators (Planning Team) to review notes from each breakout room and develop potential topics for future meetings.
- Planning Team to schedule meetings on a quarterly basis
- Facilitation team to review existing group convening documents and work with GSRO and SRNet co-chairs to outline a potential draft charter