



Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board

February 3, 2023
Board Meeting
Webinar and In-Person Meeting
WSDOT, Room 124
11018 NE 51st Circle, Vancouver WA 98682

Draft Minutes
For Approval: March 3, 2023

Present: Scott Brummer, Dan Cothren, Marylynn Kostick, Asa Leckie, Hal Mahnke, Troy McCoy, Gary Medvigy, Todd Olson, Don Swanson, Dennis Weber, Jade Unger, and Del Wilson.

Absent: Ann Rivers and Olaf Thomason. Chairman excused the absent members.

Staff: Steve Manlow, Denise Smee, Amelia Johnson, Steve West, and Lorie Clark

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Chairman Olson announced that Olaf Thomason, Wahkiakum County Citizen, announced his retirement from the LCFRB this week. Chairman Olson thanked Board member Thomason for his contribution to the Board over the years. The Board will look to fill this position.

Chairman Olson welcomed Asa Leckie to the Board. Mr. Leckie is replacing Richard Mahar as the Skamania County Commissioner representative to the LCFRB.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: No public comments were made.

PARTNER REPORTS: No partner reports were submitted.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Director Manlow provided a written report in advance of the meeting. He highlighted the following items for the Board. Please direct any questions to Director Manlow.

- **Legislative Activities:** Director Manlow stated there are a lot of moving pieces that are important for salmon recovery relating to the operating and capital budgets for SRFB and Floodplains by Design. Hearings on the budget asks should be held at the beginning of March. He added that we would like to spend time talking directly with some of the legislators when we get closer to the hearing date regarding the budget discussions.
- **HB 1215 (Riparian Bill):** This bill would establish a riparian program with the Conservation Commission making funding available for riparian restoration. However, it is staff's understanding that this bill may have been dropped. Staff is looking for more information on it noting that an alternate bill may be proposed in its place.
- **SB 5297:** This bill concerns nontribal commercial salmon fisheries in Washington waters of the Columbia river. This bill would essentially eliminate the gillnet fishing in the lower Columbia. Director Manlow stated the bill has been modified to retain what we call safe fisheries. So, the terminal fisheries, Youngs Bay and Deep River, may not be subject to this bill. He will continue

to monitor the bill. He added that this bill is important to us and gets to the heart of how our Recovery Plan was structured as a collaborative effort. The Recovery Plan calls for maintaining viable fisheries on the path to recovery. Tribal, recreational, and commercial fishing is at the heart of the strategies and actions that have been laid out in the Plan. Staff has raised concerns with the bill from a technical standpoint and did an analysis of the bill on where it does and does not align with the Recovery Plan.

- Director Manlow stated staff would like feedback from the Board to see if we should engage further on the legislative issues. He expressed that the lack of attention to state and federally approved recovery plans is a primary concern for us. We would hope that the governor's legislation would be crafted in a way that wouldn't oppose other regions recovery plans.

Questions and comments from the Board:

- Board member Cothren thanked the Director for his work on this issue and appreciates the points he has put out on the bill. He added that there are quite a few people in Wahkiakum County that support commercial fishing. His concern is that if the legislature takes away commercial fishing, then they could take away other fisheries. He is supportive of the Director's comments and work staff is doing on this bill.
- Board member McCoy stated he is a sports fisherman. He is curious on the science aspect, have there been any studies in relation to gill netting and the size of fish in the Columbia River. Director Manlow stated he didn't know of any direct evaluation for gill netting and fish size. Ms. Johnson added that there have been changes in mesh size but didn't know if it was due to a specific study.
- Board member McCoy stated if we are going to advocate for gill netting, we should do a financial analysis of revenue that is generated by gill netters with respect to the amount of funding spent on salmon recovery.
- Board member Brummer stated the bill is bad policy across the board. He added that the Board needs to take a stance, not necessarily taking sides but bringing the message forward that there should be a balance between all users.
- Chairman Olson referenced the engagement the Director has had with the Governor's office on the bill and hearing the same concerns from other entities. Our voice isn't the only one out there and staff is working collaboratively with the other regions and lead entities.
- Board member Medvigy supported the Chairman and Director continuing to engage on the bill.
- Board member Unger stated the description in the Director's Report state the bill would ban gill net fishing in the Columbia River of Washington, is there a corresponding bill for the Oregon side, and if not, would that mean there would potentially be gill netting on half the river? Chairman Olson stated staff just started tracking this issue and it has not been assigned to committee yet. However, he added if gill netting is shut down in Washington and not in Oregon, then yes, that could happen.
- Board member Unger asked if the LCFRB is coordinating with Oregon. Director Manlow stated that Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) does the recovery work on the Oregon side and they are starting conversations with Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).
- Board member McCoy stated that this bill could play well in the public view by following the technical advice could be more beneficial and impactful.
- Board member Swanson questioned the political optics of a couple of weeks or so to introduce the legislation. He stated it seems rushed when the Recovery Plan took quite a few years and funding to put together. He added that we used to have a representative from the Governor's

Office attend our Board meetings. However, that doesn't seem to be happening anymore and it was valuable.

- Chairman Olson thanked the Board for the discussion on this issue and noted he and the Director would continue to follow the bill.

BUSINESS MEETING

Item #1 Consent Agenda

Board member McCoy moved and Board member Medvigy seconded to approve the Consent Agenda as submitted. No discussion. Motion carried.

Item #2 Salmon Recovery Grant Manual and Opening the 2023 Grant Round

Director Manlow presented the updated grants manual and calendar for 2023. Staff is requesting the Board authorize opening the 2023 SRFB and CRR grant rounds as these are managed jointly. In addition, the Board can make up to 10% of the regional SRFB allocation available for Monitoring projects.

Director Manlow stated in most years the state only has a total of \$100,000 to put towards Monitoring projects. The LCFRB did not submit any monitoring projects in 2022. However, this year there is an approximate total of \$534,000 that will be available for Monitoring making this a good opportunity. Staff have been talking with WDFW on some of the monitoring needs that would help us better track our populations to evaluate the recovery bottlenecks and our understanding of fish stocks. He clarified that at this time no monitoring proposals have been developed but this would be a good year for the Board to open it up so we can see what could be put together and carried forward for a funding request.

Director Manlow stated each region in the state receives an allocation from the SRFB. The LCFRB receives \$80,000 per year to administer the grant round. This amount has not increased in several years. The funds for the CRR grant program come from Tacoma Power and they are split between hatchery and habitat projects. The LCFRB manages habitat projects for Tacoma Power but does not manage the hatchery projects. In addition, Tacoma Power has provided \$75,000 per year (for five years) to the LCFRB to manage the CRR grant round.

Director Manlow stated staff have made minor changes to the 2023 grant round. At the last meeting, staff discussed the survey performed for sponsors and TAC members in order to figure out what worked and what didn't in order to improve the grant program. This is done every year to improve the process.

Staff is proposing hybrid virtual site visits this year instead of field visits. The last few years have been virtual only so this year staff is proposing getting the TAC and sponsors into the same room to present their project proposals. There are a variety of reasons for this, including the cost effectiveness as virtual tours have been a huge savings in terms of our budget. However, sometimes the SRFB Review Panel requests a field visit. If that happens, staff will work with sponsors to provide the opportunity.

Questions and comments from the Board:

- Chairman Olson referenced the Allowable Uses, he didn't know if that was new and came out of the conversations around landowner incentives or not but added being accommodating to the landowner where projects may occur would be good.

Board member Medvigy moved and Board member Weber seconded to 1.) Adopt the 2023 Salmon Recovery Grants Manual, 2.) Authorize opening the 2023 SRFB and CRR grant rounds; and 3.) Make up to ten percent of the regional SRFB allocation available for monitoring projects. No discussion. Motion carried.

Item #3 Storedahl Small Grant Materials and Opening the Grant Round

Director Manlow presented the item. He stated this relates to a previous Board action from 2014 where the Board agreed to receive funds from J.L. Storedahl and Sons for mitigation. They had a mining operation in the East Fork Lewis River and part of the requirement in the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) that was approved by NMFS, was they had to make money available for off-site habitat restoration projects. Storedahl entered into an agreement with LCFRB to pay \$25,000 for 10 years to be used for projects.

Director Manlow stated staff is proposing to open a grant round with these funds that focus on the sideboards of the original agreement. Staff will use a subset of the TAC and a separate review committee to review and rank the projects. Staff have developed a scoring process and grant manual for the program which are included with the materials in the Board packet.

Questions and comments from the Board:

- Board member Medvigy stated he has exchanged correspondence with local legislators, the Chair and Director to continue efforts with the floodplains. When the Board opens a new grant round, does staff look at previous projects, like the Ridgefield Pits, that are currently in place to see if the new grant is a fit to complete the funding for the project? Director Manlow stated when the Board has a new funding source, the grant round is open to all sponsors equally and not necessarily to one project or sponsor. However, that said, the project you are referring to is in the heart of the area that the HCP requires the funding to be used.

Board member Medvigy moved and Board member Mahnke seconded to recommend that the Board, 1) Adopt the proposed program guide and application materials for the Storedahl Grant Program; 2) Authorize opening and implementation of the 2023 Storedahl Grant Program; and 3) Authorize the Director to enter into contracts for project implementation upon project selection. No discussion. Motion carried.

Item #4 TAC Recruitment

Director Manlow presented the item. He noted there has been a turnover in the Technical Advisory Committee's (TAC) agency seats over the last few months. Specifically, two members recently resigned from the TAC to accept positions with the SRFB Review Panel. With the loss of their skill sets, staff

requests Board authorization to build on the current skill sets for our TAC and formally solicit for new members.

No questions or comments from the Board members.

Board member Wilson moved and Board member Medvigy seconded to recommend that the Board authorize staff to: 1) Work with the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to finalize a list of desired skill sets and expertise to be represented on the TAC; 2) Formally solicit additional TAC members based on that work; and, 3) Come back to the Board with a list of potential TAC members for consideration at the Board's March 2023 meeting. No discussion. Motion carried.

Item #5 Elect Vice Chair

Chairman Olson stated this item was discussed at the December 2022 Board meeting with Lee Grose retiring and no longer on the Board. We now have an open Vice Chair position. He asked if anyone is interested in filling the position.

Board member Brummer volunteered to fill the Vice Chair position to replace Lee Grose. He stated he replaced Lee Grose as Lewis County Commissioner in December. He is a fish biologist and has 29 years of experience. He added that 20 of those years were with WDFW and as a side note, he disclosed that he worked for Director Manlow at WDFW and Mr. Manlow is the person that hired him.

Board member Brummer stated he is willing to serve but also recognizes that there may be other members that have been on the Board longer that may want to fill the position. No other members volunteered to fill the Vice Chair position.

Chairman Olson thanked Board member Brummer for stepping into the vacant position and looks forward to working with him.

Board member Medvigy moved and Board member Unger seconded to appoint Scott Brummer to serve as Vice Chair. No discussion. Motion carried.

Item #6 Appoint Finance Committee Member

Director Manlow presented the item. When Rudy Salakory resigned from the Board, he left a vacancy on the Finance Committee. Currently, the Finance Committee is composed of Todd Olson and Dennis Weber. The Board Bylaws state the Finance Committee is comprised of a minimum of three members.

Chairman Olson asked the Board if any member wanted to join the Finance Committee.

Board member Mahnke volunteered to fill the open position. The Board members did not have any objections.

Board member Swanson also volunteered to join the Finance Committee. The Board members did not have any objections.

Chairman Olson thanked Board member Mahnke and Swanson for stepping into the position.

GOOD OF THE ORDER:

- Board member Weber invited the Board members to attend the Spirit Lake Cowlitz River Collaborative workshop to learn more about what the collaborative is doing. Currently, the USACE has a catch and haul strategy for lifting spawning salmon above the sediment retention structure and that process has not been particularly successful because the Toutle River is filled with sediment. In the last year or so, nature has presented an opportunity along Clear Water Creek on the edge of the sediment plain. It is being called Wall Creek and the interesting thing is that the natural rainwater, natural springs, and the creeks have allowed beavers to build dams. It is a great refugia but the only glitch is that the USACE schedule calls for a seven foot raise behind the sediment retention structure which effectively wipes out a bunch of that to Wall Creek. They understand the value of it but don't have the authority to do anything about it because it's a naturally occurring volitional fish bearing stream. So, part of the group discussions is trying to figure out which agency will take it on as a collaborative effort and protect the natural clean water return route. If anyone is interested in attending the workshop, he will send the information to Ms. Smee to be distributed.
- Board member Weber recommended the new Board members attend the Salmon Recovery Conference on April 18 & 19, 2023 in Vancouver. He has attended in the past and stated he's developed an appreciation for the wide range of efforts being made to figure out how to restore fish runs. He added that it is an enriching conference. Ms. Smee stated the LCFRB will pay the registration for Board member who want to attend. She will send out the registration information so please contact her if you want to attend.

Chairman Olson adjourned the meeting at 2:20 p.m.

/lc

Approved in open session on _____ Signed: _____
Todd Olson, Chairman