



# Coordinated Pathway Ranking Criteria

- **No Downstream Barrier(s)**
- **Habitat Quality**
- **Lowest Barrier in a Stream First**
- **Cost per Linear Gain**
- **Linear Gain (net)**
- **Project Readiness**
- **Barrier Status**
- **Number of Anadromous Species/Stock**
- **Stock Status**
- **Level of Coordination**



(As set forth by SSHB 2051)

## **FBRB Strategy for Identification and Implementation of Fixing High Priority Anadromous Fish Barriers.**

The Legislature established the grant program of the Brian Abbott Fish Passage Barrier Removal Board (FBRB) in 2014 to assist in identifying and removing impediments to salmonid fish passage. The duty of the board is to identify and expedite the removal of human-made or caused impediments to anadromous fish passage in the most efficient manner practical through the development of a coordinated approach and schedule that identifies and prioritizes the projects necessary to eliminate fish passage barriers caused by state and local roads and highways and barriers owned by private parties. The principles provided in Revised Code of Washington 77.95.180 are the foundation to the strategy of the FBRB. The principles include (but are not limited to):

- 1) fixing (non-federal) barriers that fail to meet the Washington State fish passage criteria
- 2) to correct multiple fish barriers in whole streams rather than through individual, isolated projects
- 3) to coordinate with other entities sponsoring barrier removals
- 4) in a manner that achieves the greatest cost savings
- 5) to correct barriers located furthest downstream in a stream system
- 6) in all (anadromous) areas of the state
- 7) projects benefiting depressed, threatened, and endangered stocks
- 8) projects providing access to available and high quality spawning and rearing habitat
- 9) whether an existing culvert is a full or partial barrier
- 10) projects that are coordinated with other adjacent barriers

The strategy developed by the FBRB was designed to address the principles listed above through the development of two funding pathways; the Watershed Pathway and the Coordinated Pathway. The two pathways work in concert achieve all of the principles of the legislative direction and are the basis of the FBRB strategy.

### **Watershed Pathway**

The FBRB strategy was to utilize the extensive work conducted by regional salmon recovery organizations that have already identified priority barriers, rather than to develop a new, centralized, top-down approach to prioritization. The recovery regions are uniquely positioned to know the highest priorities for anadromous barrier remediation in their region. This portion of the strategy met the principles for coordination, addressing ESA-listed and depressed stocks, as well as the state-wide approach.

The Watershed Pathway approach is to prioritize barrier repairs in whole stream reaches and subbasins that will have the largest benefit to salmon at a population scale. During the 2015-17 biennium, the FBRB asked the salmon recovery regions to nominate priority watersheds in their areas where fish passage is a significant limiting factor for salmon recovery. The FBRB received nominations from the Snake, upper Columbia, middle Columbia, and lower Columbia recovery regions. The Puget Sound and Washington coast recovery regions submitted watersheds but did not prioritize them. Therefore, the FBRB selected priority watersheds in these regions based on technical analysis and recommendation by WDFW. The FBRB applied a set of evaluation criteria to the nominated watersheds and barriers within the watersheds to ensure the regional selections were consistent with the FBRB principles. The FBRB expects the Watershed Pathway participants to continue implementing projects from their approved and prioritized lists in future grant rounds. If lead entities or salmon recovery regions want to propose new projects in their priority watersheds that are not included in the FBRB-approved lists, or to change their priority watersheds, they must work with their WDFW fish passage biologists to get FBRB approval.

### **Coordinated Pathway**

The Coordinated Pathway approach is to leverage other fish passage investments made by the Washington Department of Transportation, forest industry, local governments, and other entities by funding barrier repairs near or in coordination with these other fish passage projects. This strategy targets high value (biological benefit) fish passage projects regardless of their location within the state (there is no geographical mandate or limit). Previously submitted Coordinated Pathway projects are not retained between grant rounds. Each grant round is a new, open solicitation of projects that will be evaluated and scored against each other (using a scoring system that is consistent with the principles of the FBRB). Scoring criteria for submitted projects is subject to change in future biennia depending on FBRB priorities.

### **Gaps**

The strategy does not yet include a gap analysis to determine if there are other high priority barriers not being addressed by the FBRB funding pathways and other entities/processes. If there are high biological benefit barriers that exist, but have not been identified/proposed for FBRB funding pathways it is likely that challenges to feasibility have impeded their identification. Examples include lack of barrier inventories (they are unknown), social constraints (uncooperative landowners), or complexity or cost is too high for existing funding mechanisms (municipal, railroad). The FBRB wanted to focus on the priority barriers that are known and feasible to facilitate initial success. With a successful grant program underway that is coordinated with other processes and bringing additional funding to the barrier remediation arena, the next step will be expansion into the unknown or previously unfeasible barriers.

## SUMMARY

### Strategy discussion points from board's first two years

July 12, 2019

- This is not necessarily a strategy, more of a collaboration and cooperative approach; should stick with the legislative language
- A watershed approach makes some sense, but as a practical matter, other factors come into play – including where opportunities are ripest for implementing projects
- Could divide the state and work with priorities in each part; use regions and give priorities
- One approach is to use legislative priorities as a start, develop a set of criteria for each bullet
- Trying to draw priorities across the state can be difficult; should consider:
  - What are the benefits for fish
  - Cost of projects
  - Certainty of success
- Each region could bring in their top projects; if all are in one place let that happen then look at other issues/areas
- Paul Wagner commented that legislative direction is also about coordination.
- The Board discussed whether this is a two-step process. First, identify the larger benefit to fish. Second, encourage multiple projects that could accomplish those benefits. Provide opportunities for bundling projects.
- Julie Henning explained that she received feedback from regions, barely in time for the December meeting. She wants to affirm with the Board that using the focus area approach within each salmon recovery region is the chosen approach. **All members agreed with the focus area approach.**
- We have not verified the choices being made by regional boards
  - Don't want to be second-guessing their choices
- The question for regions: where would you start in addressing barriers?
  - Sequencing versus prioritizing – different thought processes
  - Brian Abbott thinks that ultimately, each of the 62 WRAs would have its own plan for barriers
- Focus of regions is on listed species; the need is to be broader
  - FBRB legislation says Endangered, Threatened, Depressed as criteria
  - Might want a broader focus
- We don't want to just spread the money around, but be thoughtful
- With this approach, how do specific projects occur? We'll need to develop criteria and criteria should be kept broad; two scales:
  - (1) Criteria for determining which watershed
  - (2) Criteria within the watershed

- What criteria do we ask regions?
  - What investments have already been made?
  - Re-ask: where could you do the most good?
  - Think about “scalability”
  - Think in terms of longer-term investments
  - Not a failure if the entire watershed isn’t done
  - Need to standardize the questions
  - FBRB should meet with the regions [Brian Abbott suggested doing this in conjunction with the Salmon Recovery Conference being held in May; we could have a fish passage item on the agenda]
- Conclusions for this discussion [April 2015]: WDFW can move forward with the request to Lead Entities to nominate HUC 10s. Need to think about the “auxiliary on-ramp,” AKA the opportunistic projects.
- Coordinated pathway June 2015 discussion:
  - Paul Wagner thinks a clearinghouse of information would be helpful
  - Carl Schroeder noted that cities produce project lists as part of their GMA-required capital improvement plans
  - For evaluation criteria, being the next barrier to be corrected is important (next in a geographic context)
  - The recency of the project seems important
  - It’s important to factor in the “linear gain” – how much linear feet of habitat will be opened by a project
  - Quality of habitat to be opened is also important
- Carl Schroeder said there are different approaches. One is that the FBRB could fund the top projects in one priority area; or fund the top projects in all regions. Julie Henning thinks it will be a combination. Brian Abbott suggested it will not be good to prioritize each Puget Sound area 1-14; instead prioritize the top packages.
- Neil Aaland summarized what might be put forth at the September meeting:
  - Approve lists of watersheds and HUC 10s
  - Discuss criteria to be used in weighting
- Casey Baldwin expressed some concern about the message being sent to the regions. He mentioned we need to be aware of the difference between treaty and non-treaty tribes when referencing tribal involvement. He also mentioned there is a difference in listing status between Coho and chinook. Julie said if there’s steelhead streams then that would cover chinook as well. Casey was okay with that explanation.