

FBRB Policy Subcommittee

February 5, 2025

Attendees:

FBRB Members: Tom Jameson, Kaylee Kautz, Carl Schroeder, April Magrane, Erik Neatherlin

Triangle Associates: Joy Juelson, Kate Galambos

Next Steps:

- Continue discussion with Policy Subcommittee to define the problem prior to drafting a proposal for the Board
- Next Policy Subcommittee Meeting: February 18th

Funding Line: Defining the Problem

- Question: What is the problem we are looking to solve?
- Concern or optics that the Board is funding lower priority projects. This concern has been brought up by some Board members
- In years past, there has not been funding available for all projects and the top projects are funded
- Establishing a funding line is a new conversation this biennium because the Board has had so much funding available
- \$46 million likely to fund the FBRB in the next biennium
- Sponsors have so much funding, they are limited in capacity to manage this volume of funding
- Match modernization could be part of the solution to this problem.

The Purpose of the Brian Abbott Fish Barrier Removal Program

- FBRB fills the "gap" in other fundings programs
- The Board wants anyone with a barrier to apply
- Currently the Board is funding barrier correction components of road infrastructure projects
 - Question: Of the projects the Board funds, what percentage of these projects are primarily infrastructure projects with a barrier correction component?
- If the project is not a regional priority, it often comes to the Board

- The Board supports cities and counties that may have "lower priority" barriers
- Lead Entity projects typically fund more rural projects, but they can only take on a handful of projects because there is a limited staff capacity

Possible Changes to Eligibility Requirements

- If the project is eligible, it should be funded. It does not align with the intent of the program to say a project is eligible and not funded it.
- Key eligibility component: Do no harm to fish.
- The Board doesn't want to create unnecessary barriers to apply
- There should always be flexibility in eligibility to demonstrate compounding benefit

Match Modernization

- Match modernization could be informed by the optimization model
- Consider eliminating a match requirement for projects that are in a priority watershed identified by the optimization model

FBRB Policy Subcommittee

February 18, 2025

Attendees:

FBRB Members: Tom Jameson, April Magrane, Erik Neatherlin

Triangle Associates: Joy Juelson, Megan Euclide

Proposed Agenda:

- Discussion: Identify the "problem statement" that implementing a funding line requirement would solve
- Review: Eligibility requirements for benefits to fish to determine how eligibility requirements could address Board concerns about project costs
- Identify: Additional information from staff required to make a decision

Path forward:

- **Minimum Scoring Next Steps:** Kaylee will review the current project list to create a score distribution to find a potential option for an appropriate minimum score threshold. A line could be drawn in the QHA scores to indicate which projects meet a QHA minimum score, helping to eliminate projects that are detrimental or minimal benefits for fish for future years.

Policy Subcommittee Proposal to the Board:

- **Minimum QHA Score Requirement:** Propose setting a minimum QHA score as a project criterion to ensure that projects meet a baseline standard for habitat quality and quantity.
- **Desktop Exercise for Sponsors:** Provide sponsors with a simple, preliminary exercise to assess their projects' potential QHA scores (before performing the on-the ground QHA survey), helping them determine if their projects are likely to fit the minimum score before applying.

Discussion Notes:

Goals for Today: Joy reviewed the notes from the last Policy Subcommittee meeting. The aim was to bring proposals to the Board at their March meeting.

1. Key Issues Discussed:

- **Minimum Score:** The group discussed implementing a minimum score for project eligibility based on habitat quality and quantity. They noted that this was an unusual year, as the first third of projects are typically funded, ensuring only the highest-

priority projects receive support. However, additional federal funding this year allowed more projects to be funded. A subcommittee member pointed out that as more barriers are addressed, the projects brought to the Board may provide lower overall benefits.

- **Challenges:** Scoring takes time, and a manual is needed to define how to score.

2. Eligibility Criteria/ Minimum Scoring cut off- Discussion Points:

- Projects should not cause harm or introduce issues for fish, such as upstream water quality problems.
- Assessing both the quantity and quality of fish habitat, along with the potential for habitat gain upstream after barrier removal, would be beneficial.
- Some projects meet eligibility criteria but are costly with limited habitat gains, raising cost-benefit concerns.
- A "do no harm" mechanism is proposed to prevent projects that could negatively impact habitat from being eligible.
- To help sponsors determine whether to apply, consider setting a minimum score or requiring a certain amount of habitat gain to the next barrier.
- Habitat assessments are time-consuming and costly; Tom emphasized the importance of screening projects early.

3. Proposed Solutions and Options:

- **Desktop Exercise:** Providing sponsors a simple check (desktop exercise) to quickly assess if a project is worth pursuing before the full QHA assessment.
- **Binning Approach:** Projects can be divided into high and low categories (bins) to streamline the process.
- **Habitat Quality Assessment (QHA):**
 - The QHA is scored based on habitat metrics and used to rank projects.

4. Next Steps and Path Forward: Discussion Points

-Historically, the Technical Review Team (TRT) has vetted projects using the QHA.

-The cost increase subcommittee could serve as a second line of defense to remove problematic projects for this year's list.

- **Excluding Low/No Benefit Projects:** The goal of the minimum score is to exclude projects that do not benefit fish and focus on projects that make sense in the long term.
- **Bringing to the Board:**
 - **Setting a Minimum Score:** Determine where the natural break for a minimum score should be. This could involve reviewing the 2025 project list and scoring them into quartiles, or bins, or finding the natural cut line for a project that would not gain benefits for fish, consider using QHA.

- **Desktop Exercise for Sponsors:** Provide sponsors with a rudimentary exercise to assess their projects' potential scores using QHA to limit sponsors that have projects that don't benefit fish to applying.

5. Action Items:

- **Score Distribution:** Kaylee will help review the 2025 project list, creating a QHA score distribution to determine the appropriate minimum score threshold.
- **Score Line:** A line could be drawn in the QHA to clearly indicate which projects meet the criteria, helping to eliminate projects with minimal benefits.

Takeaways:

- Key proposals include implementing a minimum score for habitat quality/ quantity and providing sponsors with tools (desktop exercise) to evaluate their projects early.
- The subcommittee aims to refine the process to prevent projects that do not benefit fish from moving forward.

FBRB Cost Increases: Subcommittee Recommendations

Cost Increase Subcommittee Meetings:
February 12, February 18 & March 12

Cost Increase Requests for:

- 21-1553 Derby Canyon Orchards
- 21-1511 Derby Creek BNSF Crossing
- 21-1530 Whiskey Creek Barriers RM 1.5-1.7
- 20-1692 CID at Coleman Creek Fish Screening & Passage
- 21-1502 Gilliam Creek Fish Passage Prelim Design

21-1553 Derby Canyon Orchards

Sponsor: Chelan County Natural Resource Department

Key Discussion Points:

- Requested cost increase: \$467,925
- Original request: \$374,000
- Request due to budget increases since the original application in 2022
- The project was part of WDFW 2024 NOAA application, therefore the budget is updated
- Multiple upstream corrections on Derby Creek completed already
- Sponsor would like to pair this correction with the 21-1511 Derby Creek BNSF Crossing due to project proximity and mutual benefits

Subcommittee Recommendation: Approve a cost increase of \$467,925 for Derby Canyon Orchards from supplemental CCA funding.

Move to decision point – Approve cost increase of \$467,925 based upon the cost increase request and the subcommittee recommendation.

21-1511 Derby Creek BNSF Crossing

Sponsor: Chelan County Natural Resource Department

Key Discussion Points:

- Requested cost increase: \$441,150
- Original request: \$1,813,050
- The project was part of WDFW 2024 NOAA application, therefore the budget is updated
- Multiple upstream corrections on Derby Creek completed already
- Sponsor is collaborating with BNSF
- Sponsor would like to pair this correction with the 21-1553 Derby Canyon Orchards due to project proximity and mutual benefits

Subcommittee Recommendation: Approve a cost increase of \$441,150 for Derby Canyon Orchards from supplemental CCA funding.

Move to decision point – Approve cost increase of \$441,150 based upon the cost increase request and the subcommittee recommendation.

21-1530 Whiskey Creek Barriers RM 1.5-1.7

Sponsor: Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group

Key Discussion Points:

- Requested cost increase: \$247,388
- Original request: \$500,000
- Request due to increased construction costs, project complexity, and project management needs.
- Sponsor also requests a policy waiver on the \$500k grant request limit for projects without preliminary design at the time of application (preliminary designs now completed)

Subcommittee Recommendation: Approve a cost increase of \$247,388 for Whiskey Creek Barriers from supplemental CCA funding and wave the \$500k grant request limit for projects without preliminary design at application.

Move to decision point – Approve cost increase of \$247,388 and wave \$500k grant request limit based upon the cost increase request and the subcommittee recommendation.

20-1692 CID at Coleman Creek Fish Screening & Passage

Sponsor: Kittitas County Conservation District

Key Discussion Points:

- Requested cost increase: \$510,893
- Original request: \$1,481,227
- Due to limited funds for the 21-23 biennium the Board approved a partial cost increase of \$453,200 in December 2024
- Ranked #3 on the 21-23 biennium list
- Sponsor is now requesting the remainder of the \$964,093 cost increase request be funded due to additional available funds

Subcommittee Recommendation: Approve a cost increase of \$510,893 for CID at Coleman Creek Fish Screening & Passage from 21-23 biennium return funds.

Move to decision point – Approve cost increase of \$510,893 based upon the cost increase request and the subcommittee recommendation.

21-1502 Gilliam Creek Fish Passage Prelim Design

Sponsor: City of Tukwila

Key Discussion Points:

- Requested cost increase: \$2,555,619
- Original request: \$300,000
- Significant concerns about the benefit to fish due to highly urbanized environment – barrier is located at the interchange of I-405 and I-5 in Tukwila
- Sponsor is looking to expand off-channel, juvenile rearing habitat from the Green River

Subcommittee Recommendation: Do not approve Cost Increase Request. Wave policy requirement of producing a final design to allow the sponsor to use existing funds to pursue preliminary design.

Move to decision point – Reduce final design deliverable to preliminary design based on recommendation from subcommittee.

BRIAN ABBOTT

Fish Barrier Removal Board

Amendment Form

Date: 2/3/2025

RCO Project Number: 21-1553

Sponsor Name: Chelan County Natural Resource Department

Project Name: Derby Canyon Orchards

Type of Amendment: Cost Increase Time Extension Scope Change

Justification: For cost increases, describe the need and specifically what the money will be used for. Please note: a grant cost increase requires the sponsor to increase its total match contribution to maintain the agreement's original cost share percentages. For time extensions that would place the project end date more than four years beyond the project start date, describe the reason and background for the delay and provide a timeline for project completion. For scope changes, describe the reason and what work types or elements of the project will change. Specify changes in quantities and/or metrics of project elements as necessary.

Cost increase:

This project has experienced budget increases since the application submittal in 2022. The original project budget was fairly simple, with simplified line items. After submittal to FBRB, the project budget was updated for the WDFW submittal to the NOAA grant opportunity in 2023 (Restoring Fish Passage through Barrier Removal). This WDFW budget submittal for the NOAA grant is reflected in the revised budget.

We have discussed the revised budget estimates in the WDFW submittal for the NOAA grant, to inform this cost increase request. After discussing the project with qualified engineering consultants, the budget submitted by WDFW to NOAA remains reasonable.

Supporting Documents Provided. (check all that apply):

- An updated Cost Estimate Spreadsheet composed of original budget with cost increase provided in a separate column clearly illustrating where costs have changed.
- An updated Project Milestone Worksheet
- Preliminary design package including design drawings and design report (Manual 22, Appendix C)

Review:



Approved: Yes No

Approved: Yes No

BRIAN ABBOTT

Fish Barrier Removal Board

Amendment Form

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BRIAN ABBOTT

Fish Barrier Removal Board

Amendment Form

Date: 2/3/2025

RCO Project Number: 21-1511

Sponsor Name: Chelan County Natural Resource Department

Project Name: Derby Creek BNSF Crossing

Type of Amendment: Cost Increase Time Extension Scope Change

Justification: For cost increases, describe the need and specifically what the money will be used for. Please note: a grant cost increase requires the sponsor to increase its total match contribution to maintain the agreement's original cost share percentages. For time extensions that would place the project end date more than four years beyond the project start date, describe the reason and background for the delay and provide a timeline for project completion. For scope changes, describe the reason and what work types or elements of the project will change. Specify changes in quantities and/or metrics of project elements as necessary.

Cost increase:

This project has experienced budget increases since the application submittal in 2022. After submittal to FBRB, the project budget was updated for the WDFW submittal to the NOAA grant opportunity in 2023 (Restoring Fish Passage through Barrier Removal). This WDFW budget submittal for the NOAA grant is reflected in the revised budget.

We have discussed the revised budget estimates in the WDFW submittal for the NOAA grant, to inform this cost increase request. After discussing the project with qualified engineering consultants, the budget submitted by WDFW to NOAA remains reasonable.

The cost increase request to FBRB is \$441,150, from \$1,813,050 to \$2,254,200, while maintaining the required 15% match.

Supporting Documents Provided. (check all that apply):

- An updated Cost Estimate Spreadsheet composed of original budget with cost increase provided in a separate column clearly illustrating where costs have changed.
- An updated Project Milestone Worksheet
- Preliminary design package including design drawings and design report (Manual 22, Appendix C)

Review:



BRIAN ABBOTT

Fish Barrier Removal Board

Amendment Form

Approved: Yes No

Approved: Yes

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Amendment Form

Date: 1/15/2025

RCO Project Number: 21-1530

Sponsor Name: Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group

Project Name: Whiskey Creek Barriers RM 1.5-1.7, Ellensburg

Type of Amendment: Cost Increase Time Extension Scope Change

Justification:

The Whiskey Creek barrier removal project has experienced a cost increase due to factors identified since the original 2021 grant proposal. These include:

1. Increased Construction Costs: Inflation and supply chain challenges have significantly raised the costs of materials and labor.
2. Project Complexity: The early design phases revealed several complexities, including:
 - The need to carefully maintain gradient continuity following the removal of three barriers to ensure long-term stream stability and effective fish passage.
 - Supporting two landowners with differing objectives and ensuring the project meets their needs without compromising ecological goals.
 - Designing a bypass for an existing weir that currently supports irrigation needs for a downslope parcel, adding technical and logistical challenges to the project.
3. Increased Project Management Needs: The added complexity of maintaining stakeholder alignment, addressing design challenges, and ensuring the integration of evolving project components has significantly increased the demand for project management support. This support is essential to coordinate between landowners, designers, and contractors and to oversee the project's successful delivery.

Proposed Use of Additional Funds:

The requested funding increase will be used to:

1. Address the escalated costs of construction materials and labor.
2. Develop and implement designs to maintain gradient stability post-barrier removal.
3. Provide solutions for the two landowners, ensuring alignment with project goals.
4. Construct the weir bypass (if acquisition efforts are unsuccessful).
5. Cover additional project management and coordination efforts required to navigate the complexities of the design, construction, and stakeholder engagement phases.

After reviewing the updated engineer's cost estimate, our total project cost estimate has increased from \$588,300 to \$924,780. Our new funding request breaks down as follows:

Project Total	\$924,780
RCO Share	\$747,388 (\$500,000 original award)

Amendment Form

Sponsor Match \$177,392 (\$131,902 reported in PRISM)

The cost increase from the original request is \$247,388. Additionally, we request a policy waiver on the \$500k grant request limit for projects that did not have a preliminary design at the time of application given that the project has proceeded to preliminary design since the offer of funding was made.

These cost increases are the result of recent inflation and additional project construction and management needs. We respectfully request consideration for additional grant funds to cover these unavoidable cost increases.

Generally, these increases are in permitting, construction supervision, cultural resource related work, construction materials, equipment, and labor, engineering services, and administrative costs as shown in the updated cost estimate spreadsheet compared to the original.

Supporting Documents Provided. (check all that apply):

- An updated Cost Estimate Spreadsheet composed of original budget with cost increase provided in a separate column clearly illustrating where costs have changed.
- An updated Project Milestone Worksheet
- Preliminary design package including design drawings and design report (Manual 22, Appendix C)

Amendment Form

Review:

Approved: Yes No

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BRIAN ABBOTT

Fish Barrier Removal Board

Amendment Form

Date: 2/27/2025

RCO Project Number: 21-1502

Sponsor Name: City of Tukwila

Project Name: Gilliam Creek Fish Passage Prelim Design

Type of Amendment: Cost Increase Time Extension Scope Change

Justification: For cost increases, describe the need and specifically what the money will be used for. Please note: a grant cost increase requires the sponsor to increase its total match contribution to maintain the agreement's original cost share percentages. For time extensions that would place the project end date more than four years beyond the project start date, describe the reason and background for the delay and provide a timeline for project completion. For scope changes, describe the reason and what work types or elements of the project will change. Specify changes in quantities and/or metrics of project elements as necessary.

The City is requesting a cost increase for our Gilliam Creek Fish Passage project to cover design expenses to advance the preferred alternative design (Alternative 3) from 30% to 100% design with ad-ready plans.

This project is more complex and costly than originally understood at the time of application. The alternatives analysis and preliminary design phases have required additional studies and analysis which have resulted in increased costs and an extended timeline.

The unforeseen elements that make this project more complex are: (1) integrating the 205 Levee and 66th Ave S culvert to create confluence habitat downstream of the structure; (2) developing two hydraulic models (one for Southcenter flooding and the other for sizing the structure and scour analysis); and (3) incorporating alternative gate technology to integrate fish and debris passage while maintaining flood protection.

The City has estimated a funding gap of \$300,000 to get to 30% design and a gap of \$2,555,619.00 to get to final design. A detailed cost estimate is attached to this request.

Supporting Documents Provided. (check all that apply):

- An updated Cost Estimate Spreadsheet composed of original budget with cost increase provided in a separate column clearly illustrating where costs have changed.
- An updated Project Milestone Worksheet
- Preliminary design package including design drawings and design report (Manual 22, Appendix C)

BRIAN ABBOTT

Fish Barrier Removal Board

Amendment Form

Review:



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BRIAN ABBOTT

Fish Barrier Removal Board

Amendment Form

Date: 3/11/2025

RCO Project Number: 20-1692

Sponsor Name: Kittitas County Conservation District

Project Name: CID at Coleman Creek Fish Screening & Passage

Type of Amendment: Cost Increase Time Extension Scope Change

Justification: For cost increases, describe the need and specifically what the money will be used for. Please note: a grant cost increase requires the sponsor to increase its total match contribution to maintain the agreement's original cost share percentages. For time extensions that would place the project end date more than four years beyond the project start date, describe the reason and background for the delay and provide a timeline for project completion. For scope changes, describe the reason and what work types or elements of the project will change. Specify changes in quantities and/or metrics of project elements as necessary.

The budget for this project was developed in 2020 (in very early COVID era). The design process was delayed and although construction was planned for 2023, it was moved to 2024. This year the project designs were finalized and the engineers cost estimate of \$2.8 million (see attached) exceeded the anticipated \$2 million budget. It was advertised for bid though as that cost estimate was not received until the day before the solicitation advertisements had been solidified. The engineers expressed the opinion that they might be high with their estimate as they were seeing costs level off for other projects.

We did advertise the project for bid understanding that we were months later than we wanted to be for the bid solicitation and that would impact project construction time particularly effecting the lead time for items (e.g. the bridge, headgates, etc.). We had great interest from contractors with about 15 attending our mandatory pre-bid meeting. Bidders began dropping out after that, all citing the short time frame for bidding and for construction and concerns about the costs. We did extend the bid date by a week, hoping to help with some of the concerns. We ended up with three bids, the lowest of which is \$3.6 million. We do not have enough in our budget now, so we need both additional time and funding to complete this project. A time extension request has been submitted.

Since the rejection of all bids, we have worked with the engineers to begin a value engineering exercise. Several of the bidders and suppliers expressed interest in providing input and feedback to lower the cost of the project. The engineers are currently gathering this input. If the time extension and cost increase are approved, the plan is to rebid the project in June 2025. This would give contractors plenty of time to plan and order the long lead items. We are also working with the engineers to do a Geotech study of the area to assist the uncertainties contractors expressed about the dewatering effort.

A cost estimate worksheet is attached assuming the engineers estimate of \$2.8 million will hold up. The cost increase request is \$964,093 which would bring the grant total to \$2,445,320. **In December 2024, FBRB provided a partial cost increase of \$453,200, leaving a needed balance of \$510,893.**

BRIAN ABBOTT

Fish Barrier Removal Board

Amendment Form

Supporting Documents Provided. (check all that apply):

- An updated Cost Estimate Spreadsheet composed of original budget with cost increase provided in a separate column clearly illustrating where costs have changed.
- An updated Project Milestone Worksheet
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