

**Fish Passage Barrier Removal Board – Meeting Notes**

**Date: January 19, 2016**

**Place: Washington State Association of Counties, Olympia, Washington**

**Summary: Agenda items with formal action**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Formal Action</b>
Meeting Notes - December	Approved

**Summary: Follow-up actions**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Follow-up</b>
Hold another meeting of subcommittee dealing with coordinated pathway	David Price will arrange another meeting
Hold a meeting of a communications subcommittee	Neil will arrange and staff (pending discussion with David Price)
Review workplan	David and Neil will discuss; will likely come back to next meeting as agenda item

**Board Members/Alternates Present:**

David Price, Chair, WDFW	Donelle Mahan, WDNR
Carl Schroeder, AWC	Brian Abbott, GSRO
Paul Wagner, DOT	Casey Baldwin, Colville Tribe (on phone)
Gary Rowe, WSAC	Jon Brand, WSAC/Kitsap County
Jonalee Squeochs (on phone)	

**Welcome/Introductions/Agenda Review**

The meeting was called to order at 9:05 a.m. by Dave Price; Facilitator Neil Aaland was present but went home due to illness. A motion was made by Carl to approve the December meeting notes as drafted; Paul seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Dave reviewed the agenda.

**Public Comments:** No public comments.

**Discuss Watershed Pathway**

Dave introduced Stacy Polkowske, WDFW, who provided an informational update. From January to May WDFW will be identifying focus reaches, working with Lead Entities and local salmon recovery groups. In May, they'll be presenting initial project lists to the FBRB. In early summer more feasibility and cost estimates on projects will be done. In August, they plan to present funding packages to the FBRB. She thinks things are on schedule. Dave noted that the site visits that will occur will be short. Stacy said projects brought to the FBRB in August are those that can be implemented during the 2017 biennium. The objective is to have projects in every nominated area.

Stacy then discussed the Snake River region projects. Barriers shown in her presentation are listed in priority order, based on information from that region. She highlighted the top three priorities: Cougar Creek, Buford Creek, and Cottonwood Creek. These are tributary to the Grand Ronde River. [Refer to the presentation for more details on this presentation.] She went on to review four additional projects in the same watershed.

Comments and questions included:

- Dave noted that he is wondering about the point at which work stops for a given watershed
- Carl noted that it is important to figure out how to better show, in a simple way, the projects and the amount of habitat opened up
- Brian wondered why projects 4 and 5 would be left off, given their lower costs [Dave said there's a point of diminishing returns we'll be faced with; he's not suggesting these projects are that

point but it's something to keep in mind; Paul noted there's a lot of potential habitat upstream for project 5]

She then described the Snake River tributaries. Barrier locations include Steptoe Creek, Stewart Creek, Penawawa Creek, and several others [Refer to the PowerPoint presentation]. Paul said WSDOT could help develop cost estimates for the barriers identified as owned by WSDOT.

Stacy reviewed the coastal HUC 10 nomination, the Newaukum. They have honed in on several potential projects in the Middle Fork Newaukum and Lower South Fork Newaukum. Three culverts are in Middle Fork Newaukum, opening 5.5 miles, and 4 (including 1 private) on the Lower South Fork Newaukum, opening 8.7 miles. She noted they are also continuing to work on the Puget Sound focus areas.

Brian asked if there will be an upstream/downstream check to be sure there are not additional barriers; Dave thinks they will be able to rely on the local groups for field verification once they receive training. He summarized some comments he has heard today:

- Note whether roads are local or state and their names
- From the region, why is this a regional priority
- Whether ephemeral or perennial
- Characterize upstream and downstream habitat
- Use maps

### **Coordinated Pathway Nominations**

Several FBRB members met as a subcommittee last week to review alternate methodologies for prioritizing Coordinated Project Pathway nominations. They went through several different alternatives. Dave would like to land on a preferred methodology today. Cade Roler with WDFW reviewed the alternatives for project ranking. They initially ran a couple of filters that align with legislation in order to develop a refined list of projects. Filters included: Is the project on an anadromous streams, are there downstream barriers, and is the project in coordinated with a recently funded or fixed barrier (within the last 5 years). If the projects did not pass these filters they were put into a separate list of partially qualified projects.

The 123 remaining projects were then bundled into 69 barrier packages. He flagged some projects that didn't pass the filters but still merit consideration; he will bring those to the next FBRB meeting for further discussion. Casey thought a combination of project readiness, potential biological benefit, and spatial distribution across the regions should be looked at. He referred to handouts called "Coordinated Project Pathway Ranking Criteria #1" and "2". Option #1 is quite complicated; looks at accessible weighted habitat. Accessible weighted habitat only scores the lowest barrier in a package and multiplies the inverse of the culvert passability (how much passability would the crossing gain if repaired) by the net linear habitat gain. This option would result in an interactive process of choosing projects, which will change the score of every other nominated project after each selection. Additionally, Option #1 assigns point values for project readiness, number of anadromous species present, and the highest level of protection for a present species. Dave thinks the FBRB needs to wrestle with the issue and importance of severity/passability of barriers. Casey thinks we need to take into account stream width and total area, and habitat quality [Cade looked at options around quality; still trying to figure out how to incorporate this].

Cade Roler then reviewed Ranking Criteria #2. This methodology uses linear gain as a major driving factor for the ranking process. He notes that linear gain resonates with many people and is used as ranking criteria in many other grant programs and prioritization models. This option recommends filtering the list of 123 projects by the top 50 projects with the most linear gain. The list of 50 projects would then be ranked based on project readiness, barrier status, the presence of potential barriers downstream, number of anadromous species present, and the highest level of protection for a present species. Dave would like to figure out a way to take quality into account, but that is difficult with the limited information that was provided by the applicants. The project solicitation did not require applicants to provide a plethora of

information regarding stream habitat quality. The group generally discussed criteria and geographic distribution.

Additional discussion points:

- Dave suggested it would be good to focus on linear gain and geographic distribution
- Cade noted that using this method provides a relatively good geographic distribution in relation to the nominating organizations.
- Casey thinks under “stock status” need to consider threatened or endangered status
  - He also wonders about criteria 3 and 4; is it an off-ramp when it’s 100% passable? [Brian said when a barrier is falling apart, it might become impassable in the future]
  - Cade noted that he did not exclude crossings that WDFW data show as passable; the data is often older and the barrier status could have changed since its last assessment. Additionally, if the crossing is a priority for the local entity it should be considered.
- Paul thinks it’s important to focus on the quality of the project; deal with geographic distribution as a separate issue
  - He thinks it’s worth considering doing a High, Medium, Low rating based on the level of coordination.
    - Number of partnership opportunities and fixed/funded restoration projects.
- Dave thinks the legislature is going to want one list, and wants to know that the FBRB followed a reasonable process
- Brian sees the Watershed Pathway focus areas as being one project

A short break was taken for lunch. Dave suggested going around the table to narrow the conversation, get ranking criteria that makes sense.

- Carl likes coordinated pathway #2, take into account costs and benefits in some way, and also want to take quality of projects into account; having one list makes sense.
- Paul sees focusing on #2; should have a factor related to cost per lineal gain; look at lineal gain as a factor in elevating a project’s score.
- Gary thinks we’ll have to look at the points but then adjust based on other factors.
- Brian agrees with other people; he has a long term idea thinking ahead to next biennium’s ask;
  - He thinks there will be a report to the legislature; he is concerned that WDFW doesn’t have the resources.
  - He suggests opening the list back up and keeping it open to start building a list, like they did in 1997 we could have maps by region showing potential projects; could also include DOT projects and others, which could be the basis for facilitating future coordination with project proponents.
  - That would be something to show the Legislature.
- Casey agrees about habitat quality, that’s the one piece in #2 that is missing; add it as additional questions in the first cut.
  - Cade thought we could use a temperature model developed by the US Forest Service in the first cut as an indicator, but the best way to measure quality is when you’re actually on the ground.
  - Casey thinks you could ask project proponents for some kind of description that addresses quality.
- Cade also suggested capping the points for linear gain, otherwise that will overwhelm the points.

Dave said WDFW will pull together another subcommittee meeting to review these points.

### **Communications Strategy**

Brian reviewed the status of the plan. A workshop was held on January 8<sup>th</sup> with 18 people attending. Barbara Cairns led the discussion; purpose was how to apply the plan to individual organizations. He hopes that Neil will be responsible for being sure the plan is implemented. WSAC offered to help with printing; there are some details of cost and number of copies to print. Alison noted it could be expensive

to do a print shop quality print; she will get an estimate. Brian said they could print different versions at different levels of quality. Brian noted it is the responsibility of each member to get the information out to their caucus. He also noted a communication subcommittee will meet when Neil returns; look for a meeting within two weeks. A representative from WFPA attended and is eager to participate.

**Workplan Status**

Dave referred to the handout from Neil; a status update. It is a summary of plan items and deadlines was handed around; this is from the adopted workplan. It's important to re-visit some of these items. He noted we're behind on some things, but it's because we've been focusing on key items. We may need to re-visit some of these tasks, and we'll come back to this at the next meeting; Neil will send around the workplan.

Members decided to keep the meeting day on Tuesday during session.

The meeting adjourned around 1:30 pm.

**The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for 9:00 am to 2:30 pm Tuesday, February 16. Location is the Washington Counties building.**

\*\*\*\*\*

**Others present at meeting:**

Laura Till, WDFW	Larry Dominguez, WDFW
Cade Roler, WDFW	Stacy Polkowske, WDFW
Alison Hart, WDFW	John Nelson, HDR