

**FORUM ON MONITORING  
SALMON RECOVERY AND WATERSHED HEALTH  
SUMMARY MINUTES**

---

*DATE: May 14, 2008*

*TIME: 9:00 a.m.*

*PLACE: Natural Resources Bldg.*

*Olympia, Washington*

---

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Bill Wilkerson	Forum Chair
Kaleen Cottingham	Director, Recreation and Conservation Office
Chris Drivdahl	Director, Governor's Salmon Recovery Office
Josh Baldi	Designee, Department of Ecology
Jim Cowles	Designee, Department of Agriculture
Tim Smith	Designee, Department of Fish and Wildlife
Carol Smith	Designee, Conservation Commission
Barry Thom	Designee, NOAA Fisheries
Rob Wilson	Designee, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Terry Wright	Designee, Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission
Jeff Breckel	Executive Director, Lower Columbia Salmon Recovery Board
Jim Cahill	Puget Sound Partnership
David Mills	Designee, RFEG's Advisory Board
Julie Morgan	Executive Director, Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board
Alex Conley	Executive Director, Yakima Basin Fish and Wildlife Recovery Board
Bob Metzger	Designee, USFS Olympic National Forest
Kit Paulsen	Designee, City of Bellevue
Pete Schroeder	Designee, Lead Entity Advisory Group
Brad Thompson	Designee, US Fish & Wildlife Service

---

IT IS INTENDED THAT THIS SUMMARY BE USED WITH THE NOTEBOOK PROVIDED IN ADVANCE OF THE MEETING.

A RECORDED TAPE IS RETAINED BY THE RECREATION AND CONSERVATION OFFICE AS THE FORMAL RECORD OF MEETING.

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**

Chair Wilkerson opened the meeting of the Forum on Monitoring at 9:05 a.m.

Kaleen Cottingham, Director of the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO), started the meeting by introducing the new chair, Bill Wilkerson.

Chair Wilkerson described the importance of building relationships between the Forum, Puget Sound Partnership, Northwest Power and Conservation Council (NWPPCC), Columbia River Work Groups, and others. He also described his vision for shifting the emphasis of the Forum toward making decisions, rather than receive informational briefings. Chair Wilkerson wants a structure that provides staff support and briefings at the agency level.

Kaleen Cottingham pointed out two letters included in the Forum members' packets. One is a tentative award letter from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) will be the grant recipient, but the funds will largely support work at the Puget Sound Partnership. Kaleen added that the RCO expects

to receive \$23.5 million from the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund (PCSRF) grant. At least ten percent of the funds must be allocated to monitoring. The second letter was sent from the Monitoring Forum to the Northwest Power and Conservation Council providing recommendations to amend the Council's Fish and Wildlife Program.

Kaleen introduced new staff who will be working with the Monitoring Forum:

- Rebecca Connolly was introduced as the RCO's new Board Liaison.
- Moriah Blake was introduced as the new Administrative Assistant for the Salmon Section.
- Steve Leider, of the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office, is serving as interim staff for the Monitoring Forum until the new coordinator is hired.

## **Agenda Item #2: Approval of December and February Minutes**

Chris Drivdahl, Director of the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office (GSRO), requested to amend two sentences from page three of the February minutes. She asked to strike the third sentence under the State of Salmon Report, which read, "Regional salmon recovery organizations have decided to have more involvement with watershed so they can tell the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office (GSRO) what is in the report not the other way around."; and to strike the words "but she is hoping to push it back until January.", from the final sentence of the paragraph.

Kit Paulson, of the City of Bellevue, asked to omit the words "ambient freshwater" from the second sentence of the first paragraph under the Water Quality Consortium Progress Report on page two.

Bob Metzger, of the USFS Olympic National Forest, asked to change the words "forest services" to "forest service" in the final sentence of the fifth paragraph of page six. And in the last sentence of the second paragraph from the bottom of page seven, he wished to change the wording from "want to label some metrics" to "want to recommend some minimum metrics"

The Forum approved the December 2007 and February 2008 minutes as corrected.

## **Agenda Item #3**

### **Review and Discussion of Forum's Role and Operational Structure: How Do We Focus Collective Energy on Key Responsibilities?**

Steve Leider, of the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office and Interim Monitoring Forum staff, gave a presentation that included an overview of Forum history and set the stage for a discussion of the Forum's role and structure.

During the presentation, the Forum discussed difficulties in standardizing monitoring practices due to different needs, priorities, and goals, particularly among regional boards. The Forum also talked about older monitoring data, how it addressed data gaps, and how it compares to more recent monitoring practices. The presentation ended by asking the

Forum a series of questions to address, “How do we organize to proceed on the most important priorities?”

Chair Wilkerson reiterated that the structure should include directors at the policy level, advisors, and technical staff. He noted that he did not have answers about how the Forum could address this at regional and local government levels. He noted that if we want to get monitoring and a coordinated budget off the table, directors need to be briefed and have internal discussions before coming to the meeting to make decisions. He believes that the Forum will need to make hard decisions, and create a budget with high, medium, and low priorities.

Tim Smith, of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), noted that the organizational chart needs to show what is above the Forum. He asked where the member agencies fit in, and what are the roles and expectations. Tim recommended that this should be included in a charter that clarifies to the agencies what it means to be part of the Forum.

Jeff Breckel, Executive Director of the Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board, agreed that the Forum has done a lot of good technical work, but that as a group, lacks an action agenda for implementing. From the regional organization perspective, they have to answer varied questions from all of the agencies and answer to local governments, who are looking to hold state agencies accountable. Similar to the regional organizations, the Forum needs to look at the questions from a collective approach instead of each entity looking out for their needs.

Carol Smith, of the Conservation Commission, noted that it's important to tell story of salmon recovery. She also thinks the Forum needs to be more strategic.

Josh Baldi, of the Department of Ecology, noted that this isn't just salmon, it is watershed health and that the Forum doesn't want to lose the watershed for the fish. He thought it also was important to look at institutional barriers that have impeded progress, noting that understanding barriers will help us make progress.

Chris Drivdahl noted that she views issues in three buckets: monitoring (the right questions), data (answers to the questions, in terms of the minimum data needed), and reporting (telling the story). Reporting is a challenge because we don't have a good way of organizing and accessing data.

Kit Paulson added that confusion regarding roles, funding, and addressing the different layers are the biggest problems. She said that the Forum cannot be successful if we don't know the questions to ask at each scale. The Legislature continues to hear from different areas about monitoring activities, so they believe a great deal of work is taking place; and if the Forum does not provide results, they do not want to continue funding. If the Forum is going to make a difference, we need a united framework, and we need to get people making policy decisions to articulate what the legislature wants to know.

Julie Morgan, Executive Director of the Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board, agreed with Chris and asked if the Forum would address adaptive management as well as monitoring, including data storage, analysis, and synthesis. Julie thought the structure would be better if the buckets under the steering committee looked like this:

- Monitoring
- Data stewardship
- Data analysis
- Reporting
- {Structure based on tasks.}

Julie noted a lot of money is spent on research and development, and the Forum could break the cycle of continuous investment in new products by endorsing particular products. This would free some research and development funds to address the data gaps.

Jim Cahill, of the Puget Sound Partnership, said that the Forum needs to focus on strategic questions and work back from there to see if we can answer them. Outreach also is essential to maintaining a consistent message that monitoring is important.

Alex Conley, Executive Director of the Yakima Basin Fish and Wildlife Recovery Board, noted that users need data analysis, and that someone needs to own that process. Analysis is vital to answering high level questions.

Chair Wilkerson noted that based on the conversation, the Forum is thinking like a policy group. If we treat the Forum as more of a policy group, we can elevate this substantially. Instead of budget wish lists, the Forum will provide questions with a process for answers, and a corps of agency directors ready to make decisions and recommendations addressing the hard questions. He stated that the Forum needs to market monitoring as something more tangible and important to the public; as a system that solves a problem. He added that the Forum will define questions, get data to answer them, and then sell the story to the legislature, the Governor, and the Northwest Power and Conservation Council.

Bob Metzger suggested that the Forum also consider collaboration. He explained that to sell monitoring, we need to show how we're working together. The agencies and regional organizations all have different needs based on respective federal, state, and local scales, but coordination gives more credence.

Chair Wilkerson noted that the Puget Sound's cooperation with the federal caucus is the best model for collaboration that he has seen. The Forum needs to figure out how to bring the federal caucus to the table for monitoring.

Kaleen Cottingham added that the state legislature is less willing than the federal government to fund monitoring, and that the Forum has relied on federal dollars

Terry Wright, of the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission, noted that the Forum's discussion of the group's purpose was great, but wanted to know, "how will we do it?" Many of the issues are too big for quarterly meetings, and Terry suggested using smaller

groups with specific task assignments and timelines to get the group headed in the right direction.

Chair Wilkerson stated that the Forum's first step is to report to leaders that we are going to be more policy-focused. He and Kaleen will meet with directors to talk this through. Directors need to bring questions to the table of what we should be addressing as a Forum, and ideas of how we will address them. At the next meeting, we need to determine key questions, region by region.

Pete Schroeder, of the Lead Entity Advisory Group (LEAG), stated that the Lead Entities are at the bottom of the pyramid, and are very interested in helping to sell monitoring to the public so that the legislature sees public support. The biggest question is "what have you done for delisting?" While delisting is a salmon issue, not a policy issue, it is inextricably linked with monitoring and is an underlying factor in the Forum's success.

Chair Wilkerson discussed drivers for water quality and salmon, such as delisting and climate change. Water and salmon are both important to the public, and the Forum can recommend marrying ourselves to both.

Tim Smith stated that monitoring has changed over time to become an end unto itself, and that the Forum needs to reconnect it as a driver of public policy. The public doesn't understand monitoring to be a tool for salmon recovery or watershed health. He thinks monitoring is most effective as a transparent tool, like a bank statement or report card – both are monitoring, but aren't perceived as such.

Steve Leider, of the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office, reminded the Forum about previous discussions regarding the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) needs. NOAA has provided guidance to the Forum along the way and we have incorporated it. Elizabeth Babcock, NOAA's Recovery Coordinator for the Puget Sound, was at the February meeting to discuss a tighter intersection between the Forum and NOAA needs. She is working to provide answers to the questions the Forum posed. Steve added that there is a Columbia River federal caucus with an active interest in monitoring.

Chair Wilkerson asked about the activity of the Columbia caucus.

Barry Thom, of NOAA, answered that there is some question about the caucus' status. It will exist, but they may redefine their function. He also explained that there are many different groups with similar themes to the Forum that are trying to figure out the "doer" part. NOAA is trying to develop more detailed protocols for collecting and analyzing data. The Forum can have a role in developing processes at a state level so it contributes to the broader level. NOAA also needs to determine "how much is enough?" in the larger monitoring framework.

The Forum discussed formalizing the use of technical sub-committees in conducting its policy work.

Josh Baldi noted differences of opinion in courts and the legislature regarding water quality and quantity relationships. Another important point is to change the “little p” to a “strategic p”. The drivers of this discussion seem to be what we think are strategic questions. Josh stated that he wants to understand our process.

Chair Wilkerson answered that there are no formal processes yet, and that the Forum needs to know what the questions are. The Department of Ecology can tell us about the water questions, in summary format.

Kaleen Cottingham added that she will task the Recreation and Conservation Office staff with gathering the questions.

Kit Paulson, Josh Baldi, and Chair Wilkerson discussed the role of the Puget Sound Water Quality Consortium. It was explained that the Consortium is working on an organizational structure which must eventually fit into the Partnership’s action agenda. There are enough Forum members involved with the group, that there is currently no need for formal Forum participation. Chair Wilkerson noted that he does not want the Consortium to duplicate efforts with the Puget Sound Partnership, but ensure that the Consortium’s work is linked to the state. Josh responded that the Consortium’s purpose was to serve as a pilot that could be shared statewide. Kit Paulson added that the Consortium reports to the Forum two times per year.

#### **Agenda Item #4 Review and Discussion of Agency Monitoring Budget Requests for the 2009-2011 Biennium**

Steve Leider gave a presentation on the agency monitoring budget request review process. The presentation highlighted budget requirements, background information on the Forum’s recommendations to the Office of Financial Management, as well as the Forum’s proposed schedule for reviewing agency budget recommendations.

Following Steve’s presentation, each of the following state agencies provided a presentation to the Forum on their respective monitoring activities:

- Kaleen Cottingham, Recreation and Conservation Office – Kaleen provided preliminary numbers on the costs of the RCO’s monitoring efforts, dating back to 2001. She explained costs related to intensively monitored watersheds, project effectiveness monitoring, status and trend monitoring, and of the agency’s databases. She concluded her presentation with a summary of draft requests for 2009-11 funding.
- Ken Dzinbal, Department of Ecology - Ken discussed the Department of Ecology’s monitoring budget. He described current monitoring activities and their cost in the 07-09 biennium. Ken also presented an early draft of new monitoring budget requests for the Department of Ecology.

- Carol Smith, Conservation Commission – Carol stated that the Conservation Commission has a single monitoring project on the ground, costing \$600,000 from the general fund for the biennium. She noted that conservation districts do most of the on-the-ground projects.
- Scott Redman, Puget Sound Partnership – Scott explained that the Partnership is in “monitoring development” mode. They’ve created a monitoring program design for 2008, but need a program to monitor effectiveness and status and trends for 09-11. They will get to questions in this biennium, but not the project design to answer them. Chair Wilkerson noted that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) budget includes \$1.5 million for monitoring, and it would cover some of these costs. Scott responded it is likely that the Partnership will use the EPA funds, which may also be used for status and trends or other proposals. He noted that the dollars are for monitoring and information management, so some of it may be used for information management.
- Eric Neatherlin, Department of Fish and Wildlife - Eric explained that the Department of Fish and Wildlife does not have draft budget request materials available yet. He outlined the objectives of the Department of Fish and Wildlife related to monitoring:
  1. Selective fisheries effectiveness monitoring
  2. Habitat work schedule, exclusively federally funded, at least through 2011
  3. Estuary/salmon recovery
  4. Juvenile nearshore utilization
  5. Habitat remote sensing (part of the Forum status & trends framework)
  6. Hatchery reform
  7. Smolt monitoring (fish in/fish out) including expanding to non-listed species
  8. Salmonid Stock Inventory (SaSI) update
  9. HPA program refunding

Chair Wilkerson said that the nine priorities that Erik listed need a clearer link to monitoring. Erik said he would use the 2006 Office of Financial Management (OFM) report as a framework. The 2007-2009 costs are not available at this time.

- Jim Cowles, Department of Agriculture - Jim explained that the Department of Agriculture has one monitoring program focused on pesticides. The program collects weekly samples in five major watersheds in Washington including one urban watershed in Seattle. The Department of Agriculture spends \$1.6 million per biennium, and expects to request a small add to cover operational increases for next biennium. The Dept of Agriculture passes this funding to Ecology, which conducts the actual monitoring for them.

**Agenda Item #5**  
**2008 Forum Meeting Schedule**

Chair Wilkerson, Steve Leider, and Kaleen Cottingham discussed the upcoming meeting

schedule. With concurrence from Forum members, Chair Wilkerson decided to continue with the current schedule.

Kaleen Cottingham announced that the next meeting of Forum is July 16<sup>th</sup>, with subsequent meetings on September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2008 and December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2008.

**ADJOURN**

Meeting adjourned at 3:04 p.m.

---

Bill Wilkerson, Chair

Next Meeting:        July 16th, 2008  
                              *Columbia Room, Legislative Building, Olympia*