

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

*DATE: March 18, 2009*

*TIME: 9:00 a.m.*

*PLACE: Natural Resources Building*

*Olympia, Washington*

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Bill Wilkerson	Chair, Forum on Monitoring Salmon Recovery and Watershed Health
Kaleen Cottingham	Director, Recreation and Conservation Office
Chris Drivdahl	Director, Governor's Salmon Recovery Office
Jim Cowles	Designee, Department of Agriculture
Ginny Stern	Designee, Department of Health
Bruce Crawford	Designee, NOAA Fisheries
Carol Smith	Designee, Conservation Commission
Josh Baldi	Designee, Department of Ecology
Sara LaBorde	Designee, Department of Fish and Wildlife
Jim Cahill	Designee, Puget Sound Partnership
Rob Wilson	Designee, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Bob Metzger	Designee, USFS Olympic National Forest
Jeff Breckel	Executive Director, Lower Columbia Salmon Recovery Board
Terry Wright	Designee, Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission
Kit Paulsen	Designee, City of Bellevue
Pete Schroeder	Designee, Lead Entity Advisory Group
Dick Wallace	Northwest Power and Conservation Council
Bob Nichols	Governors Executive Policy Office, Salmon Recovery Funding Board

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

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

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 9:05 a.m.

Chair Wilkerson invited Forum members and those in the audience to provide introductions.

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

Kit Paulsen proposed adding two sentences to Agenda Item #6 from the December Puget Sound Monitoring Consortium's presentation. After the first sentence add the following sentence: A report on pilot projects, storm water work group, and governance issues was being provided to the Forum and to the State Legislature. Also, in the third paragraph, add the following sentence to clarify the last part of the paragraph: Current funding is proposed to be moved from Ecology to the Partnership at the end of this biennium.

Dick Wallace **MOVED** to pass the December Minutes. Kit Paulsen **SECONDED**. The Forum **APPROVED** the December 2008 minutes as corrected.

**Agenda Item #3: Announce 2009 Salmon Conference**

Brian Abbott, RCO Salmon Section Manager, announced the April 15-16, 2009 Salmon Projects Conference at the Little Creek Conference Center. Brian explained that registration is open and the cost is \$80.00. Brian reviewed the two day conference agenda, including workshops, a help desk and networking events. Conference presentations will be available online after the conference.

#### **Agenda Item #4: 2008 State of the Salmon in Watersheds Report**

Steve Leider, of the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office, presented the 2008 State of the Salmon Report. He highlighted changes to the report from previous years, such as updates to the series of comparing "then and now" across the 4-Hs, modifying the "dozen dials" or high level indicators, showing progress among viable salmonid populations across the state, and interviews with local community members involved in salmon recovery efforts within various watersheds.

Kaleen Cottingham stated that the legislature wants to see all of the reports covering salmon recovery to be combined. The Forum was impressed with the report, and noted that it will be helpful in revealing the story of salmon recovery. Steve responded that the purpose of the State of the Salmon is to present the data, and allow the reader to decide the story. The Forum discussed the benefits of the State of the Salmon's high level approach to presenting the data, but also noted the drawbacks for duplicity among other salmon recovery reports compiled by other state agencies and more detailed reports at the local, regional, and watershed level.

Chair Wilkerson explained that the primary audience for the State of the Salmon report is the Governor and the Legislature. He suggested asking the policy makers what will help them make a hard budget decision and what will help them understand that the forum is improving the resources for salmon recovery.

#### **Agenda Item #5: Legislative Update**

Kaleen Cottingham explained that there are two bills (House Bill 2157 and Substitute Senate Bill 6004) in the house that deal with boards and commissions, which have not moved forward. There are three bills in the senate that have moved past committee – there is little change to the Forum in the Governor's budget. Senator Craig Pridemore is presenting a bill which suspends the Monitoring Forum and Biodiversity Council, eliminates the Salmon Recovery Funding Board and moves the Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board to the Department of Natural Resources. It is also likely that the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office will be moved to the Recreation and Conservation Office.

The Revenue forecast comes out tomorrow (March 19, 2009), and budget cuts will be expressed by the next week. Terry Wright asked how much of the budget is from the capital budget, as opposed to administrative fees from contracts. Kaleen responded that most of the grant management funds are from the capital budget, there are programs that are 100 percent general fund money. RCO may lose quite a few of the dedicated funds, since the legislature is proposing moving dedicated funds from the capital budget to the operating budget for social services. Bill Wilkerson asked to hear from other agencies regarding the impact on monitoring and baseline programs.

Rob Duff noted that Ecology is taking hits. Monitoring is targeting status and trends funds through the Puget Sound Partnership, and the Environmental Protection Agency's National Estuary Program (NEP). Programs are at risk, namely monitoring programs outside of the Puget Sound. Scott Redman explained that the Partnership is proceeding with work to the NEP.

Sara LaBorde noted that the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) are at a \$31 million budget deficit and 170 employees received at risk letters within the last couple of weeks. Since 40 percent of WDFW's budget comes from federal funds, the 2010 budget will greatly impact the agency. The IT, Habitat, and Fish Programs are at risk. Seven hatcheries are on the block to be closed, but if hatcheries are not closed, budget cuts will greatly impact the rest of DFW. Sara LaBorde announced that Lead Entity Day was a success, and pointed out that the Project Conference is creating buzz within WDFW, which has helped Lead Entities feel secure about the Lead Entity program moving to the RCO.

Chair Wilkerson noted that the Forum must prove that it can govern in tough economic times. Dick Wallace echoed the Chair's comment, and agencies must be willing to sacrifice a bit to move forward.

Kit Paulsen pointed out that local governments are experiencing budget difficulties and making cuts at the local level. Terry Wright explained that the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) left \$1.8 million out of the tribal budget, so tribes are working with BIA to account for the budget shortfall.

#### **Agenda Item #6: NOAA's Guidance for Monitoring Salmon Recovery**

Bruce Crawford discussed the guidance document for currently listed salmonid species being prepared by NOAA. The document is currently in review at the Science Center and will be returned to NOAA after the feedback period from local groups wraps up on March 27, 2009. The document is expected to be distributed to states and tribes in early April.

#### Forum Discussion:

Kaleen asked Bruce if the document will ask current monitoring efforts, such as RCO's contract with Tetra Tech, to change course. Bruce assured Kaleen that it would not impact current projects. Steve Leider added that the suggestions in the guidance report will not be a surprise to groups conducting monitoring.

Bob Metzger asked Bruce if the guidance document takes the economic climate into consideration when providing recommendations. Bruce responded that the guidance document will prioritize monitoring efforts. Ken Dzinbal stated that the guidance document will help, since most monitoring groups wanted NOAA to tell local, state, and tribal efforts what data they need. Dick Wallace noted that certainty must be considered when determining the scale of monitoring efforts.

Kaleen asked Bruce when the Forum should give feedback to NOAA. Bruce said before the next meeting in June. Chair Wilkerson clarified that Ken could set up dialogue and provide a policy recommendation from a subcommittee. Kit recommended that the workgroup provide review comments separate of individual agencies. Ken responded that the workgroup could separately review the document, but it could also review the responses of the agencies and look for dissimilarities. Ginny Stern added that she would recommend the Kit's suggestion, and for agencies to send a copy of their review to the Forum workgroup. Ken agreed to coordinate the workgroup.

## **Agenda Item #7: SRFB Monitoring Review**

In 2008, the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) provided \$2.35 million to support several on-going monitoring programs, which is 10 percent of the federal 2008 PCSRF grant. As monitoring efforts mature and salmon recovery strategies are refined, it is important to periodically review and update the priorities and funding allocation among monitoring elements. In October 2008, the SRFB discussed its current approach and how to ensure that they invest in the most important and useful monitoring.

The Forum formed a workgroup of agency representatives to review monitoring priorities and potential overlaps between SRFB and Forum monitoring strategies. The SRFB's current reach-scale project effectiveness monitoring contract expires in June 2009. The Intensively Monitored Watershed (IMW) monitoring contract expires in October 2009, and juvenile salmon abundance monitoring (one part of a status and trends monitoring program) will seek renewal by October 2009.

Ken provided an overview of the Salmon Recovery Funding Board's current monitoring programs: IMW, implementation, project effectiveness, smolt monitoring, and estuary protocols. He explained the purposes of each of the different types of monitoring that the Board is funding. Effectiveness monitoring and IMWs are scheduled to take place every 3 – 12 years.

Terry Wright noted that keeping the questions that the SRFB want answered at the forefront of providing recommendations.

Chair Wilkerson would like to have a workgroup offer recommendations to the SRFB. Kaleen added that the recommendations need to be at the policy level. Chair Wilkerson agreed with Kaleen that the discussion needs to take place at a high level. The half-day workgroup meeting will be scheduled testing the reaction to the federal meeting prior to the next Salmon Recovery Funding Board meeting.

## **Agenda Item #8: High Level Indicators**

Ken Dzinbal started the series of presentations with the results of the High Level Indicators (HLIs) workgroup. The purpose of the group is to agree upon HLIs with the desired outcome to have a set of simple HLIs to report salmon recovery and watershed health across the state to reduce confusion and increase transparency, accountability, and efficiency. Indicators are divided into Fish Abundance and Watershed Health.

Steve Leider presented on the Pacific Northwest Aquatic Monitoring Program (PNAMP), which represents a larger group of organizations at Northwest Environmental Information Sharing Executive Summit (NWEIS). He reported that PNAMP and the Forum are in agreement with the key High Level Indicators. PNAMP has a draft report that will be edited after the Forum's meeting, and ready for the May NWEIS meeting.

Lynn Helbrecht gave an overview of the purpose and importance of biodiversity in Washington State and a brief history and work of the Biodiversity Council. Stephen Walters explained metrics that compose the Biodiversity scorecard. Similar to the Forum, the target audiences for the Biodiversity Council includes the legislators, policy makers, the general public, and the science community.

Bob Metzger asked how often the scorecard will be updated after it is developed. Stephen answered that there will be a needs assessment with variables, but most likely annually or biannually. Josh Baldi asked if there will be a common set of indicators between the Forum and the Council, and what is the commitment to policy change. Lynn responded that there is a common set of indicators, and the Council plans on having data tiers, for policy makers to review at the highest layer of data. The draft scorecard will be ready by December.

### Forum Discussion:

The Forum discussed the similarities and differences between the Forums' HLIs and Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board's (OWEB) list. OWEB's list is longer and more complicated than the Forum's. It is

important to keep the Forum's list of HLIs simple to ensure consistent maintenance over time.

#### **Agenda Item #9: Schedule for reviewing agency budget requests**

Ken Dzinbal stated that it does not look like agencies will have an accurate budget by May 2009 and asked the Forum how agencies are approaching the upcoming budget session. Chair Wilkerson supports signing a letter stating that until the Forum knows the accurate budget for the next biennium budget recommendations will be postponed. The Chair praised the Forum for developing a consistent message, and encouraged the group to maintain their goals. Jim Cahill added that if the economy does upturn, the Forum may want to consider budget "add backs". The Chair did not advocate for building a budget strategy until the legislature has a budget.

#### **Agenda Item #10: Regional input to state monitoring efforts**

Jeff Breckel presented the Council of Regions survey of Regional Organizations' Monitoring Activities. Regions are at different stages of monitoring efforts. Regions need financial support from state agencies to ensure alignment among state and local priorities.

James White explained monitoring efforts in the Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Region. The Upper Columbia recently started using the Habitat Work Schedule to store current and past projects in their region. James shared Upper Columbia's development of a data exchange network.

#### Forum Discussion:

Kaleen asked where Upper Columbia receives its data. James explained that the majority of Upper Columbia's monitoring is not focused on salmon recovery. Jeff Breckel added that most regions rely on watershed connections to gather data. Kaleen would like to improve telling the story to legislators about the web of data collection at the regional level, much of which is not receiving salmon monitoring funds. Kit Paulsen asked what the Forum can do to assist regional monitoring needs. James responded that the Forum can assist in fostering an open one-on-one discussion with state agencies about monitoring.

#### **Agenda Item #11: Forum Business Rules**

Jim Fox provided a review of the Forum's business rules and actions, and the need for an operating charter. Kaleen Cottingham explained the need for a charter, and RCO staff's willingness to help the Forum craft a charter. The Forum supported RCO staff creating an operating charter.

#### **ADJOURN**

Meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

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Bill Wilkerson, Chair

Next Meeting: June 24, 2009  
*Olympia, WA*