

# **Lead Entity Advisory Group (LEAG) Report**

Salmon Recovery Funding Board

July 2008

prepared and submitted by (past) LEAG Chair, Jeanette Dorner

As salmon smolts have been migrating out this spring, Lead Entity committees and coordinators have been working with project sponsors to review, refine and prioritize the next round of salmon habitat projects that will be waiting to greet the smolts when they return as adults. Lead entities across the state have also been loading their active and proposed salmon habitat projects into the Habitat Work Schedule. The following are some highlights from our recent LEAG meeting in Edmonds on June 17<sup>th</sup> and updates on lead entity activities.

## **New Lead Entity administrative organization in Pend Oreille**

The Kalispel Tribe is the new lead entity administrative organization in the Pend Oreille lead entity area. This change was recently approved by the consenting governments. The Tribe is in the process of hiring a new lead entity coordinator to facilitate the lead entity process there.

## **LEAG Officer Elections, new Executive Committee members**

We have two new members of the LEAG Executive Committee: Richard Brocksmith (Hood Canal) and Dan McCarty (Klickitat). We also have one member renewing his membership: John Sims (Quinault). We also had elections for new officers at our June LEAG meeting. Richard Brocksmith is our new chair and Barbara Rosenkotter (San Juan) is serving for a second term as vice-chair. Jeanette Dorner (Nisqually) has now moved into the position of “Past Chair” on the LEAG Executive Committee.

## **Lead Entity Program support**

WDFW has been working with lead entities through LEAG and with RCO staff to develop a proposal for increased lead entity support for the state’s next biennium budget. It is on your agenda for Friday morning. We appreciate the continued attention by WDFW and RCO to this need that we have been discussing for some time now. Lead entities strongly support this request. We understand it is difficult in the current economic situation to request an increase of funds. However, in times when funds are low it is even more important to be sure that the money that is spent is going towards projects that will make the biggest difference and are locally supported. That is the greatest strength of the lead entity process and a little more support for lead entities will make a big difference in our ability to ensure that continues to happen.

## **LEAG Discussion of state and local permitting streamlining**

One of the helpful state permitting processes for salmon restoration projects has been the potential to be designated as eligible for the state streamlined permitting process. Project sponsors who have received this eligibility have found this very helpful to move projects forward to construction more quickly. However, the legislation that created this process was developed in the late 1990’s when most stream restoration projects were smaller in scope and scale. As the salmon habitat restoration project world has matured, there are more projects that are more focused on whole system restoration and are larger and more

complex. These projects are not as easily falling into the streamlined process. This is meaning increased costs and time for projects to move from when they are funded to going in the ground. WDFW is currently more precisely defining the size and scale criteria for restoration projects' eligibility for streamlining as required by the legislation. They are doing this work consistent with the direction of the originating legislation. However, the practical result of this may be more projects that don't meet that criteria and they will take longer and be more costly to implement because of the extended time spent on permitting.

Some lead entities are looking into potential proposed solutions which will likely need your and other policy maker's support to be implemented. We will keep you informed as those are developed.

### **Salmon Recovery Monitoring**

LEAG is working on a position paper that lead entities can all agree to that summarizes our positions on monitoring. Our hope is this paper, when completed, will help characterize what lead entities see are the greatest monitoring needs, what areas should be prioritized for funding, and how lead entities would like to be involved in monitoring. Stay tuned for more...

### **Lead Entity Outreach – “Saving Salmon is Everyone’s Business”**

A number of lead entities hosted successful lead entity outreach events to raise awareness about lead entities and local salmon recovery efforts. More lead entities are committed to hosting such an event over the next few months. We also are already planning for a Lead Entity Legislative Day next session which is scheduled for March 10, 2009. Mark your calendars!