

Council of Regions Report

Salmon Recovery Funding Board

October 13, 2009

Prepared and submitted by COR representative, Steve Martin

COR met August 13 to discuss items of interest statewide followed by an afternoon session to discuss items specific to the Columbia basin. The morning session dealt with topics related to the Monitoring Forum, GSRO transition to the RCO, and regional project funding allocations. The afternoon session covered various monitoring initiatives underway for the Columbia Basin.

Monitoring Forum:

COR concurs with the high level indicators for salmon being considered by the Forum but noted that there are significant data gaps for many populations. Filling these data gaps will likely require additional resources and/or changes to monitoring priorities and approaches. COR also stressed that, in order to have meaning, the high level indicators must be presented in context showing trends over time or progress toward recovery goals.

COR reviewed the proposed Forum business rules noting that 7 of the appointed seats are for each of the regional boards. While it was agreed that all regional boards should attempt to participate in Forum meetings, it was recognized that this was not always possible. Further, the absence of several regional board representatives could make it difficult for the Forum to achieve a quorum. It was agreed that the regions attending Forum meetings should attempt to represent all regions in dealing with issues of mutual interest. Based on this discussion, Steve Martin requested the Forum revise its quorum requirements to state that at least one regional organization representative must be present in person or phone for a quorum.

GSRO transition to the RCO:

COR members acknowledged appreciation for the GSRO and RCO in their effort during the transition noting that the process has been seamless and transparent. COR affirmed the importance of the independent roles of the GSRO and the significance of the office in state and federal policy conversations. Each regional organization has an approved work plan and contract for the upcoming biennium. The COR website will continue to be housed within the GSRO site.

Regional Project Funding Allocations:

The regional allocation of funding for lead entity project lists was visited. Several regions questioned whether the current allocation formula was appropriate, particularly given reductions in state funding levels. While no recommendation or proposal was agreed upon, it was agreed to discuss the issue further at future meetings. Should the SRFB decide to revisit regional allocations, COR desires to be included in any such discussions.

Other:

- COR members are collaborating on a letter to Congress supporting PCSRF funding.
- COR reviewed the Community Salmon Fund project allocation proposals and concluded that each regional area should be provided a predictable base-level of funding in the amount of \$75,000 and that the balance of funding should be distributed based on the current SRFB regional allocation formula.
- COR will submit a letter to NOAA requesting a follow up to our November 2008 meeting for the purpose of discussing recovery plan implementation, monitoring and reporting.
- Regional visits with the RCO and GSRO where milestones, obstacles and efficiencies were discussed are complete.

Columbia basin update:

Columbia basin organizations are actively involved with the Northwest Power and Conservation Council (NPCC) to develop and finalize the Council's RME framework for anadromous salmonids as well as scoping a process to develop Subbasin plan updates that are used to guide Council investments.

The Columbia Basin regions are also actively participating in an effort being conducted by the Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Authority (CBFWA) to develop a comprehensive fish monitoring strategy for the Columbia Basin. The strategy is attempting to integrate the monitoring needs of the FCRPS BiOp and ESA recovery. The other participants in this effort include NOAA, BPA, the NPCC, and the states of Washington, Oregon, and Idaho.

Lead Entity Advisory Group Report
to the
Salmon Recovery Funding Board, October 2009
Prepared and Submitted by LEAG Chair, Richard Brocksmith

The Lead Entity Advisory Group (LEAG) held our most recent meeting by conference call on August 27, 2009. A variety of topics were discussed and acted upon, including:

- recent SRFB discussions and decisions,
- status of 2009 grant round submittal materials,
- upcoming process for 2010 grant round,
- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Community Salmon Fund Proposal,
- changes in administration of the Lead Entity (LE) Program and LEAG in the transition from WDFW to RCO,
- potential general fund budget cuts to LE Program,
- LEAG mission, structure and operations planning, and
- LEAG training and retreat for 2009-2010 biennium.

The transition of the Lead Entity Program from WDFW to RCO is nearing completion with contracts renewed, billing procedures and trainings having occurred, and staffing structure being arranged within RCO. There are several details that will take more time to develop such as improvements in LE deliverables and deadlines, Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration capacity fund amendments, in-direct cost policies, and technology issues such as the LE website and email distribution lists.

LEAG has been monitoring the State's economic forecast and guidance from the administration on cuts to general fund programs, including the LE Program. We have been working with Rachel Langen, RCO's Deputy Director, to find at least short-term solutions to potential LE budget cuts over the coming biennium and will discuss this with SRFB at your October 16, 2009 meeting.

LEAG mission, structure, and operations are of importance to lead entities and to SRFB given the role this coordinating and consensus-building organization plays inside and outside of the LE Program. To implement the outcomes of our visioning effort at the July LEAG meeting we have updated the 2007 LEAG Mission and Structure document (including adding an operations plan component) and will hopefully be finalizing that on October 1, 2009. This product documents our vision to become a more cost-effective organization that utilizes more internal LE resources and minimizes State agency input of resources. A good example includes reducing multiple in-person meetings in 2009 to four conference calls in 2010. The resources that are required to have a successful LEAG have been identified and we believe we can meet them for the next biennium utilizing the same short-term solution as discussed above for the general fund cuts to the LE Program. This will also be discussed with SRFB at your October 16, 2009 meeting.