



YAKIMA BASIN  
FISH AND WILDLIFE  
RECOVERY BOARD

## Minutes of the 10/6/2016 Board of Directors Meeting

*As approved by the Board of Directors on 1/19/2017*

### **Members Present:**

Adam Fyall (Benton County), Mike Leita and Terry Keenhan (Yakima County), Paul Ward and David Fast (Yakama Nation), Dan Olson (City of Union Gap), Holly Cousens (City of Yakima), Nancy Lillquist (City of Ellensburg), and Jay McGowan (City of Cle Elum)

**Staff Present:** Alex Conley (Executive Director), Darcy Batura (Lead Entity Coordinator)

**Others:** Heather Simmons (Dept. of Ecology), Sara Walker (Terraqua).

### **1) Approval of Agenda and Minutes**

Chair Dan Olson opened the meeting. The Board reviewed the meeting agenda, the draft minutes for the 8/4/16 Board of Directors meeting and notes from the 9/26/16 Executive Committee meeting. *The 8/4/16 minutes were approved as submitted with consent of all present; the agenda was adjusted to move the discussion of the riparian planting workshop to before the Lead Entity program update.*

### **2) Board Correspondence and Announcements**

#### Announcements:

- The Board presented Darcy Batura with a card and a framed print, thanked her for her five years of service with the Board, and wished her well in her new job as TNC's Central Cascades Community Coordinator.
- Alex updated the Board on the outcomes of the budget reduction process discussed at the August meeting. The Board has finalized an amendment to our two year operating contract with RCO that incorporates a 25% cut for the current fiscal year. We will be able to use funds originally allocated to the previous year to cover the new funding gap, so do not need to adjust planned expenditures at this time. Alex noted that future funding is entirely dependent on the outcomes of the upcoming state and federal budget processes.
- Alex announced that Guy Norman, recently retired from WDFW, has been appointed to fill the vacant seat on the Northwest Power and Conservation Council created when Phil Rockefeller retired. He also noted that the Governor's Office has not announced who will fill the vacancy on the state's Salmon Recovery Funding Board.

1200 Chesterly Drive, Suite 280, Yakima, WA 98902

Phone (509) 453-4104 Email: [info@ybfwrb.org](mailto:info@ybfwrb.org) Web: [www.ybfwrb.org](http://www.ybfwrb.org)

- The Board discussed the NOAA Columbia River Partnership. The four Recovery Boards in the Columbia Basin will be represented by Steve Martin of the Snake River Salmon Recovery Board. YBFWRB staff will work closely with Steve to ensure that the positions expressed on behalf of the regional organizations are consistent with those of our Board and its members. The Yakama Nation will also be a direct participant in the Partnership, and Paul Ward noted some of the tribes' concerns with the process.
- Alex and Darcy noted that they provided staff level input in several processes focused on identifying future funding levels for state budget proposals. Darcy conducted a review requested by the Department of Ecology on how Floodplain by Design proposals from the Yakima Basin matched our Recovery Plan and Lead Entity priorities. Darcy also updated our Habitat Work Schedule database with information on potential future SRFB projects identified by our partners; this data was used by RCO to build their capital funding request for the statewide SRFB program. Alex noted that he attended the Yakima public meeting on the proposed Washington Waters bill, and provided feedback on the lists of Yakima habitat projects being compiled by Ramboll, the consultant contracted to compile a statewide capital projects list. The Board briefly discussed the value of shared capital project lists for habitat work in the Yakima Basin.
- Terry Keenhan thanked Alex for his keynote address at the Northwest Regional Floodplain Management Association's annual conference. He suggested that Alex give a portion of his presentation on the geology and history of the Yakima Basin to the Board at a future meeting.

Correspondence:

- The Board reviewed the three letters sent based on discussion at the August meeting. These were a response to the Snake River Recovery Boards letter on predation, a letter to the SRFB regarding how current and future capacity budget cuts should be allocated, and a letter to WDFW supporting specific elements of the Department's Wild Futures budget initiative. Alex noted that he had talked with Steve Martin about the predation letter. He noted that our response had been appreciated, and that the Snake Salmon Recovery Board had talked with NOAA Fisheries and agreed that predation issues should be highlighted and addressed as part of the upcoming NOAA Columbia Basin Partnership process.
- The Board reviewed two draft support letters, one supporting the Upper Yakima Bull Trout eDNA proposal being submitted to USFWS by the Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group, and one supporting the Lower Yakima River Water Quality Monitoring proposal being submitted to the Department of Ecology by the Benton Conservation District and the USGS. The Board approved both letters as presented, and directed Chairman Dan Olson to sign them.

**3) Proposed Riparian Workshop with Department of Ecology**

Heather Simmons, who manages water quality grants for the Department of Ecology's Central Washington office, presented her proposal to convene a workshop for Ecology and SRFB grant recipients that focuses on sharing best practices for riparian planting projects. The Board discussed the proposal and agreed that it would be appropriate for the Board to be a co-convenor and cover a

portion of the workshop costs. Alex and Heather committed to working together to refine and implement the workshop proposal. The workshop is planned for February of 2017, just before the spring planting season.

#### **4) Lead Entity Program**

Darcy gave an update on the 2016 grant review process and the status of the ranked project list forwarded by the Board to the Salmon Recovery Funding Board. She noted that she had just received the State Review Panel comments, and was working with our project sponsors to determine how to respond to questions and concerns raised by the Panel. Alex noted that he would be working with Darcy on this process, and would cover this work after Darcy's departure. He noted that 2016 list should be finalized in early November, and that he planned to have a new lead entity coordinator hired by January, so that the new hire can be responsible for initiating the 2016 grant ground.

#### **5) State and Federal Policies and Budgets**

Mike Leita updated the Board on the status of the federal legislation supporting the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan. He noted that prospects looked good, but that the bill was unlikely to come out of the conference committee before January.

Terry Keenhan noted that Yakima County's work with the US Corps of Engineers on the Gap to Gap Project was proceeding well, and that the County anticipated the project would receive \$10 million from the Corps' CAP program in the upcoming year.

The Board reviewed a draft letter to the Governor's Office prepared at the request of the Executive Committee. The letter expresses the Board's support for the three state agency funding request currently being reviewed by the Governor. These are the:

1. The RCO's \$55.3 million capital budget request to support the SRF grant program, lead entity operating costs and the Regional Fisheries Enhancement Group program.
2. The Department of Ecology's \$31.1 million request to support the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan (which included \$5.4 for proposed aquatic habitat improvement projects), and;
3. The Department of Ecology's \$70 million request for the statewide Floodplains by Design program, of which approximately 18% is anticipated to go to local government floodplain restoration projects in the Yakima Basin.

Alex briefly reviewed other state budget requests identified by the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office as contributing to salmon recovery. The Board did not chose to add specific support for additional items to the draft letter, noting that in what would be a highly competitive budget process, it was important to highlight defined priorities. Mike Leita did ask Alex to confirm with the

Department of Ecology that the budget request title for the YBIP program was indeed “Yakima River Basin Water Supply Program,” as listed in the GSRO document.

Mike Leita asked if we were certain that we could effectively spend the increase in SRFB project funding that would come from the full RCO request. Alex noted that in recent years our list of ranked and approved projects has significantly exceed both the funding currently available, and what would be available with the proposed increase in SRFB funds.

The Board agreed that the three priorities identified in the letter should serve as the basis for staff responses to future requests for support for specific programs.

The Board proposed specific revisions to the letter and approved sending the revised letter with the Chair’s signature, with carbon copies to be sent to all state representatives for the Yakima Basin. Adam Fyall noted that the Benton County Commission would be meeting with all 6 state representatives for the County to discuss legislative priorities, and that the items highlighted by the Board would be part of that discussion.

Alex noted that the SRFB is convening an allocation committee to develop recommendations to the SRFB on future allocation of both project and organizational capacity funding across the state. These recommendations will be completed by mid-spring, and would be used by the SRFB as it sets budgets for the 2017-2019 biennium.

## **6) Recovery Program Updates**

Alex gave an update on Bull Trout Action Plan updates; other recovery program items were deferred.

## **7) Board Logistics**

The Board authorized Alex and the Executive Committee to work together to:

- 1) Develop an RFP for consultant support for strategic planning and finalize a contract for strategic planning support based on the response;
- 2) Revise (if needed) and post the lead entity job description, and;
- 3) Hire or contract for a temporary operational support position that could cover administrative duties until a long-term position description is developed.

The Board directed Alex to work with Bob Vilbrandt, CPA to file an IRS extension request so that the FY2016 Audit and Fincial Statement and the IRS 990 tax form can be reviewed by the full Board at the January meeting prior to submittal to the IRS.

The Board reviewed and approved the proposed Resolution confirming membership in the Non-Profit Insurance Pool (NPIP), and directed Dan Olson to sign the revised membership agreement.

The Board noted that the next Board of Directors Meeting will be on January 19<sup>th</sup>.

## **8) Public comment:** There were no public comments.