



YAKIMA BASIN
FISH AND WILDLIFE
RECOVERY BOARD

MINUTES

Board of Directors Meeting

5:30 to 7:30 pm on November 12th, 2008
1110 W Lincoln Ave, Yakima

As approved by the Board of Directors on 1/28/09

1) Welcome and Introductions

Those present:

Board Members: Nancy Lillquist (City of Ellensburg), Neil McClure & Dave Brown (City of Yakima), Terry Keenhan (Yakima County), Adam Fyall (Benton County), Paul Ward (Yakama Nation)

Guests: Jim Milton

Staff: Alex Conley, Angie Begosh

Chairman Paul Ward called the meeting to order at 5:37 pm. He suggested we bypass introductions as everybody present knew each other. All agreed. Terry Keenhan requested that all business related items that require a vote be discussed first as he would need to depart early. The agenda was revised accordingly.

2) Review of Sept 3rd Minutes

Alex sent a copy of the last meetings minutes ahead of time in the Board packet, and provided a copy at the meeting. Board members reviewed the minutes. Nancy Lillquist moved to approve minutes as written, Neil seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

3) Board Correspondence

Alex distributed correspondence and newspaper clippings for Board members to review.

- a.) Letter from GSRO to indicate draft plan will be recognized as our interim recovery plan and the draft recovery actions as the interim implementation schedule;
- b.) Letter from Governor regarding the Board's letter of support for the SRFB's programs;
- c.) Newspaper clipping regarding the Recovery Plan release and public meeting.

4) SRFB/Lead Entity Program Update

Status of 2008 Project List

Angie updated the Board on the status of the 2008 Lead Entity list. The Port of Sunnyside Wetlands Restoration project was removed from our list because the RCO/State Review Panel finally determined that it was ineligible. Because the Port of Sunnyside project is no longer on our list, we have \$ 72,000 available for our alternate projects. Our first alternate project is currently the Herke Screening Project, but we do not anticipate a satisfactory resolution of the conditions placed on the project before the December SRFB meeting. In order for the money to cleanly move down the list to fund the Swauk and Iron Creek

project and keep Herke as a viable alternate, we need to switch their order in the list so that the Swauk and Iron Creek Restoration Design becomes our first alternate (position #9) and Herke Fish Screening

becomes our second alternate (position # 10 on the list). This will not change any other aspect of our list – it will simply allow us to fund an alternate that is ready for funding and keep our two remaining alternates on the list, so that they are eligible for future funding if the conditions placed on them are resolved (SRFB policy allows for funds allocated to a project that does not proceed to contracting within 180 days of the Board's funding decision to be moved to approved alternates). Angie asked the Board if they would approve switching the order of the Herke Fish Screening project and Swauk and Iron Creek Restoration Design pending Citizen's Committee approval. Nancy moved to approve the switch pending Citizen's Committee approval via email, and Neil seconded the motion. All were in favor of the motion, none opposed.

Update on status of funded projects

Alex distributed handouts that gave an update on all current active SRFB projects. He gave a brief overview of each of the projects and highlighted several acquisition projects that were not being completed as planned, and explained that it is likely that we will have to return some money back to the SRFB – which is not entirely a bad thing considering the current economic situation. Board members raised questions regarding Kittitas Conservation Trust track record – is this a problem with the organization? Paul explained that these projects were pursued aggressively and in partnership, so the blame should not be placed solely with KCT. One step we can take toward more solid acquisition proposals is for us as staff to ask for more proof of landowner involvement during the proposal review process. The Board was supportive of staff being more proactive and aggressive in helping sponsors move projects forward. There was discussion about tracking milestones and how active we will be in working with sponsors. Alex discussed his idea of using reach-level grants to create a strategic approach to acquisitions. Nancy asked about the possibility of moving money to other projects; Alex explained that staff was working with RCO to do so where possible, but that such moves must be acceptable to RCO and meet specific requirements. There was further discussion regarding the challenges of acquiring properties and easements with public funds and the challenges associated with biologists trying to negotiate real estate deals when it is not their specialty.

SRFB Funding & preparations for 2009 grant round

Alex updated the Board on discussions for how to use "leftover" money in regions after SRFB grant processes rather than returning it to the general pot. Alex has been lobbying hard for money to remain in regions for reallocation at the discretion of the local Lead Entity and Regional structure.

5) Recovery Planning Update:

Update on steelhead recovery plan outreach

Alex updated the Board on outreach efforts. Alex encouraged the board to participate in a general public meeting hosted by NOAA is scheduled for November 19, 2008, 6:30 pm, at the Yakima Area Arboretum. He does not anticipate a lot of participation since many of those who are interested in the plan have already been involved. Alex discussed his approach with different groups, and the level of interest different groups have with the plan. He received input on other organizations to invite into the discussion.

6) Feedback on Northwest Power & Conservation Council Program Amendment

Alex reviewed the Northwest Power & Conservation Council's efforts to amend its Fish & Wildlife Program and presented a draft letter from the Board to the Council. Terry Keenhan asked for an explanation of the last paragraph on the Salmon Stronghold Initiative and Alex explained his statement that there is no need for the Council program to specifically call for development another framework for funding. Paul Ward requested time run the letter by the Yakama Nation legal council. Nancy moved to authorize chair to sign the letter pending Board member approval by email prior to November 25. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

7) Department of Ecology SEIS Update

Alex gave a brief update on the Department of Ecology's development of a Supplemental EIS for the Yakima Basin Storage Study conducted by Ecology and the Bureau of Reclamation. He is reviewing

preliminary drafts to ensure that fish habitat proposals are consistent with the Board's recovery plan; a public draft will be released in late November for public comment in December.

8) Lower Yakima TMDL/Water Quality Discussion

Alex updated the Board on discussions and potential projects on the lower mainstem, including upcoming efforts to develop a TMDL for temperature, dissolved oxygen and pH. He is working with Tom Coleman and Max Linden of the City of Yakima to submit a EPA grant to secure seed money for further discussion about the integration of the water quality and fish habitat discussions in the Lower Yakima. The Board expressed support for Alex's participation in development of the pre-proposal. Alex also gave an update on the Benton Conservation District SRFB project and the temperature study they are conducting on the lower Yakima.

9) Board Logistics:

Executive Committee Meeting/status

The Board reviewed the status of the Executive Committee and the notes of their November 7th meeting. Alex encouraged additional Board of Directors members who were interested to join the Executive Committee.

Admin & recovery program coordinator hiring processes

Paul moved to delegate final hiring/termination decisions to Alex with review by the Executive Committee. Neil seconded the motion, which was approved by all.

Development of Board Policies

The Board supported the proposal to work in concert with the Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board on the development of general Board policies.

Retirement benefit plan policies

Alex updated the Board on the executive committee decisions regarding the Board's retirement benefits for staff. The decisions were to make the Simple IRA program available to anybody who works over 20 hours/week, with employer match of up to 3% starting after 1 year waiting period.

Annual meeting proposal

The executive committee suggested having annual meeting in May/June so we can consolidate with end of the year fiscal tasks and performance reviews. The annual meeting will be an open house set up to pull in people who aren't as familiar with what we do.

Board of Directors Representation

Nancy had a question about representation for Kittitas small cities. Alex noted that the consensus of the Kittitas Council of Governments was that Cle Elum would act as the Kittitas County small cities representative, but Alex has not heard from them regarding their participation at this point.

Performance review status

Nancy moved to delegate the decisions regarding performance evaluations and compensation to the executive committee. Adam seconded the motion. All in favor, none opposed.

10) Financial and Activity Reports

Alex updated the Board on finances and indicated that we would be spending money on getting the new office equipped in the next month.

11) Announcements & Public comment

No announcements or public comments were made.

Chairman Paul Ward adjourned the meeting at 6:45 pm.