



Minutes of the October 2, 2019 Board of Directors Meeting

As approved by the Board of Directors on January 22, 2020

Meeting held from 1 pm to 4 pm at the YBFWRB office in Yakima

Members Present:

Adam Fyall (Benton County), Terry Keenhan (Yakima County), Richard Bloom (City of West Richland), Jonalee Squeechochs (Yakama Nation), Jay McGowan (City of Cle Elum), David Brown (City of Yakima), Julie Schilling (City of Union Gap)

Staff Present: Alex Conley (Executive Director)

Others Present: Elizabeth Torrey (WDFW), Lance Hoyt (City of Toppenish), Jim Davenport (Yakima Valley Library)

By Phone: Diane Driscoll (NOAA Fisheries) and Anna Lael (Kittitas County Conservation Trust)

The meeting of the Board was called to order at 2:20 pm upon arrival of a quorum.

1) Approval of Agenda and Minutes

Chair Adam Fyall opened the meeting and all present introduced themselves. The Board reviewed the meeting agenda and the draft minutes for the 7/31/2019 Board Annual Meeting. Richard Bloom motioned to approve the agenda and July minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Terry Keenhan and approved with consent of all present.

2) Updates and Correspondence:

- A. The group briefly recapped the **July 31 Annual Meeting and Tour**, which was hosted by the Yakama Nation. Board members expressed thanks for the tour, and especially the chance to be a part of the lamprey release. The group briefly discussed the **2020 Annual Meeting**, and proposed that it be held in the Tri-Cities, with tours and presentations focusing on Lower Yakima and McNary Pool water quality and predation issues. Directors also expressed the hope that we can get greater participation by Board members and partners at the 2020 annual meeting.
- B. Alex gave an overview of the site visits and topics of discussion on the **August 1-2 tour with OFM staff**. He noted that it was a great opportunity for two way information sharing with those that write the Governor's budget proposals, and thanked Erik Neatherlin of the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office for leading the effort to set up the tour.
- C. Alex updated the Directors on the **status of the Operations Manager hiring process**. 20 complete applications were received, and 8 candidates interviewed. Alex is now calling references of the top 4 candidates, and looking into logistics to bring one out of town candidate in for a visit. He hopes to have someone on board in November.

- D. Alex briefly reviewed the **Yakima Basin Integrated Plan Habitat Committee's recent activities**. The committee (which Alex serves on) is finalizing habitat project funding recommendations for 2019-21 Ecology YBIP funding. Two projects under consideration are also potential recipients of 2019 SRFB funding, and Alex is leading the group's efforts to coordinate the use of the two funding sources. Final recommendations will be made in mid-November. Alex also noted that the Subcommittee is interested in hearing ideas on how we can build out capacity to develop future projects that address high priority needs.
- E. Alex briefly updated the Board on **assessment activities in the Wenas Watershed**. He presented highlights of the summer 2019 YTAHP fish barrier and habitat survey, and reviewed the results of fish tagging and tracking efforts by the Yakama Nation and USFWS. The Board discussed next steps, and encouraged Alex to engage with partners and be ready to report on progress during Board legislative outreach visits in January.
- F. Alex presented **pie charts summarizing the diversity of funding sources for the Board** over time. The Board expressed support for the work to date, and briefly discussed options for further funding diversification.
- G. Alex reminded the Board of his role as **Chair of the Council of Regions**, and noted that Tricia's term as chair of the **Washington Salmon Coalition** would start in October. He noted that WSC and COR are working together to compile survey results to inform in-person meetings with the Corps of Engineers and Ecology regarding permitting challenges faced by project sponsors across the state. Alex also noted ongoing efforts to coordinate among the four Washington State Salmon Recovery Regions in the Columbia Basin regarding Columbia River policy issues.
- H. Richard Bloom updated the Board on the state of **star grass in the Lower Yakima**. He noted that recent years it has been prolific and created significant water quality issues that impact fish, human recreation and mosquito control efforts. The Benton Conservation District and the Benton Mosquito Control District just met with Senator Warnick, who noted there may be opportunities to use drought response funding to fund a pilot program. Alex expressed interest in working with these partners to develop a proposal that builds on past evaluation work and implements and evaluates proposed control efforts. Lance Hoyt noted the relationship between water stargrass and nutrient issues and described the **City of Toppenish's efforts to develop water quality trading projects** that would reduce phosphorus loading from agricultural and sewer plants in the Yakima River.
- I. The Board briefly **reviewed the past correspondence** in the meeting packet.
- J. The Board discussed the potential impact of Northern Pike on Yakima Basin steelhead and salmon, and reviewed the proposed **support letter for the Washington Invasive Species Council's budget request for \$500,000 to develop a pike suppression grant program**. Jay McGowan motioned to approve the letter as presented. The motion was seconded by Dave Brown. Terry Keenhan abstained, and the motion was approved with consent of all others present.
- K. The Board discussed that while pike pose a future threat, our at-risk fish runs currently face significant levels of predation from non-native bass, walleye and catfish in the Lower Yakima and

the Columbia River. The Board reviewed the draft **letter to WDFW emphasizing the need for focused action to evaluate and reduce predation by bass, walleye and catfish**. The Board recommended forwarding a copy of the letter to the Corps of Engineers, NOAA and BPA. Terry Keenhan moved to approve the letter with additional of these CCs; Jay McGowan seconded the motion which was approved with consent of all present.

3) NOAA Fisheries Update

Diane Driscoll of NOAA Fisheries Ellensburg Office joined the meeting by phone to give an update on the **upcoming NOAA Five Year Review Process**. She will be the lead for the review of Mid-Columbia Steelhead, and will be looking to work with the Board and other partners on it. The Federal Register Notice for the process should be out any day, and formal comments will be due in late March. The final 5 year Review will be issued in the spring of 2021. Chris Jordan is heading up the Science Center's status assessment process. Diane also recommended that we review and provide comment on the draft Columbia Basin Habitat Monitoring Strategy developed by NOAA, BPA and the Northwest Power and Conservation Council, and highlight monitoring that will be needed to fully evaluate listing status and direct recovery actions. She also noted that the Mid-Columbia Forum continues to meet and bring together NOAA, state, tribal and local partners to coordinate recovery actions for Mid-Columbia Steelhead. Alex expressed his thanks for Diane's ongoing work to support Mid-Columbia recovery efforts on top of the rest of her job.

4) Audited Financial Statement and IRS 990 Form

Abby Sanders reviewed the FY2019 Audited Financial Statement and the 2018 IRS 990 Form that she drafted, and gave the Board a handout of summary information. In response to Board questions, she noted that the Board was in overall good shape, though it continued to be largely dependent on only a few sources of governmental funding. She noted that there are no audit findings or other negative issues to address. After review, Dave Brown **moved to approve the Financial Statement and the 990 as presented**. Jay McGowan seconded the motion, which was then approved with consent of all present.

5) Partnership with Yakima Valley Library

Jim Davenport, Yakima Valley Library Trustee, presented the Library's efforts to build a local natural resources collection. They are developing a Northwest Reading Room to house parts of the Relander Collection and the collections newly acquired from Bob Tuck; the new space should open this winter. Jim and Alex gave an overview of recent discussions about pulling together partners active in natural resources management in the Yakima Basin to build a shared archive of both print and digital materials, especially those not otherwise easily accessible. Alex gave a brief presentation on the work he is doing with library staff to pilot a digital archive for Yakima Basin Natural Resources materials, with its own landing page, finding aids and search capabilities, and showed the Board several documents they have added to the library system. Alex requested that the a) Board authorize up to \$10,000 to support working with the Library to develop of a digital archive, and b) delegate to the Executive Committee the authority to approve an interlocal agreement or other funding agreement with the library. Julie Schilling moved to **authorize up to \$10,000 to support work with the Library and to delegate approval of a funding agreement to the Executive Committee**. The motion was seconded and approved with consent of all present.

6) SRFB Targeted Investment Proposal

The Chair recommended that we move the Targeted Investment discussion up the agenda to accommodate Anna Lael of the Kittitas County Conservation District, who had phoned in. The

Directors agreed, and Alex gave an overview of the SRFB's development of a Targeted Investment Program and his engagement in helping develop proposals to fund in the Mid-Columbia. The group reviewed the handout prepared by Alex, and tables showing the evolution of the proposed project list over time. Prior to the SRFB's September meeting, two projects from the original list were identified as in need of funding and ready to go. After the SRFB approved funding in September, it was determined that work in the Little Naches was not ready for implementation, leaving one project (Kittitas County Conservation District's work on fish passage in the Naneum/Caribou watersheds) eligible for the funding. Anna Lael is completing the project application, which will go to review by our TAG and Citizen Committee and the State Review Panel in October, so that it can be approved for funding at the SRFB's December meeting. Anna gave a presentation on the project and how the sites included complement other investments and make significant progress in opening up the habitat needed to meet spatial structure criteria for the Upper Yakima population of Mid-Columbia Steelhead. Following the presentation, Julie Schilling moved to **approve the KCCD Naneum/Caribou Passage and Screening Project for submission to the SRFB, contingent upon a positive review by the TAG and the Citizen's Committee.**

7) 2019-21 RCO Applicant Resolution and Contract

The Board reviewed the draft Authorization Resolution for RCO Project 19-1676P and discussed the contract, Scope of Work and Statement of Work for the Project, which will provide base operating funding for FY2020 and 2021. Alex noted that once the previous contract is closed out, any unspent funds will be carried over and the new contract amended to add them. Jay McGowan moved to **approve the Authorization Resolution as presented, and direct Alex to submit the signed contract to RCO.** The motion was seconded and approved with consent of all present.

8) Ecology Contract for Bull Trout Coordination

Alex reviewed the work being conducted under the current contract with Ecology, which will expire on Dec 31. It has funded his and Emily Smith with Mid-Columbia Fisheries time convening and supporting the Yakima Bull Trout Work Group (BTWG). The Yakima Basin Integrated Plan has recommended that the Board receive \$70,000 in funding to cover the costs of this work from Jan 1 through Dec 31 of 2021. This will cover both existing costs and additional staff time and/or contracted services to complete specific tasks at the request of the BTWG. Ecology is hoping that we can amend our existing contract to add the new funding and extend the closing date through 2021. Alex is working with Ecology and the BTWG to finalize the proposed scope of work and complete either a contract amendment or new contract, as directed by Ecology Office of Columbia River staff. He asked that the Board authorize the Executive Committee to approve the amendment or contract once a draft is completed with Ecology, so that it can be executed prior to January 1. Richard Bloom moved to **authorize the Executive Committee to approve a contract or contract amendment with Ecology for \$70,000 to support the Board's work to convene and support the Bull Trout Working Group.** Jay McGowan seconded the motion, which passed with the consent of all present.

9) Lead Entity Updates

Alex directed the Board to Tricia Snyder's written update and noted that Tricia is currently working on resolving state review panel questions about 2019 projects, organizing the October 15 completed project tour, and preparing the late October off-season meeting for our Technical Advisory Group and Citizen Committee. Alex also reviewed the changes coming in the 2020 grant round, which will result in an earlier (September rather than December) funding decision by the SRFB.

10) 2020 Legislative Outreach Plans

The Board expressed its interest in having staff and Board members meeting with state legislators from the Yakima Basin in the second half of January. Members concluded that the Executive Committee should start identifying legislators to meet with, topics and key messages at its November meeting, and staff should schedule visits in December (prior to the next Board meeting on Jan 22). Members noted that we should be ready to update legislators on issues they asked us about last time, such as the Wenas watershed and fish passage needs in the Yakima Basin.

11) Recovery Program Updates

Alex:

- a) Updated the Board on recent meetings and activities of the Yakima Bull Trout Working Group.
- b) Noted that he is working with partners to engage in state and Columbia Basin level discussions of monitoring needs and funding, to ensure that the monitoring needs identified in our recovery plans are addressed.
- c) Noted that once hiring and contracting for the next year is completed, his focus will be on completing a work plan for the proposed steelhead recovery plan update.

12) Communications and Outreach Plans

Alex directed the Board to Tricia Snyder's written update.

13) Board Logistics

The Board discussed the rent payment issues presented by Alex, and directed him to work with the landlord and RCO to ensure terms of the lease are met. The Board briefly reviewed the July to September financial report and noted that the next Board meeting would be held on January 22.

14) Public Comments

Elizabeth Torrey with WDFW noted that she and other WDFW staff were working to raise awareness about Sage Steppe issues, especially in light of increased alternative energy project proposals, and that she was glad to visit with local government staff and others to talk about these and other issues.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:10 pm.