



YAKIMA BASIN
FISH AND WILDLIFE
RECOVERY BOARD

Minutes of the May 18th, 2022 Board of Directors Meeting

As approved at the 8/10/2022 Annual Meeting

Meeting held from 1 pm to 3 pm via GoToMeeting web conference

Members present: Adam Fyall & Will McKay (Benton County), Troy Havens & Ron Anderson (Yakima County), Arden Thomas (Kittitas County), Shannon Adams (Yakama Nation), Richard Bloom (City of West Richland), Patricia Byers & David Brown (City of Yakima), Jay McGowan (City of Cle Elum), Nancy Lillquist (City of Ellensburg), Steve Becken (City of Prosser)

Partners present: Erik Neatherlin & Jeanie Abbott (GSRO) and Megan Duffy (RCO)

Staff present: Alex Conley, Kayla Gallentine

The business meeting of the Board of Directors was called to order at 1:00 pm following confirmation of a quorum.

Welcome, Introductions, Agenda and Review of Minutes

After acknowledging the 42nd anniversary of the eruption of Mt. St. Helens, the group reviewed meeting logistics and the proposed agenda and deferred introductions till the beginning of the RCO discussion, when invited guests would be present. **Minutes of the 3-23-22 Board Meeting were approved** with the consent of all present.

Board Updates

Alex provided the following updates:

- a) The **2022 Eastern Washington Riparian Planting Symposium** was a success, and videos of all the presentations are available on the Board's web site. Heather Simmons, who has been the driver behind the workshop all six years it has been held, is moving on to a new position in the Department of Ecology and will no longer be involved. Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group has secured funding for part-time staff support of the Riparian Consortium, and Alex and Kayla will stay involved in organizing future events. Board members expressed appreciation for the work that has gone into holding what has become a popular and enduring event.
- b) **Board Membership Updates:**
Alex noted that he had not had any contact with the **City of Union Gap representative** appointed to the Board of Directors last winter, and that we will need to resolve the status of that seat as part of the annual meeting.

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Shannon Adams noted that with Jonalee Squeochs' departure and changes in the leadership of the Yakama Nation Fish and Wildlife Committee, **the Yakama Nation will be updating its appointments to the Board**. Shannon will serve as interim representative; she expects that the Yakama Nation Fish and Wildlife Committee will appoint Jeremy Takala to the Board of Directors member with David Blodgett III and Kelsey Harbick serving as his staff alternates. Shannon noted that it would be valuable to have the Board give a presentation to tribal representatives about its work and goals.

- c) Alex noted that staff capacity limitation mean that he and Adam decided to **defer completion of the proposed strategic planning process until the fall/winter**. This will also allow participation by new Yakama Nation representatives.
- d) Alex noted that the **COVID reopening plan** discussed at the last meeting was being implemented and that we had a nice air filter sized for office meetings, but that we had not yet purchased a conference room camera. Nancy noted many organizations she has worked with are using an Owl camera.
- e) Kayla announced the **Saturday lamprey release in People's Park in Ellensburg** and updated the Board on recent outreach events she has participated in.
- f) Alex updated the group on the submission of **4 applications from the Yakima Basin to 2022 Brian Abbott Fish Barrier Removal Board** grant round and shared a map showing progress and goals for fish passage projects in the Wilson-Naneum-Cherry watersheds around Ellensburg.
- g) Alex noted that he is working with partners to track **federal infrastructure funding opportunities** such as the America the Beautiful Challenge and work with partners to identify projects that fit funding opportunities.
- h) Alex noted that **the Yakima Bull Trout Working Group met in early May and is finalizing its 2022 Bull Trout Funding Recommendations** to the Yakima Integrated Plan Habitat Subcommittee. He also noted that three major bull trout projects are moving toward construction: Clear Creek Dam Fish Passage, the South Fork Tieton Bridge and the Kachess River Instream Restoration Project, and that he is looking for additional staff support for convening the Bull Trout Working Group.
- i) Alex noted progress on two contracts for **Steelhead Recovery planning products**, the Yakama Nation Contract to Update Recovery Plan elements for the Satius and Toppenish Steelhead Populations, and the Fish Passage Prioritization Project with Aspect Consulting. He also showed a graph of the 2021-22 steelhead run to date, which is at the lowest levels since the mid-1990s prior to listing. The group briefly discussed different factors driving this decline and noted the need to figure out which bottlenecks most need to be addressed.

3) Dialogue with Megan Duffy, RCO Director, and Erik Neatherlin, GSRO

Participants on the call introduced themselves to the guest speakers, Megan Duffy, RCO Director, Erik Neatherlin, GSRO Executive Coordinator, and Jeannie Abbot, GSRO Program Manager. Erik gave an update on GSRO activities and the development and implementation of the recently updated Governor's Strategy for Salmon Recovery. He highlighted the new Orca Recovery website, the hiring of Katie Pruitt, and the vacancy currently being filled for a senior policy position to lead implementation of the Statewide Salmon Recovery Strategy and coordinate with the Regional Organizations. He also

highlighted efforts to secure some of the \$200 million identified for salmon recovery in the Federal Infrastructure bill, including NOAA funds, the American the Beautiful and the Culvert restoration program.

Megan Duffy, the RCO Director then gave an update on the SRFB program, the process to determine how to allocate the \$75 million of new funding awarded to RCO, and efforts to address Lead Entity and Regional Organization Capacity needs,

In subsequent discussion, Erik Neatherlin stressed the need for stories sharing how local management and expertise are making effective use of this money, especially in natural resources. He also encouraged partners to think creatively about how improvements can be made for local infrastructure, like roads and water systems that also benefit salmon. He and Megan noted that regionally representative organizations are the best voice to bring into these state-wide conversations, especially as most Washington expertise is on the ground and local.

Lead Entity Program

- a) Alex presented an **update on the 2022 grant round** prepared by Michael Horner, who was on leave the day of the meeting. He noted that it was great to do in-person field tours again for the first time since 2019, and that the grant round was one the biggest ever in both number and total dollar amount of proposals. Alex noted that recent state appropriations mean that the amount of funding available for projects could go up significantly pending decisions to be made by the SRFB at its June 2nd meeting, and that the long project list under review this year means that the Board is well positioned to make use of that extra funding.
- b) The Board of Directors reviewed the nominations provided by Yakima County members for individuals to fill the two vacant Yakima County citizen committee seats and **approved a motion to appoint Max Linden and Ryan Anderson to the Citizen Committee** with the support of all present.
- c) The Board of Directors discussed the **\$75 million appropriated by the legislature for SRFB salmon recovery projects** and the requirement that \$50 million of that be spent on projects over \$5 million. Alex noted that there is broad support for routing the \$25 million available for projects of any size through the existing grant process and regional allocation, but that there was more debate about whether to allocate the \$50 million through regional or statewide competition. All of the regional organizations have expressed support for a regional approach that would allow projects to start being developed and evaluated by regions immediately after the June 2nd SRFB meeting; regions are concerned that deferring to an as-yet undefined statewide and/or targeted investment competition will require significant investments in developing new processes and criteria before sponsors can identify projects that fit well, leaving little time and energy for required local project development and evaluation. The Board of Directors discussed the issue and reviewed the draft letter prepared by staff emphasizing these points. Alex noted that the text of the letter would likely change once the SRFB memo presenting specific alternative was available, and **the Board of Directors moved and approved sending a letter based on the points in the draft pending final email review and approval by the Executive Committee.**

Agreements

- a) The Board reviewed the proposed **Interlocal Agreement with the Yakima Valley Library**. The agreement establishes a joint process to establish and add documents to an enduring, publicly

accessible digital archive of significant documents relating to water and natural resource issues in the Yakima Basin. The new agreement is self-renewing unless one of the parties opts out and does not require any payments between the parties. Nancy expressed support for the work and noted that it helped implement the vision championed years ago by one of the Board's founders, Leo Bowman. Adam noted that he would communicate that to Leo. A motion to approve the ILA as presented was made and approved by all present.

- b) Alex updated the Board on the fish passage prioritization and online web portal development currently underway in partnership with Aspect Consulting and noted that the proposed **Contract Amendment with Aspect Consulting** would allow this work to continue by adding new items to the scope and \$27,000 to the budget. The Board of Directors reviewed the amendment, and a motion to approve it was passed with the support of all present.
- c) Alex presented slides provided by Ralph Lampman describing the **Pacific Lamprey Conservation Agreement** and encouraging the Board to join as a signatory. The Board expressed interest into either joining as a signatory or providing a letter of support and agreed to invite Ralph to join the Board's August 10 annual meeting to continue the discussion.

Organizational Capacity Funding Proposal

The Board of Directors reviewed the **draft capacity funding evaluation** prepared by Alex, which details current funding (which has been unchanged since 2006) and proposed increases that would allow the Board to operate at its intended capacity and better implement its mission. Alex noted that he was working with GSRO, RCO and the other Regional Organization Directors in the Columbia Basin to identify the best pathways to move forward with a request for increased capacity funding. The Board discussed how the flat funding reduced our ability to implement our mission over time, and expressed support for pursuing increased capacity funding.

Board Logistics

- a) The Board of Directors discussed the **August 10 Annual Meeting and Tour in Tri-Cities** and agreed that we should work from the tour and meeting plans developed last year before the event was cancelled
- b) The Board of Directors reviewed the **updated annual letter to members and annual recruitment letter** and directed staff to compile the annual mailings. A motion to have the Chair sign the letters was approved with the support of all present.
- c) The Board of Directors expressed support for scheduling a **late June Workshop for work plan/budget review**, so that any proposed changes sent in in response to the annual letter can be considered and incorporated into an update of the current two-year work plan and budget to be considered at the August annual meeting.
- d) Alex noted that the Board's policy manual provides staff with paid holidays based on the State of Washington Holiday schedule, and that this year, Juneteenth had been added as an official state holiday. The Board **expressed support for observing Juneteenth**.

No public comments were made, and the meeting adjourned at 3:05 PM