

Date: September 22, 2020

Place: Virtual Meeting

Format: Regular Meeting started at 4:05 p.m.

Board Members on Phone: Jon Jones (WC), Roland Schirman (CC), Michael Talbott (CC), Brad Johnson (AC), Brian Shinn (AC), Bill Bowles (GC), Kris Fischer (CTUIR), Michael Largent (WC), Larry Hooker (WW), Todd Kimball (WW), and Justin Dixon (GC)

Others on Phone: Ali Fitzgerald (SRSRB), John Foltz (SRSRB), Brian Burke (NOAA), Becky Johnson (NPT), Joanna Cowles-Cleveland (WWCCD), and Megan Stewart (ACCD)

Verify Quorum / Public Comment

SRSRB Chairman Bowles called the meeting to order at 4:05 pm and verified a quorum (11 present via phone). No public comment. A motion was made by Michael Largent to approve the agenda. It was seconded by Brian Shinn and the Board approved the motion.

Approve Agenda and Consent Agenda:

1. August 2020 Expenses: On Hold
2. August 25th, 2020 Meeting notes

Action 1 – A motion was made by Michael Largent to approve the August 25th, 2020 meeting notes with an amendment to clarify that the approved COLA would take effect July 2020. The motion was seconded by Michael Talbott and the Board approved the motion.

Update – Announcements and Items of Interest

Executive Call Actions – No action taken.

RTT update— The main topic of the RTT meeting was review and updates to priority restoration and protection reaches for SRFB funding. This process will continue over next few months and will be presented to the SRSRB upon completion. Additional discussion centered around flood response with the leveed reaches of area rivers. This topic has also been added to the SRSRB agenda.

Brief Project Implementation update— John briefly summarized projects that were implemented in 2020. A more in depth presentation will follow at a later meeting.

2020 SRFB project list final update— Ali informed the SRSRB that the annual grant awards SRFB meeting took place on September 16th and our ranked list was approved as expected. This concludes the 2020 Grant Round.

Presentation: An Update on NOAA’s Ocean Salmon Research – Brian Burke, from the NOAA Northwester Fisheries Science Center, gave a presentation adapted from the Mid-Columbia Steelhead forum that sheds some light on what is occurring in terms of ocean conditions affecting salmon and steelhead life cycles. Data indicates the “blob”, has been strong in most of the years since 2014, contributing to unusual marine conditions and biological responses. They are seeing range expansions of southern species, algal blooms, species die offs, and generally much skinnier salmon collected in trapping efforts. Brian also summarized some of the ongoing ocean surveys including the Newport hydrographic line, juvenile salmon and ecosystem surveys, and salmon behavior and distribution. Based on current observations and our understanding of these species, we need to focus on ecosystem-based fish management to include multiple trophic levels such as baitfish and plankton as well as addressing/understanding ocean predation. Brian also noted that ocean predation impacts remain a big data gap, with the need to do diet studies to get an estimate (no one is studying this right now).



Discussion/Action: Fish and Wildlife Commission Harvest Policy C-3620 and Next Steps—John sat in on the recent Fish and Wildlife Commission Meeting. Upriver recreational harvest allocation was increased 5% but overall allocation is now determined by a sliding scale which appears to allow additional commercial harvest if stock abundance increases. In regards to conservation measures, adjusting harvest based upon escapement goals was not included and there was limited management direction provided to protecting lower river coldwater refugia from harvest pressure. The SRSRB discussed sending a letter the Association of Northwest Steelheaders asking for their support of developing a more equitable recreational harvest and helping to articulate the Board’s position. Michael Talbott made a motion to approve submission of this letter to the Association of Northwest Steelheaders. Brian Shinn Seconded the motion. The motion received six yeas and two nays. The motion failed to pass by consensus.

Discussion: Potential outreach initiative on habitat project relationships to flood risk reduction—John informed the SRSRB of some concerns with river cleaning within the leveed town reaches of area rivers and broader relationship of habitat restoration work to flood risk reduction. This topic was a discussion point at the RTT meeting where members expressed concerns that large quantities of wood were being removed as well as modifications to the levees as emergency fixes which are not consistent with our goals for habitat restoration. The RTT would like to reconvene the levee subcommittee. John also presented a few outreach ideas such as working with local towns and sharing our LiDAR to help model 100-year flood events, or publishing letters in the local newspapers. Yakima County has had some success with connecting County and Restoration engineers to better manage restoration and flooding topics. John asked for feedback from the SRSRB on how best to approach this topic and how we should be involved. General feedback from the SRSRB is that we should not be the primary driver of this conversation and that it should come from our regional project partners but that we do need to be involved. Seeking the development of something like a trifold pamphlet would be a good place to start, including what information is available, some history on how we have altered waterways and how we could potentially mitigate those impacts, and general sharing of information. CTUIR has a scheduled meeting with Columbia County to give a flood presentation. The Board also thought that there should be a focus on engaging the Army Corp of Engineers and was believe that engaging in the levee group would be a good idea – it was noted that NOAA, CTUIR, and the USFWS will have a greater impact in working with the Corp. This will be a continuing conversation at upcoming meetings.

Action: Approve October 27th, 2020 for next Board meeting to be held remotely starting at 4:00 PM. – A motion was made by Brad Johnson and seconded by Michael Talbott to hold the next Board meeting on October 27th, 2020 remotely at 4:00 PM. The Board approved by consensus.

Meeting adjourned at 6:12 p.m. by Chair Bowles

Signed By:  Date: October 27, 2020

Bill Bowles, Chair, Snake River Salmon Recovery Board