Snake River Salmon Recovery

Date: May 24th, 2022
Place: Dayton Best Western
Format: Regular Meeting started at 6:00 p.m.
Board Members in Person: Sean Thurston (CC), Jon Jones (WC), Kris Fischer (CTUIR), Brian Shinn (AC), Marty Hall (CC), Larry Hooker (WW), Mike Denny (WW), Brad Johnson (AC), and Justin Dixon (GC).
Board Members on Phone: Bill Bowles (GC) and Michael Largent (WC).
Others in Person: John Foltz (SRSRB), Kris Buelow (SRSRB), Ali Fitzgerald (SRSRB), and Roland Schirman (Citizen).
Others on Phone: Steve Martin (WDFW), Joanna Cowles-Cleveland (WWCCD), Aneesha Dieu (CCD) and Lance Frederick (Pomeroy CD).

Verify Quorum / Public Comment/Approve Meeting Agenda

SRSRB Vice Chair Johnson called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm and verified a quorum (9 in person, 2 on phone). There was no public comment. A motion was made by Kris Fischer to approve the agenda. It was seconded by Marty Hall and the Board approved the motion.

Action 1 – A motion was made by Marty Hall to approve the April 26, 2022 meeting notes. Mike Denny seconded the motion and the Board approved the motion.

Discussion: FY 2022/23 Budget – review in preparation for approval in June – John provided an overview of the SRSRB budgets specifically focusing on the regional budget which is $333k operating budget and the Lead Entity budget of $65k. John reminded the Board that the Tucannon Programmatic portion of the budget has already been approved and that what's being presented is for the remainder of the operating costs. John provided handouts with more detail, but the regional budget includes staff time for John, Ali, partner contracts and contracted support. It also includes approximately 1.5 FTE worth of administrative assistance through WWCC. The region budget is estimated to have approximately $100k carryover. Additional information can be found in the budgets sent out to board members, which looks like previous years. John asked for board members to get questions to him ahead of the June meeting when the Board will seek to approve the budget, this includes the WWCC indirect rate and the RCO authorizing resolution (to allow the Chair to sign our grant contract from RCO).

Discussion: Partner Contracts for FY2022/23 – review in preparation for approval in June – John also summarized planned partner contracts and associated costs. Details can be found in associated handouts but include funding for WRIA 35, NPT, CTUIR, Palouse CD, Asotin County CD, Pomeroy CD, Walla Walla Columbia CD, and Columbia CD. There is potential to increase the outreach and education portion of funding if John receives requests from any of the partners. These contracts are set to be approved at the June meeting as well.

Discussion/Action: Letter of Support to SRFB regarding funding for 2022 Grant Round – The Board discussed the Legislature Approved Salmon Recovery Funding Board Funding Increases at the last meeting. The State SRFB will be deciding how to allocate these funds at their June meeting and the Board asked John to develop a letter for the Board to consider informing the decision.

John reviewed the draft letter, an update on the conversations across the salmon recovery regions, and provided an update on an additional $75 million in state habitat project funding and potential scenarios for its distribution, $25 million is allocated for projects <$5 million each and the remaining $50 million is for large projects over $5 million. Multiple scenarios for how to allocate funds were developed according to the SRFB meeting memo. The Board discussed the options and draft letter presented.

Brian Shinn made a motion to approve the letter of support to the SRFB for the 2022 grant round with support for Option 2 for the $25M, and Options 3 for the $50M (with 1 or 2 as suitable alternatives). Jon Jones seconded the motion and the Board approved the motion.

Snake River Salmon Recovery

Discussion: State of Salmon in Watersheds Report Overview and Check-in – The Governor's Salmon Recovery Office puts together a State of Salmon in Watersheds Report that is submitted to the Legislature once every two years. John has been contacted by the GSRO for input on some of the content, mainly on the regional page, for the upcoming report. John would like to work with the Chair and Vice-Chair, and other Board members that are interested, as necessary to get feedback and input on the potential updates. Text updates to the regional page are due the end of June. If interested in participating in the review/update, please let John know.

Action: Planned Project Forecast List (PPFL) Approval – Ali and John provided a brief update on the PPFL and that it's similar to our 3-year workplan but highlights projects that would potentially apply for SRFB funding in the 2023 or 2024 grant rounds and sponsors would have the capacity to complete. This list is used by RCO to demonstrate funding need and provide legislators with examples of how additional funding might be utilized. The PPFL does not preclude our local scoring/ranking/review process nor does it guarantee funding. Ali showed the final version of the PPFL with all edits incorporated.

Michael Largent made a motion to approve the Planned Project Forecast List. Bill Bowles seconded the motion and the Board approved the motion.

Presentation: RTT Updates – Summary of Regional Fish Barrier Prioritization – John summarized ongoing efforts to develop a tool to prioritize regional barriers that has a map showing all the barriers based on priorities such as habitat gain, habitat quality, climate change, and species benefit. Statewide barrier maps had previously shown an extensive number of barriers in the region which didn't reflect the true barriers or unknown barriers versus "barriers" that did not have fish presence or otherwise not a priority. Three general priority areas rose to the top following this exercise: Mill Creek, Tucannon, and Snake River tributaries.

Update – Announcements and Items of Interest

Executive Call Actions – No actions taken.

2022 SRFB Grant Round Updates – Ali provided a brief update on the current grant round including a recap of the May project tour, initial review panel project statuses, and key dates moving forward. The final scoring meeting is on June 23rd.

Film Screening — Sean has been in touch with film maker Kris Millgate on potentially sponsoring a film showing of "Ocean to Idaho". John and Sean Thurston discussed the potential opportunity to show a film called Ocean to Idaho, the Board was interested but wanted to learn more. The film will be pre-screened by interested members of the SRSRB to see if they would like to host a community screening.

June Meeting Preparations — June topics will include Nez Perce Tribe Coho Program and hatchery infrastructure needs, along with budget approvals.

Executive Session: To review the performance of Board staff – Board Chair to announce the time when the executive session will be concluded. The Vice-Chair announced that the Board would go into Executive session to review the performance of Board staff and that the session would end at 8:00pm; a second call-in line was made available for Board members participating remotely. The executive session began at 7:39 PM and ended at 8:00 PM when the Board returned to the open public meeting; the executive session was then extended to 8:05 PM. At 8:05 PM, the Board returned to the open public meeting.

Action: Evaluations and Salary Recommendations for Staff – John summarized the executive session with the recommendation for 3% step increase salary increases for the Tucannon Program Lead and Project Funding Coordinator, to begin on July 1, 2022 in addition to any college-approved COLA's (anticipated to be ~3%). He also shared a brief summary of the positive performance evaluations he conducted with staff to support the request and shared his appreciation for both Kris and Ali's hard work over the last year.

Snake River Salmon Recovery

A motion was made by Justin Dixon to approve the 3% step increase raises for The Tucannon Program Lead, the Project Funding Coordinator, and the Executive Director, including any college-approved COLA's, beginning July 1, 2022. It was seconded by Brian Shinn and passed by consensus. The SRSRB expressed their appreciation for staff.

Action: June 28, 2022 for next Board meeting to be held at either the South Fork Walla Walla Fish Hatchery or in Dayton, WA. — The Board discussed the idea presented by Gary James to host the August Board meeting and legislative outreach bbq at the SF Walla Walla Hatchery; the Board thought that would be a good idea and Gary and John will work on the details.

A motion was made by Marty Hall and seconded by Sean Thurston to hold the next Board meeting on June 28, 2022 in Dayton, WA at the Best Western, with a remote option starting at 6:00 PM. The Board approved by consensus.

Meeting adjourned at 8:13 p.m. by Vice Chair Johnson.

Signed By: Bradley Johnson Date: 6/28/2022
Brad Johnson, Vice- Chair, Snake River Salmon Recovery Board