

Date: October 25th, 2022

Place: Dayton Best Western

Format: Regular Meeting started at 4:02 p.m.

Board Members in Person: Jon Jones (WC), Marty Hall (CC), Mike Denny (WW), Sean Thurston (CC), Don Jackson (CC), Bill Bowles (GC), and Larry Hooker (WW).

Board Members on Phone: Kris Fischer (CTUIR), Brad Johnson (AC), Michael Largent (WC), Todd Kimball (WW), and Justin Dixon (GC).

Others in Person: John Foltz (SRSRB), Kris Buelow (SRSRB), Ali Fitzgerald (SRSRB), Roland Schirman (Citizen), Jim Peterson (citizen), Aneesha Dieu (CCD), and Ben Kleist (CCD).

Others on Phone: Joanna Cowles-Cleveland (WWCCD), Justin Yeager (NOAA), and Steve Martin (WDFW).

Verify Quorum / Public Comment

SRSRB Chair Bowles called the meeting to order at 4:02 pm and verified a quorum (7 in person, 4 on phone).

No public comment. A motion was made by Marty Hall to approve the agenda. It was seconded by Mike Denny and the Board approved the motion.

Approve Agenda and Consent Agenda:

1. September Expenses as follows:
 - (H2SR) RCO: \$19,197.45
 - (H2FW) LE: \$2,455.56
 - (H2B4) BPA: \$13,924.59
2. September 27, 2022, meeting notes.

Action 1 – A motion was made by Jon Jones to approve the September expenses and September 27, 2022, meeting notes. Sean Thurston seconded the motion, and the Board approved the motion.

Presentation: Mid-Columbia River Steelhead 5-Year Review Overview and NOAA Perspectives – Justin Yeager presented a summary of the Mid-C Steelhead 5-year stock status review which includes accomplishments, challenges, and recommendations. Mid-C Steelhead was listed in 1999 and the original recovery plan was released in 2009. The Umatilla and Walla Walla populations are at moderate risk and the Touchet population is still considered high risk.

Key threats include predation, ocean conditions, low flows, high temperatures, degraded habitat, passage issues, and lack of floodplain. The top near-term priorities include flow enhancements, fish passage improvements, implementing the WWW 2050 plan and WW Integrated Flow Enhancement Study, and continue to increase monitoring.

A lot of opportunities exist with the increase in funding across multiple sources. It will be important to be strategic and put projects forward. He also highlighted that ocean conditions in 2021 looked good so he's hopeful we'll see better returns in the near future. John noted the Board support for several regional NOAA IJA proposals; Justin said he would like to see a summary of the projects proposed from the region and that the NOAA restoration center could provide support for future grant proposals to NOAA.



The SRSRB asked questions about avian and aquatic predators impacts on salmon and how to manage that moving forward. The avian component in particular is a big challenge to navigate. Justin noted that avian predation is typically worse for juvenile steelhead as they migrate in the upper six feet of the water column whereas Chinook migrate at lower depths, 6-10ft. Non-native fish predation was also discussed, noting that there is a big data gap for this topic. The Board brought up barging as a good option and Justin agreed about the usefulness of the tool, although noting there are challenges with straying.

Additional discussion centered around the Snake River dams and weighing the pros and cons of removal versus other techniques of improving survival in out-migrating fish, specifically noting the NOAA Rebuilding the Interior Columbia Basin stocks. Justin noted that dam breaching is not believed to be needed for ESA recovery, but the Columbia Basin Collaborative is looking at healthy and harvestable population goals which is a much higher goal than ESA. The Board asked if the dams were breached, would population rebuilding be guaranteed? Justin noted that there is a lot of uncertainty, but that the hydrosystem does have a big impact on fish. Dam breaching responses are just a theory but scientifically well founded. Mike Denny offered to share his knowledge of avian predation with the Board in a future presentation, specifically discussing which species are eating live fish and which species might be less of an issue as they eat injured or dead fish. Sean asked if the SRFB can fund non-native fish removal as it benefits habitat work. John didn't believe so but will check in on this; maybe there is an opportunity to expand efforts in the future.

Discussion/Action: Overview of State Budget Agency Requests and Conversation about Legislative Support and Letter to the Governor – John presented the draft letter to the Governor modified from one the SRSRB sent during the last biennium. Hits on key priorities including funding for RCO/SRFB capital and capacity funding, Fish Barrier Removal Board, WDFD monitoring and Wooten Floodplain Mgmt. Plan, Conservation Commission, and DNR LiDAR acquisition. Historically the letter, once approved, goes to Governor's office and OFM to help inform the Governor's budget at this point in time and then after the Governor's Budget is released in December, a similar letter would be sent to our local legislators. John asked for any edits or revisions to the letter. A few minor edits for clarity were made.

The Board asked for a follow up regarding the status of the large federal hatchery infrastructure request. Steve Martin said he will reach out to Tom McBride and John to follow up on this.

A motion was made by Marty Hall to approve sending the letter as edited. Jon Jones seconded the motion, and the Board approved the motion.

Discussion/Action: Review Draft 2023 Board Meeting Calendar – John presented the draft schedule with regular monthly schedule. Last year we opted to host all meetings in Dayton due to COVID and the Board was supportive of continuing to meet there given the central location and the ability for improved remote capabilities. John asked if the SRSRB had thoughts on start times or locations of the meetings for 2023. Bill requested the September meeting should be 6:00. SRSRB supportive of Dayton for the location.

Larry Hooker made a motion to approve the draft meeting calendar as proposed and with one edit for September meeting time. Sean Thurston seconded and the motion passed by consensus.

Discussion: Review Draft 2023 Executive Board Meeting Schedule and County Commissioner Representation – John reviewed the roles of the executive committee and the schedule for the monthly meeting as well as the assigned rotating county commissioners for each meeting. Marty Hall volunteered to take the open January time slot. The SRSRB was supportive of the schedule.



Update – Announcements and Items of Interest

Executive Call Actions – No actions taken.

RTT Update – Kris Fischer summarized green LiDAR data analysis including geomorphic change detection from 2017 to 2020. A report will be out soon as well as a presentation at a future SRSRB meeting. John summarized the priority reaches for species other than our listed species of interest including bull trout, coho, mountain whitefish, Pacific Lamprey, mussels, and non-native predatory fish. More details to follow. Also working on updating 3-5 year workplan.

Action: December 13th, 2022 for next Board meeting to be held at the Best Western in Dayton, WA at 4:00PM. — A motion was made by Marty Hall and seconded by Mike Denny to hold the next Board meeting on December 13th, 2022 at the Dayton Best Western at 4 PM in Dayton, WA. The Board approved by consensus.

Meeting adjourned at 5:40 p.m. by Chair Bowles.

Signed By:  Date: 12/13/2022
Bill Bowles, Chair, Snake River Salmon Recovery Board