

July 9, 2013

TO: Snake River Recovery Planning Coordination Group

FROM: Rick Mogren

SUBJECT: Coordination Group Meeting Notes: May 7, 2013

Introduction:

A meeting of the Snake River Recovery Planning Coordination Group (Coordination Group) convened at 9:30 am (Mountain Time) at the Upper Snake River Tribes (USRT) conference room in Boise, Idaho on Tuesday, May 7, 2013.

Group participants consisted of representatives from tribes, states, and federal agencies. Attachment 1 lists participants and their contact information.

These notes present the general nature of the topics presented, a summary of questions and discussion as raised through each portion of the meeting, and next steps. They do not represent a verbatim transcript of the conversation.

Copies of these meeting summary notes and the presentation slides used at the meeting are available on NOAA' Snake River recovery planning website.¹

Opening Comments: (Scott Rumsey / Heather Ray)

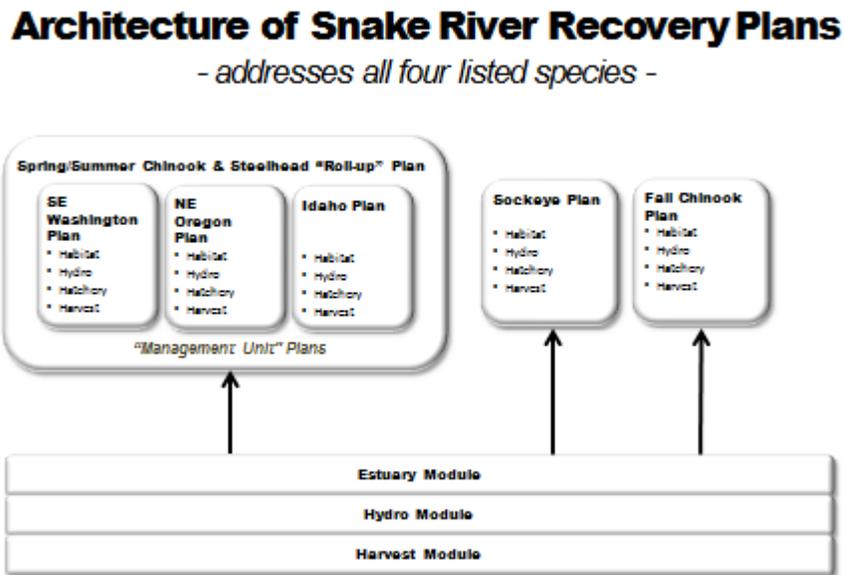
- Heather Ray welcomed participants on behalf of USRT.
- Purpose for this meeting is to update participants on planning progress and inform them as to how they may engage in the process if they so desire.
- All of the Snake River recovery planning documents have been or will be posted to a NOAA website for access by interested parties.¹

Snake River Recovery Context (Scott Rumsey):

¹ Recovery documents and meeting slides are posted on NMFS's Snake River recovery plan web site at: http://www.nwr.noaa.gov/protected_species/salmon_steelhead/recovery_planning_and_implementation/snake_river/current_snake_river_recovery_plan_documents.html.

- The proposed Snake River recovery plan “architecture” consists of three separate recovery plans. The first is a “roll-up” recovery plan synthesizing the SE Washington, NE Oregon, and Idaho management unit (MU) plans for Snake River spring/summer chinook and steelhead. The second is a recovery plan for Snake River Sockeye. The third is a recovery plan for Snake River Fall Chinook. All plans address the four “Hs” (habitat, hydropower, hatcheries, and harvest) and incorporate the basin-wide estuary, hydropower, and harvest modules as applicable to each listed species.² Figure 1 illustrates this architecture³:

Figure 1.



- NOAA’s Snake River recovery plan completion process:
 - Collaborate with co-managers and relevant groups to develop each draft recovery plan
 - Coordinate with the NOAA-formed Snake River Coordination Group
 - Brief and coordinate with Federal Caucus, Northwest Power and Conservation Council, etc.
 - Brief and coordinate with US v Oregon Policy Group

² Elizabeth Gaar noted that a potential fourth “Ocean Module” is under consideration by NOAA.

³ Scott modified Figure 1 from the diagram shown during his presentation to better illustrate the information that he intended to convey. The original slide is posted along with the rest of his presentation on the website identified in footnote 1.

- Communicate via NOAA web site
- The following is the general schedule for completion of all three recovery plans. The schedule for each individual plan completion may vary based on their respective processes:
 - All three recovery plans completed in draft no later than November 2013
 - Notice of proposed recovery plans posted in Federal Register by early 2014
 - Final recovery plans in 2015
 - In 2018, the plans will be updated with integrated all-H strategies, incorporating the best available science from the following regional processes:
 - FCRPS biological opinion
 - Other biological opinions
 - Hatchery genetic management plans
 - FERC relicensing for the Hells Canyon complex
 - US v. Oregon
 - Updates to various Forest Plans
 - Amendments to the NPCC Fish and Wildlife program
 - Changes to the treaty with Canada
 - New information from research and monitoring actions
 - Findings from NOAA's Columbia Basin "situation assessment"
- Summary of discussion during the course of Scott's presentation:
 - Q: What is the link between the harvest module and the harvest/hatchery aspects in the MU plans?
 - A: The harvest module addresses broad, Basin-wide issues related to harvest in the ocean, estuary, and mainstem Columbia and Snake Rivers. The MU plans provide a greater level of detail, discussing issues and harvest/hatchery actions applicable to specific tributaries and programs within each MU plan's boundaries and scope.
 - Q: How sensitive is the hydropower module to changes that may come out of the FCRPS BiOp litigation?
 - A: The intent is to ensure the recovery plans and modules are consistent with the outcome of the FCRPS BiOp and other ongoing regional processes. In the interest of time, the Snake River recovery

plans are being drafted on a parallel track with these other processes. If there are substantive changes called for through one or more of these processes, then the affected module(s) and/or plan(s) will be updated accordingly. A major purpose in revising the Snake River recovery plans in 2018 is to ensure they holistically reflect and synthesize the best available information and science as may be developed through these other processes.

- Q: Is delisting part of the plan? What will NOAA consider for delisting criteria given the lack of regulatory power in the recovery plans?
 - A: Section 4(f)(1)(B)(ii) of the Endangered Species Act requires that recovery plans incorporate objective, measurable criteria which, when met, would result in a determination that the species be removed from listing. Species status reviews are conducted every five years. When the time comes, NOAA will compare the results from the status reviews with the criteria identified in the plan and make the appropriate recommendation. Delisting (or downlisting) is a formal rule-making procedure that must be noticed in the Federal Register. Once noticed, and after passage of a reasonable period of time for public review and comment, NOAA will review the comments received and then render a decision as to whether the species remain listed, be downlisted, or be delisted.
- Q: How will NOAA estimate intrinsic productivity in a species at or above recovery abundance levels? The commenter questioned whether “intrinsic productivity” is a useful and practical criterion for delisting given that one cannot empirically measure “intrinsic productivity” (productivity at low levels of population abundance) in populations nearing recovery.
 - A: For a more detailed treatment of this and related issues, please refer to the Interior Columbia Technical Recovery Team’s (ICTRT) viability criteria report, and the section entitled “Evaluating Population Status vs. Viability Curves” (p. 41)⁴.
 - The ICTRT developed abundance and productivity objectives that serve as our starting point for the development of ESA delisting criteria. The ICTRT recommended that intrinsic productivity and natural origin abundance should be high enough that 1) declines to critically low levels would be unlikely assuming recent historical patterns of environmental variability; 2) compensatory processes provide resilience to the effects of short term perturbations; and 3) subpopulation

⁴ See the ICTRT report on viability criteria available on-line at:
http://www.nwfsc.noaa.gov/trt/trt_documents/ictrt_viability_criteria_reviewdraft_2007_complete.pdf

structure is maintained (e.g., multiple spawning tributaries, spawning patches, life history patterns).

- Intrinsic productivity reflects population productivity at low levels of abundance when there is lack of depensation. In a typical Hockey-Stick stock-recruitment model, the intrinsic productivity is represented by the initial slope the curve at the linear portion of the Recruit:Spawner relationship.
- The TRT describes a methodology for estimating intrinsic productivity for depressed populations at low to moderate levels of abundance based on an average of recruits per spawner. For depressed populations intrinsic productivity is an index of current productivity based on simple, direct, and empirical measures of population spawner abundance and subsequent recruitment.
- The TRT recognized the commenter's concern that intrinsic productivity may be difficult to directly measure for populations at higher levels of abundance (i.e., nearing delisting targets). Intrinsic potential for such populations may be derived from fitted stock-recruitment curves⁵.
- Given that intrinsic productivity may be derived (vs. must be directly measured) for populations at higher levels of abundance, we do not feel that there are the practical limitations to using it as a delisting metric, as the commenter suggests. Additionally, the TRT recognized that there are other potential methodologies for estimating population productivity. For example, if there is adequate high-quality population data for natural-origin spawner abundance of sufficient duration, population productivity could potentially be estimated using population trend.

Product and Strategy Review:

Sockeye plan updates (Rosemary Furfey / Chris Kozfkay):

- See presentation slides used by Rosemary and Chris for an overview of plan content, organization, and ongoing actions (posted to website identified in footnote 1).

⁵ The ICTRT recognized that there is substantial potential for error or systematic bias in estimates generated using curve fitting techniques, especially when a data series is relatively short and highly variable. Approaches to risk assessment based on empirical curve fitting should explicitly incorporate methods to reduce the impact of error and bias. See pp. 41-42 of ICTRT Viability Report.

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- Draft chapters of the Snake River Sockeye plan are available for Coordination Group review and comment on the website identified in footnote 1.
- Sockeye plan completion schedule:
 - Edit and revise draft chapters based on TAC and SRCG review (June – July 2013)
 - Add recovery costs and finish draft chapters
 - Next TAC meeting (August 2013)
 - Complete draft recovery plan (October 2013)
 - NOAA NWR review (November 2013)
 - Federal Register notice (early 2014)
- Summary of discussion during the course of Rosemary and Chris' presentations:
 - Q: Are there any opportunities for experimental populations of sockeye?
 - A: Possibly, although none are planned. This could be looked into if there is sufficient interest.
 - Q: Note there are a number of high-mountain, land-locked lakes. Is it possible there are land-locked sockeye within those lakes? Could these potentially residual stocks be used to help spread the risk?
 - A: This is not currently being considered. There is an interest in expanding diversity, and this approach could be considered if a genetic link can be established between those and the listed fish. Note that kokanee, in general, are genetically different from listed sockeye.
 - Q: Can you distinguish fish originating from Alturas and Redfish lakes at the weir?
 - A: Yes. Alturas fish are collected and transported back to Alturas lake.
 - Q: Has the HGMP for the Springfield hatchery been approved? What is the status of construction?
 - A: The HGMP is anticipated to be approved by 2014 (it has been submitted for noticing in the Federal Register). Construction is anticipated to be completed by September, 2013.

Fall chinook plan update (Elizabeth Gaar):

- Elizabeth reviewed the draft Fall Chinook recovery plan outline (dated May 3 2013). This outline is posted to website identified in footnote 1.

- NOAA has the lead in writing the plan. NOAA is doing so in coordination with points of contact (POCs) identified from interested regional parties. The plan is being developed iteratively, with NOAA preparing draft documents then providing them for review and comment by designated POCs.
- Specific issues as identified by either NOAA or POCs may warrant more formal discussions as the plan progresses.
- Summary of discussion during the course of Elizabeth's presentation:
 - Q: What are the delisting criteria for Snake River Fall Chinook?
 - A: NOAA is only just now engaging on this issue, and should have draft criteria ready for review by the designated POCs within the next month or so.
 - Q: How do the Snake River Fall Chinook issues being discussed under the Hells Canyon FERC relicensing process relate to the recovery plan?
 - A: NOAA will incorporate the outcome of the FERC process into the recovery plan.
 - Q: Once a FERC license is granted, it is usually good for a very long time (50 years). Are reopening clauses being considered for the license should desired biological outcomes not be achieved?
 - A: NOAA is addressing recovery planning goals through the FERC process in accordance with the Federal Power Act and the Endangered Species Act. NOAA is approaching the FERC negotiations with the assumption that reintroducing Fall Chinook above Hells Canyon is consistent with recovery goals. However, the feasibility of reintroduction at this time is questionable given the degraded nature of habitat above the dams. The intent is to develop a long-term adaptive management strategy as part of the FERC licensing agreement that allows for necessary changes without reopening the full FERC process.

Recovery Planning Status and Implementation Insights:

SE Washington MU Plan (Steve Martin):

- See presentation slides used by Steve (posted to website identified in footnote 1).
- Steve noted the significant progress made in plan implementation. Plan status:
 - Completed an update to the 2005 MU plan in 2011 based on new information

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- Programs are funding what we identified in the 2011 MU plan (examples to follow)
- SRFB and BPA are primary financial resources
- PSMFC, DOE, USDA, USFS are contributors
- Partnerships remain durable and generally in harmony. Implementers are following the priorities in the recovery plan and combining resources to maximize benefits.
- Implementation successes:
 - Decreased water temperature
 - Increased Stream flow
 - Decreased Sediment
 - Large scale restoration actions have replaced small scale treatments
 - Funding “commitments” sufficient to support moderate gains
 - Population increase
- Implementation challenges:
 - Hatchery management – Tucannon Steelhead
 - Harvest management – Columbia River Spring Chinook
 - Threats criteria – land conversion, hydro effects, over harvest, predation
 - Endurance/patience from local, state and federal sectors – this is a 25+ year endeavor
 - Maintaining support for salmon recovery when there is “nothing in it for local interests”
 - Steve noted a growing lack of enthusiasm among local stakeholders due to the perceived lack of results relevant to local residents. For example, many local residents initially supported recovery planning actions in the expectation that local fishing opportunities would increase. Instead, greater restrictions have been imposed. In effect, local residents are not seeing the return on investment they expected when the recovery effort first began.
- Summary of discussion during the course of Steve’s presentation:
 - Q: What are the plan components needed to ensure a transition from reliance on hatchery to natural origin fish?

- A: Currently, about 50 percent of natural origin steelhead bypass the Tucannon. Of those that do enter the Tucannon, some experience pre-spawning mortality. The plan calls for at least 285 natural origin fish to enter the Tucannon before the local sport fishery is allowed. As a result, it has been difficult to obtain necessary brood stock for seeding needs for full smolt production.

Idaho MU Habitat Plan (David Mabe / Rosemary Furfey):

- The Idaho habitat plan is in draft and posted to the website identified in footnote 1.
- Public comments were received last winter; NOAA is preparing responses to the comments received.
- As a result of expert panel suggestions, NOAA developed a new list of projects and actions and is integrating those suggestions into the plan along with the public comments. The updated plan will reflect these new actions and any additional actions developed for the FCRPS BiOp.
- The hatchery and harvest components of the plan are under development, and being developed on a management-unit basis for the steelhead / spring summer chinook roll-up. HGMPs and FGMPs are under development, and the results will be incorporated into the MU and rollup plans as they become available.
- Implementation lessons:
 - Implementation funding is prioritized through Idaho's Office of Species Conservation (OSC).
 - OSC places priority on high priority actions in high priority areas
 - Significant flow increases have been realized in the Lemhi and Pahsimeroi basins even though the area's water is highly appropriated.
- Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) stated they would like to participate in plan completion early on, and NOAA committed to working closely with IDFG.
- Summary of discussion during the course of Dave and Rosemary's presentation:
 - Q: Will NOAA post the comments and responses to the website?
 - A: Yes.
 - Q: Are there plans to analyze the before and after conditions of the areas upstream of the Lemhi as implementation progresses?
 - A: Most larger tributaries have been flown and scanned with LIDAR (light radar). The Lemhi may be scanned this year if sufficient funds available. There is also information being generated for the Lemhi through the Columbia Habitat Monitoring Program (CHaMP).

- Q: What is NOAA's prediction as to how to best get to recovery? What steps and processes will be followed to integrate all of the "Hs"?:
 - A: NMFS identified priority limiting factors for habitat. These have not yet been integrated with the hatchery and harvest components of the plan. But they will be integrated as the plan is completed. The priority of effort is directed toward the Lemhi, Yankee Fork, and Pahsimeroi.
- Q: How do the HGMP and FGMP processes line up with the recovery planning strategy?:
 - A: These processes are underway at the population level and may not be completed until 2015. The strategies from these processes will likely be summarized at the major population group (MPG) level.
- Q: Are water diversion screens addressed?:
 - A: Yes, if identified in the plan as a limiting factor or threat.

NE Oregon MU Plan (Rosemary Furfey):

- NOAA and its Oregon partners have worked hard over the last five years to complete the draft plan. The draft plan was presented to the NE Oregon technical team for review and comment in March 2012. No comments have been received.
- The draft plan is now posted on the website noted in footnote 1 and open for further comment (none received as of this meeting).
- Summary of discussion during the course of Rosemary's presentation:
 - Q: How will the high temperatures seen in the lower Grande Rond as it flows into the Snake River be addressed?:
 - A: This has been identified in the draft plan's chapter on limiting factors and threats. No actions have been decided as yet, but this is a high priority issue for BPA, likely to be addressed through the FCRPS BiOp. The intent is to increase upstream flows to reduce downstream temperatures.

Open Discussion:

- Planners should capture and advertise recovery program successes and distribute lessons learned from successful actions
- There is real power in the planning process for developing and maintaining local land owner support

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- The plans should clearly denote limiting factors and threats, actions, and other required components. But implementation should be left to local groups for flexibility and continued local support.
- Plans should ensure that improvements / agreements are locked in for long term results (examples: use of trusts/statute to preserve in stream flows; use of long-term conservation easements; work with DOAg agencies on landscape scale protection)
- Plans should capture accrued benefits (example: benefits of riparian fencing)
- In order to challenge a prevailing mindset, a key first step is “getting the first guy to change his mind”; others in his community are then more likely to follow
- How to maintain local interest in recovery planning? (Suggestions included noting down-stream economic benefits of recovery (\$1 spent now = \$5 later); being sensitive to lost opportunities (such as local fishing); and being proactive in addressing them.
- Note the Mid-Columbia Steering Committee coordinates implementation among its members. Will a similar structure work for all or parts of the Snake River Basin?
- Key message for stakeholders is patience; it may take a long time to see recovery benefits – note that most plans have a 10 to 30 year time horizon to achieve their goals
- What are some steps to combat “salmon fatigue”? Note Steve Martin’s response, “salmon don’t eat money; contractors spend money.” Note and advertise the local economic benefits from salmon recovery efforts.

Attachments:

1. Participants and Contact Information

ATTACHMENT 1

Participants and Contact Information

Name	Affiliation	Email
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Not Present: Yakama Bands and Tribes, Warm Springs Tribes, Shoshone Paiute Tribe, Oregon Governor's Office, Washington Governor's Office,