



February 17, 2016

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Columbia Basin Partnership Workshop Participants

**FROM:** Debra Nudelman and Annie Kilburg, Kearns & West

**SUBJECT:** Columbia Basin Partnership Workshop – February 17, 2016 Draft Summary Memo

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**Welcome, Opening Remarks, Introductions, Agenda, and Materials**

**Welcome and Opening Remarks**

Barry Thom, *National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries*, welcomed the group and thanked the meeting attendees for their willingness to participate in the first Columbia Basin Partnership (the Partnership) Workshop.

He explained that over the next five years, NOAA Fisheries will be making a number of significant fishery management decisions regarding the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and recovery of listed species. These decisions must consider ESA, tribal treaty rights and trust responsibilities, sustainable fisheries, and other federal obligations for Columbia River Basin (the Basin) salmon, steelhead, and water resources. It is NOAA Fisheries' goal that these decisions reflect regional views regarding salmon and steelhead recovery in the Basin.

NOAA Fisheries began this effort with the Columbia Basin Situation Assessment (the Assessment), which many of the workshop attendees participated in. Among the desired results expressed by the stakeholders assessed were greater efficiency, certainty, predictability, improved relationships, more durable solutions for salmon recovery, and a shared regional definition of success.

Many participants noted the absence of common goals for salmon and steelhead among various management entities, as reflected in the existence of multiple federal, state, and tribal recovery and management plans. The Assessment reflects a desire for regional leaders to make decisions and move ahead to achieve recovery, convene parties to resolve issues, and develop broader support for recovery efforts. The Assessment stimulated a new discussion among regional leaders and partners about the future.

Barry explained that he has high expectations for NOAA Fisheries, those who decide to engage in the Partnership, and for the success of this process. There may be times for all of us when we have to look beyond our own interests to find a way forward. He asked attendees to be willing to think widely and ambitiously to chart a positive future for fish and everyone who depends on them.

The Partnership has an opportunity to build a framework that will set the Columbia Basin apart and provide a new model for salmon recovery. NOAA Fisheries is committed to meaningful engagement with the Partnership and its participants.

## **Introductions, Agenda, and Materials**

Deb Nudelman, *Kearns & West (K&W) Facilitator*, thanked Barry for the welcome and opening remarks. She asked the group for a round of introductions. The workshop attendees introduced themselves by name and affiliation. (Note: for a full list of participants see *Appendix 1*).

Deb explained that this workshop is an opportunity for participants to engage in dialogue with other sovereigns and stakeholders and provide their input on the Partnership process. She walked participants through the agenda and meeting materials, asked for clarifying questions, and provided an overview of the ground rules for the structure of the workshop dialogue.

## **Context, Purpose, and Process Approach**

Barry presented the Partnership scope and principles.

The scope of the Partnership includes:

- All ESA-listed and non-listed salmon and steelhead in the Columbia Basin, above and below Bonneville Dam
- Ocean, mainstem, and tributary fisheries that harvest Columbia Basin stocks – commercial, recreational, and tribal
- Multiple scales (basin-wide, Evolutionarily Significant Unit (ESU), and Major Population Group (MPG))
- All impacts across salmon and steelhead life-cycle (e.g., habitat, hydro, hatcheries & harvest)
- Consideration of ecological conditions, and current and future habitat capacity

Principles in this process include:

- Supporting tribal treaty rights and tribal trust responsibilities
- Meeting ESA requirements and providing for recovery of listed species
- Addressing sustainable fisheries in a manner consistent with federal case law regarding harvest management
- Relying on the latest scientific information
- Involving both sovereigns & stakeholders

## **Status of Columbia Basin Partnership**

Barry explained that NOAA Fisheries envisions the Partnership consisting of a Sovereigns Committee with tribal, state, and federal representatives and a Stakeholder Committee. The unique management authority of our sovereign partners is recognized and we want to have meaningful opportunities for engagement with stakeholders. Designing this process is challenging; our goal is to do that collaboratively.

Barry explained that NOAA Fisheries needs to ensure compliance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) due to the involvement of stakeholders. NOAA Fisheries is currently exploring options on how best to do that; this will be an inclusive, robust, and solid collaboration.

NOAA Fisheries is exploring options for FACA this spring. In the meantime, in order to keep the momentum going, NOAA Fisheries will engage with stakeholders in an open forum such as a workshop setting.

### **December 14 Sovereigns Group Meeting**

Barry noted that the December 14 Sovereigns Group Meeting provided a lot of support for the Partnership process. NOAA Fisheries met with regional sovereigns to share the Partnership concept and address questions. The sovereigns that attended expressed support for continued dialogue in determining the goals of the Partnership process and provided excellent feedback.

In terms of long-term goals, NOAA Fisheries received feedback that we should seek interim objectives over time, such as a 20-year, 50-year, or even longer-term timeframe. There was a strong recognition that the Partnership needs to be a science based process, using an intuitive and understandable framework by looking at abundance numbers. The sovereigns noted that there are a limited number of entities that understand the entire Basin and we need to take the time to develop a shared understanding of the current status of the Basin before moving the Partnership forward. Another key suggestion from the sovereigns' meeting is the need to consider climate change in the Basin in order to develop realistic and pragmatic goals for salmon and steelhead.

### **Clarifying Questions**

Deb thanked Barry for the introduction and overview of the Partnership. She asked participants for clarifying questions.

One participant asked what the deliverables and the final outcome of the Partnership would look like. Barry responded that the outcome will be based on a two-year process to develop numerical long-term goals for salmon and steelhead conservation and harvest in the Basin, if the group can reach agreement.

Another participant asked about NOAA Fisheries' perspective of the current available habitat versus potential changes that could affect it. Barry responded that NOAA Fisheries is trying to provide information in terms of current habitat capacity, as well as also developing approaches to consider how habitat capacity may be changed in the future. These topics are up for discussion; it is up to the Partnership on how to frame the dialogue.

### **Hopes and Expectations for the Columbia Basin Partnership Process**

Deb thanked participants for their questions and asked them where they were seated to share their hopes, expectations, and interests for the Partnership process and fill out the *Expectations Feedback Template*. (Note: The completed templates are attached as *Appendix 2*). The meeting attendees discussed this topic amongst themselves at each of their tables and provided report-outs to the full group with comments, concerns, and questions as follows:

- This Partnership is an opportunity for us to make positive steps together on this topic
- Some of the challenges we face include climate change and defining goals and objectives for the Partnership
- We need to define recovery, harvest needs, population growth and development, and how we interact with the ecological community
- Success will be a discussion forum and an opportunity to exchange ideas/perspectives

- We want to achieve consensus on recovery, quantitative goals, and productive working relationships
- We need to develop principles to guide the actions for decision making; this is an opportunity for stakeholders to listen and respect perspectives
- We want this group to make the decision on how to move forward in the Basin
- Success would include continued, productive conversations, with public involvement, far into the future
- Impairments need to be assessed and addressed through this process; the outcome will identify decisions on how to address all four Hs (hatchery, hydro, harvest, habitat)
- We need a clear understanding of the information that is needed and access to the information with a focus on end users
- This process should use the best available science and consider cultural resources
- There is a hope and need to build trust between sovereigns and stakeholders through this process; there is value in learning the interests of all of the stakeholders in the Basin
- Success would be a process that reflects common goals and awareness of the trade-offs as well as sovereigns and stakeholders being involved in developing recommendations
- Funding of the Partnership will provide credibility in supplying long-term and sustainable efforts
- This is an opportunity to discuss de-listing outside of litigation
- This may lead to a process of doing things differently, potentially evolving away from de-listing and/or recovery due to mitigation
- We would like to provide for the return of salmon and lamprey to their previous numbers; we should develop common metrics
- We want to create a true partnership so that we can resolve and understand our differences
- We want to learn what is biologically possible and use that to inform what is politically feasible
- We hope to use this conversation to discuss hydro power systems, natural, and sustaining populations
- We hope to use science to inform decision making and create sustainable outcomes
- We hope to develop a common understanding that voices are heard and that there is an effort to balance differing viewpoints

Deb thanked everyone for their willingness to share their hopes and expectations for the Partnership process and the group for their insightful comments. She asked Barry to share the common themes from the report-outs and he offered the following reflections:

- We are hearing that there is a great deal of commonality amongst the workshop participants; this helps to build and support the progress of the Partnership
- There is a need for information; we will share the data management component including initial information maps/graphs with the workshop attendees
- The complexity of these challenges are hard to simplify into easily understandable information; we welcome recommendations of individuals to help assess and address data gaps
- We are hearing questions about what it might mean for the Pacific Northwest if salmon recovery occurs; we will continue to address this throughout the process
- Where do we begin, build momentum, and keep the conversation going? We need to determine whether we will begin with a pilot project area and build from there

- This group understands the issues and the challenges we will face for this process to be successful

## **Review and Discuss NOAA Fisheries' Initial Information**

After a lunch break, Deb welcomed the workshop participants back and introduced Michael Tehan, *NOAA Fisheries*, to provide an overview of the information on current status and conditions.

### **Overview of the Information on the Current Status and Conditions**

Michael explained that his presentation builds off the themes shared from the report-outs and how NOAA Fisheries will move forward with this process. We have goals outlined; now we need to determine what kind of information to look at and key questions to consider to get there. We will discuss the basic challenges of looking across the Basin and figure out how we can gain agreement on the fundamentals of this process. We are looking for regional alignment on fish populations that we can produce in the wild and for successful harvest.

Michael outlined the conceptual steps for the Partnership as follows:

- Compiling existing information on goals, current status and trends, and conditions
- Identifying key questions to guide discussions; discussing and developing principles for conservation and harvest; developing an analytical approach; and establishing technical teams as needed
- Creating numerical goals for harvest in each fishery, natural escapement, and hatchery escapement, by species

Michael shared the Chinook Salmon evolutionarily significant unit (ESU) boundaries map; Snake River Spring/Summer Chinook Salmon ESU map; and the summary of recovery goals for the Grand Ronde major population group (MPG) of the Snake River Spring/Summer Chinook Salmon. (Note: The maps/document can be found in the *CBP Workshop - Afternoon PowerPoint - 02-17-16 - discussion draft*). With these maps, Michael explained that NOAA Fisheries is attempting to identify the minimum abundance thresholds needed for recovery and the current numbers of spawning fish. We are trying to figure out how to integrate extirpated populations into the ideas and goals of the Partnership. How do we look at future population capacity? We are looking for an opportunity to find some agreement to show the breadth of goals in the Basin.

Michael shared the Columbia River Basin Objectives-MPG slide and explained that this is a snapshot of a web/map based interface that the Northwest Power and Conservation Council (the Council) is working on to summarize existing fish conservation goals in the Basin. The beta product can be accessed [here](#). This will be a tool that we can use to have ready access information available for the Partnership's future work.

Michael shared examples and commented on other information that can be used in the Partnership as follows:

- Hatchery programs and production levels
  - There is a lot of existing information about hatcheries in the Basin.
- Habitat condition and capacity
  - NOAA Fisheries has been working on developing methodologies to both assess current habitat capacity and to identify opportunities to increase capacity. We will need both rapid assessment and detailed basin-specific approaches; it would be helpful to work with local groups on this.

- Harvest rates
  - NOAA Fisheries has met with local recovery groups and this is probably the most difficult information to translate into a MPG scale since they are not broken out by population. It will take a while to reconcile this information.
- Hydro system survival
  - We will share information on hydro system survival through the FCRPS.

Michael explained that NOAA Fisheries wants to set the stage for a regional discussion and adult returns is a good way to capture goals. Questions to participants are: should we try to develop common currency for goals? Is that the right metric to use on the regional scale?

Deb thanked Michael for sharing this information and asked the group for questions; there were none. The attendees took a short break.

### **Review and Discuss Proposed Questions for the Partnership**

The group returned from their break. Michael reviewed the proposed questions for the Partnership including:

- To help set the stage, what additional information would be useful on existing goals, population structure/scale, and current species status?
- Do you agree with using the MPG scale? If not, are there alternative suggestions?
- In order to align regional goals, how do we structure the regional dialogue? What key questions are relevant to developing common fish recovery goals?

Deb asked that participants consider and discuss these questions at their tables, fill out the *Discussion Questions for Columbia Basin Partnership Template*, and provide a report-out to the full group. (Note: The completed templates are attached as *Appendix 3*). The meeting attendees' report-outs consisted of comments, concerns, and questions as outlined below.

### ***To help set the stage, what additional information would be useful on existing goals, population structure/scale, and current species status?***

Participants commented on the above question as follows:

- There is a need for additional harvest information
- In order to quantify production, we would like to see an assessment of hatchery performance; what makes hatcheries successful?
- Ensure that we have enough information on federal and non-federal projects regarding non-native species
- There are a lot of names for the same type of goal; the Council is in a good place to continue refining that
- We should condense the information gathered to date and include a timeframe column
- We need to work with experts in order to discuss hatchery and wild fish goals
- We need to have a clear definition for habitat capacity and to understand limiting factors
- There is an interest in economic accounting for hatcheries' return on investment (ROI); what kind of capacity increases does it take?
- Determine how economical/effective mitigation is
- There is a need for more information on productivity while incorporating hatchery concerns

- We need a clear set of mitigation goals and agreements that exist in the Basin and look at what has been used as a goal for fisheries in the region
- There is a need to identify what is missing in the information provided by the Council
- We need additional information on landscape scale stressors, historic predevelopment population numbers, and historic habitat availability; use a triage approach
- Consider what can be achieved by reintroducing salmon into occupied or poorly occupied areas
- Look at the influence of localized issues (i.e. Cascade Locks) and harvest goals outside existing plans
- How do we evaluate the recovery impacts on the economy? How do we prioritize actions?

***Do you agree with using the MPG scale? If not, are there alternative suggestions?***

Participants commented on the above question as follows:

- Several participants said that using the MPG scale is a good place to begin
- We might want to have a larger group or reduced populations
- What level of granularity we use probably depends on the question we are addressing
- Common currency is valuable for common goals/objectives
- MPG levels are okay to account for ESA; however, this may not be enough for everything else
- We support new and emerging genetic tools; apply the finest technology as best we can
- There is a need to use additional small and local-scale tools
- We need to use common analytical approaches such as population viability and habitat capacity; we support a coordinated assessment system
- Other participants said that using the MPG scale depends on the issue; there is reluctance to choose a scale as it is important to understand connections
- Meta populations might be easier to track; however, this is generic

***In order to align regional goals, how do we structure the regional dialogue? What key questions are relevant to developing common fish recovery goals?***

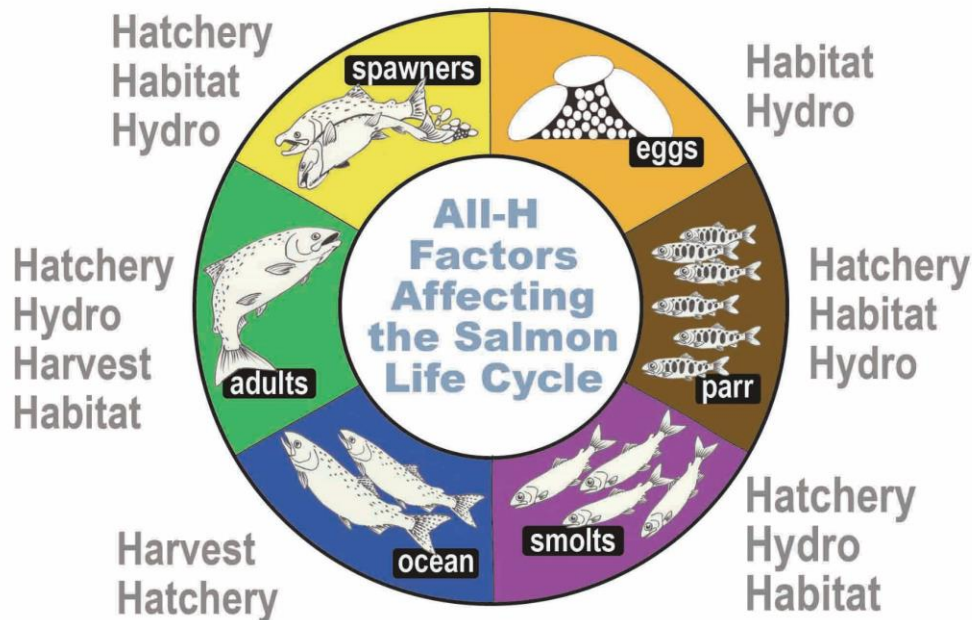
Participants commented on the above question as follows:

- If we are trying to manage abundance, a group of stakeholders that encompass more diversity is needed
- How do we meet population specific goals? What are the primary issues?
- How do you define and resolve incompatible goals?
- Do the groups know the current goal for productivity?
- We need to continue to work on identifying how we deal with mitigation, harvest objectives, and conservation objectives; use questions to address these issues
- Are stakeholders able to trade activities for abundance?
- Can stakeholders talk about recovery for hatchery and wild fish?
- We need to integrate people back into the science
- Use recreational, subsistence, cultural, and historic information as part of the conversation
- Once we establish goals, we must explain why we need it and what the cost benefit is
- We need to create a baseline so that information is understood beginning at a specific point
- How does future demand help get us to potential resolution?
- How do we shepherd these goals forward politically?

Deb thanked everyone for their suggested questions and for sharing their concerns and insight. There has been a lot of incredibly helpful feedback shared; the construct is still in the formative stage. NOAA Fisheries will use this information to inform their process going forward.

### Review and Discuss Next Steps for the Partnership

Barry transitioned the group to review and discuss the proposed educational workshops and displayed the *All Hs Lifecycle Graphic* for participants' feedback (see below).



Barry explained that the second workshop will focus on the current status and trends of ESA species and non-listed fish; tributary habitat; ocean and estuary; and ecological interactions. The third workshop will focus on harvest, habitat, and hydro power. The hope is that the *All Hs Lifecycle Graphic* helps to provide an understandable visual on the topics to be discussed going forward. If participants support these workshops, NOAA Fisheries will be asking others to lead the conversations on other topics.

Deb asked participants whether or not the workshop approach is helpful and participants responded with the following comments:

- There was a suggestion to provide experts to answer questions that come up throughout the process
- Several participants agreed that the workshops will be very useful, especially if there is no need for in-person engagement; provide a webinar presentation option
- A few participants requested that the information incorporate a regional perspective in order to prove more useful

Deb asked the group, based on what they had learned, if they will continue to participate in this process and whether they will attend the second and third workshops? Almost every attendee raised their hand to confirm their participation. She requested that participants fill out the *Additional Workshop Topics for the Columbia Basin Partnership Template* at their tables and provide K&W with a copy for the meeting notes (Note: The completed templates are attached as *Appendix 4*).



In response to a question, Barry clarified the stakeholder nomination process by explaining that there are several options under consideration for compliance with FACA. Based on the approach to FACA, NOAA Fisheries may need to re-solicit the nominations. The goal is to have nominations in place for the formal Partnership in the fall, 2016.

### Next Steps and Summary

Deb asked meeting attendees to fill out the templates they received and to provide their feedback to K&W before they leave the workshop.

Deb reviewed scheduling options with the workshop participants and asked them to tentatively hold April 20 and June 7 for the next two workshops. It was noted that several participants had a conflict with the April 20 date; NOAA Fisheries will work to confirm another date for the second workshop. *[The second workshop has been rescheduled to May 4].*

Barry thanked the group for their positive energy and effort; he stated that he is heartened by the support for moving this process forward. He said that he is looking forward to the upcoming months and providing an opportunity for others to participate in this process. The meeting was adjourned at 3:24 pm.

<b>Upcoming Meeting Dates</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Location</b>
May 4, 2016 9:30 am - 4:00 pm	Workshop Members	Ambridge Event Center, Ballroom
June 7, 2016 9:30 – 4:00 pm	Workshop Members	Ambridge Event Center, Marquam Room
<b>Meeting Documents</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposed Agenda – 02-17-16</li> <li>• Columbia Basin Partnership – PowerPoint – 02-17-16</li> <li>• Expectations Feedback Template – 02-17-16</li> <li>• Columbia Basin Partnership Discussion Paper – - 10-18-15</li> <li>• Columbia Basin Partnership Questions &amp; Answers – 10-18-15</li> <li>• Discussion Questions for Columbia Basin Partnership Template – 02-17-16</li> <li>• Additional Workshop Topics for the Columbia Basin Partnership Template – 02-17-16</li> <li>• Workshop Topics Feedback Template – 02-17-16</li> <li>• Lunch Options – 02-17-16</li> </ul> <p><i>The above documents were provided to participants at the February 17, 2016 workshop.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CBP Workshop - Afternoon PowerPoint - 02-17-16 - discussion draft – 02-17-16</li> </ul> <p><i>The above document was provided to participants following the February 17, 2016 workshop. Copies of these documents can also be obtained by contacting Kearns &amp; West.</i></p>		