

Snohomish Basin Salmon Recovery Technical Committee Meeting

January 4, 2022 9:00—12:00

Zoom Meeting

Attendees

Micah Wait, Wild Fish Conservancy
Kevin Lee, WDFW
Karen Chang, USFS
Andrea Mojzak, King County
Brett Shattuck, Tulalip Tribes
Adam Jackson, Snohomish County
Alexa Cummings, Snohomish County
Morgan Ruff, Tulalip Tribes
Emily Davis, Snoqualmie Watershed Forum
Mike Rustay, Snohomish County
Matt Pouley, Tulalip Tribes
Heather Khan, WA Dept. of Ecology
Daniel Howe, Snohomish County
John Klochak, King County
Elissa Ostergaard, Snoqualmie Watershed Forum
Jason Hall, Cramer Fish Sciences
Jim Shannon, City of Everett/Port of Everett
Carson Moscoso, Snohomish Conservation District
Stephanie Cotton, Snohomish County
Darcey Hughes, Snohomish County
Doug Hennick, Wild Fish Conservancy
Evan Lewis, King County
Keith Binkley, SnoPUD
Kyle Koch, Sound Salmon Solutions
Lindsey Desmul, WDFW
Marty Jacobson, WA Dept. of Ecology
Matt Baerwalde, Snoqualmie Tribe
Gwendolyn Hannam, WDFW
Mary Lou White, WFC
Mike Crewson, Tulalip Tribes
Pete Verhey, WDFW
Ryan Bartelheimer, Snohomish Conservation District
Ryan Lewis, Snoqualmie Tribe
Josh Kubo, King County
Denise Krownbell, Seattle City Light
Hannah Liss, PSP
Denise Di Santo, King County
Jonah Keith, Tulalip Tribes
Mark Stamey, GeoEngineers
Ashley Kees, WDFW
Anne Savery, Tulalip Tribes
Josh Chamberlin, NOAA

Dawn Presler, SnoPUD
Jeff Parsons

Introductions

Mike opened the meeting with introductions and reviewed the agenda.

Impromptu Networking

Attendees were sent to breakout rooms briefly for networking.

Regional and Basin Updates

2022 SRFB Grant Round

Alexa reminded the group that Notices of Intent for this year's grant round are due via email by January 14, 2022. Site visits are scheduled for March 15 & 16, 2022.

She also shared, on Stephanie Celt's behalf, that the DNR Watershed Resilience Action Plan launch is scheduled for January 11th from 12pm-1pm at the Port or on Zoom. More information to come.

Morgan shared that there is a lot of funding coming for capital projects and Lead Entity staff are working to keep our basin apprised as things develop. We're excited to seize the opportunity to get important work done with these increased resources.

Technical Committee 2022 Work Plan

Mike presented the draft meeting schedule for 2022. He noted that March will be a busy month of project presentations since many grant programs have applications all due around the same time. He encouraged project sponsors to reach out if they have a project that could use technical review from this committee and coordinate that with the co-chairs.

Pilchuck Culvert Prioritization

Mike gave an overview of the growing need for a basin wide prioritized list of culverts. This issue comes up often, from regional reviewers, around project proposals for culvert replacements. Since our plan is multi-species, having a clearer message on our priorities will benefit the basin going forward. Different agencies have their own prioritization processes. Evan Lewis presented last month on King County's approach. Snohomish County has their own approach. But we need coordination between jurisdictions across the basin for consistency. One approach is to break up the basin into subareas and utilize work groups to prioritize those culverts.

There has been a work group specifically focused on the Pilchuck because it is identified as a priority area for our basin and was put forward to the Fish Passage Barrier Removal Board (FPBRB) as such. Matt gave an overview of how the work group identified key culverts in this subbasin.

Matt explained that breaking things out by geographic area is helpful for capturing institutional knowledge from our partners. This is valuable and can be used to inform the prioritization process rather than just relying on geographic metrics and LIDAR. First, the WDFW online geodatabase was used to pull all the known stream crossing structures from the Pilchuck basin (~600). But not everything is in the database. Some initial criteria was used to pare down the list i.e.) streams with known anadromous use, percent passability, location to mainstem, adjacent barriers, upstream habitat potential. The list has been narrowed to ~75 priority barriers, many of which are already in planning/design.

There was discussion about this pilot prioritization approach. Mary Lou mentioned concerns around prioritizing upstream culverts once the downstream ones have been corrected. She also felt there should be two levels of prioritization – a whole watershed level and a subbasin level.

Evan mentioned that King Co has only looked at county barriers so far but plans to work with partners to assess the others. He had concerns about how to compare barriers across the subbasins. If we have prioritized lists in each area that rank culverts within each subbasin how do we then rank them across subbasins i.e.) a top ranking barrier in the Snoqualmie vs a top ranking barrier in the Pilchuck. This will be especially important for messaging in project proposals to funding agencies.

Doug mentioned trying to include an estimate of how much potential productivity for each species is still being blocked by culverts. For example, in the Stilly there had been an extreme barrier but it only blocked a few Coho and would cost millions to address.

There was general committee approval with this prioritization approach and adding the Pilchuck culverts as an umbrella project to the 4YWP.

Project Update: Sultan River Floodplain Activation

Keith gave an overview of previous project work and explained the goal of this phase is to increase hydrogeomorphic complexity in the mainstem and expand rearing habitat in the floodplain. The ELJs that have been placed before held up really well to even the record-breaking flows in recent years. So they will be able to utilize that existing wood in this design. Some of the initial designs had to be modified to work around existing wetlands but the project progressing. The proposed channel would link the historic channel with the expansion area and provide more habitat. Next steps include filing the JARPA.

Matt asked if there has been any monitoring of the side channel since it was created and what fish use they've seen or anticipate seeing. Keith said snorkel surveys are required and they've seen good Coho use. Matt asked if they intend to do a low flow monitoring effort to see which fish are using it doing low flows. Keith explained that they operate under a minimum flow standard in the Sultan so all the channels must remain wetted. So it'll be interesting to see how the fish respond once there is more water in there but it will likely be favorable.

Elissa asked about beaver presence and constraints around removing fill and flood rise restrictions. Keith explained the impetus between the redundant inlet design was a beaver dam restricting flow. For the fill, they completed a model that showed the conveyance is mostly through town so the project doesn't impact that much – it's basically de minimus. Most of the fill doesn't end up leaving the floodplain because it is very wide.

Ann asked about flow percentages between the side channels and what percent would go in the new side channel. Also, do you have a concept of gaining or losing in the side channels? Keith said in the most recent high-flow event, they did measurements and it's pumping a lot of water through there and is very encouraging; probably close to 100 cfs. Jeff asked for Anne's input on the upper threshold for flow.

Wrap Up and Roundtable Updates

- Heather: Feb 1st Terry Husseman grant round opens and closes Mar 1st. \$50K max award. No match required. Can be used as match for other fund sources. Each regional office has about \$250K so the pot is pretty big this round.
<https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/documents/2106031.pdf>
- Morgan: Project work group meeting coming up this Thursday at noon. Largely to help with project coordination and peer-to-peer support. Reach out to Morgan and Cory if you haven't received the invite.
- Lindsey: WDFW is hosting a video storytelling workshop end of Jan/early Feb. Asking for some more participants (6-7 more). <https://www.farmfishflood.org/blog/tell-your-story>
- Doug: At the fish in, fish out presentation last month he was surprised to hear a low percentage (3%) of trolling mortality happens to our stocks in Alaska and BC. He would like to see the data supporting that and to learn how those studies are done to calculate those numbers. Matt said he and Mike were discussing having another presentation to dive into this topic.

Meeting adjourned.