

Columbia Basin Collaborative
Integration/Recommendations Group (I/RG) Kick-Off Meeting
Tuesday, November 30, 2021, 9:00am – 2:30pm PT/ 10:00am – 3:30pm MT
Zoom Webinar

Welcome, Opening Remarks, and Proposed Agenda

Liz Mack, Kearns & West, opened the meeting, and invited Lytle Denny of Shoshone Bannock Tribe to lead the opening prayer.

Barry Thom, National Marine Fisheries Service, provided opening remarks. He shared an overview of the Columbia Basin Partnership Task Force (CBPTF) effort that established the quantitative and qualitative goals for salmonid recovery in the basin. Barry shared the collaborative effort took dedication over several years by a collective of sovereigns and stakeholders. He shared his appreciation for the State leadership to convene the next phase of work to realize the CBPTF goals. Barry emphasized that although collaboration can be difficult at times, it is the way to achieve great things across the basin. He stated that he was encouraged to see the breadth of parties participating at the I/RG. He noted that salmon recovery will require everyone throughout the basin to continue to work diligently to overcome the challenges facing salmon.

Liz invited the four state representatives, Mike Edmondson (Idaho), Mike Milburn (Montana), Jim McKenna (Oregon), and Guy Norman (Washington), to introduce themselves. They welcomed the Integration/Recommendations Group (I/RG) members.

Liz reviewed the meeting agenda and the ground rules. She also outlined principles of collaboration and urged work group members to listen to understand fellow members' interests, to think creatively for options for mutual gain, and try to separate the people from the problem.

Introductions

Liz invited I/RG members to introduce themselves and their alternates, and to participate in a visioning exercise using a [virtual whiteboard](#). Liz noted that the CBPTF laid out a vision for salmon and steelhead recovery, and that the exercise is focused on a vision for how the CBC can collaborate to advance the work of the CBPTF. The I/RG members wrote answers to the following questions:

- What does success look like for the CBC?
- What can you bring to the table to help the CBC succeed?
- What do your I/RG colleagues bring?

KW staff shared their responses on the virtual whiteboard. Liz invited I/RG members to offer reflections or ask clarifying questions.

The I/RG Members made the following comments:

- The group should take advantage of the current receptive political climate
- This group needs to be focused on implementation more than process
- Traditional ecological knowledge is valid
- The group needs to develop a plan as a whole
- Everyone across the basin needs each other to save the salmon

- Encourage perspective sharing with one another
- The group must be careful not to perpetuate inequity that exists across the basin
- I/RG members are hopeful that people mean what they say at the table and act with integrity
- The group needs to move beyond talk and towards speaking with a single voice towards action
- I/RG members are seeking a plan to support their interests, and need to move beyond seeking individual interests to advocating for the whole
- The group wants to be able to take quick concrete actions to move the needle
- I/RG members care about water quality and addressing water scarcity

Liz thanked the I/RG members for their contributions and respectful dialogue.

Overview of CBC Purpose and Proposed Approach

Liz invited Mike Edmondson to provide an overview of the purpose of the CBC as well as a proposed approach for a regional collaborative to achieve the CBPTF goals.

Mike Edmondson began by sharing the history and context of the CBC. The Governors of Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington developed a Four-State Agreement to establish a collaborative framework to advance the CBPTF goals. Over the past year, the four states developed a proposed collaborative framework and convened the I/RG. He emphasized that these materials are proposed by the Ad Hoc Convening Committee but will be taken forward by the I/RG. At the February and June Organizational Workshops, the state representatives heard valuable input into the process and structure and worked to refine the vision for the collaborative.

He shared about how the CBC could add value to ongoing salmon recovery efforts and does not want to duplicate efforts. Mike stated that other forums will address the topics of the Lower Snake River Dam removal, and the four state representatives do not propose focusing on that issue in this forum at this time. Mike acknowledged that the topic of dam breaching is controversial, and it may be helpful to start by focusing on topics that may be easier to agree upon first.

Mike shared the overall process structure and described the proposed membership for the Integration/Recommendations Group, Topic-Specific Work Groups, and regional forum representation. He also described the consensus decision-making process to support recommendations to be shared with sovereign and other external entities.

The I/RG members had the following discussion:

- Members noted that they came to the CBC expecting to discuss the Lower Snake River Dams based on previous CBC Organizational Workshops and CBPTF.
- Some of the I/RG members are prepared to discuss dam breaching and believe the CBC should take on the topic even though it may be controversial. It is an important topic for many of the groups.
- One work group member stated that if one of the value-added pieces of the CBC is to overcome barriers, then not addressing dam breaching in this forum is a missed opportunity.

- Many of the I/RG members are experiencing fatigue with trying to address these topics at different forums.
- A member asked how the CBC will respond to the outcomes from existing forums.

Response from the four state representatives:

The State representatives recognized that dam breaching is an important and time sensitive issue. Other forums are addressing this topic, and the CBC can integrate the outcomes from these other forums. The Inslee/Murray initiative will be reaching out to Tribes, stakeholders, advisors, and experts across the region to determine whether there are reasonable means to replace services provided by the dams. The stay of litigation by the Nez Perce, Oregon, and others will also look for comprehensive solutions to addressing the Lower Snake River Dams. Both processes have near-term timelines and are predicted to be resolved in 2022. The aim of the conveners is for the CBC to be a long-standing forum that integrates these efforts and others. The CBC will not be occurring in isolation from these other forums. The four state representatives acknowledge that it will be important to consider all sources of impact and work comprehensively to effectively address salmon.

The I/RG members had the following discussion (answers shown below are from the four state representatives):

- An I/RG Member noted that it will be important to link closely to the existing forums in order to be a part of the solutions.
- An I/RG Member added that water quality is also a controversial topic and will be important to address in the CBC.
- A few I/RG members noted that science can be devised to serve a political or policy position, but that is not how science should be used in the CBC. It will be helpful for scientists to discuss points of mutual agreement and work together to serve the resources. Having independent scientific support would be helpful to give everyone confidence that the best available science is being utilized.
- An I/RG member sought clarity in how the Project Team relates to the I/RG and is interested in transparency of how topics are proposed and how work will begin.
- Question: How is the Columbia Basin Collaborative different from the Northwest Power Act (NWP)? Answer: The CBC will address topics that are broader than the NWP that focuses on mitigation for the federal hydropower system.
- Question: What kind of time frame will the CBC operate on to build and implement a framework? Answer: The I/RG will give assignments to the topic-specific work groups. The proposed schedule will strive to develop recommendations within a year.

I/RG Roles and Responsibilities

Liz invited Jim McKenna to share about the I/RG roles and responsibilities and the proposed charter. Jim shared his appreciation for working with the four states weekly to develop a collaborative process towards the common vision of robust and harvestable salmon populations in the future, bringing in the voices of all constituents and technical experts.

Jim emphasized that everyone is representing their groups and constituencies. Participating in the I/RG does not require any members to give up rights or options outside of the CBC forum. The aim of the collaborative is to utilize the power of consensus support to leverage funding and political will.

A charter helps to document how the group can work together and provides structure for the group to refer to down the road. With a consensus process, no single entity puts a thumb on the scale nor does a voting structure allow for minority opinions to be ignored.

The I/RG had the following discussion about the draft charter:

- The charter should include a statement on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.
- The CBC needs to be aware of international impacts since Grand Coulee Dam has impacts in Canada.
- A work group member suggested adding more language around urgency and time for action.
- Decarbonization and the role of methane could be incorporated in the charter
- The I/RG member suggested clarifying the section about speaking to the media since there may be situations where the I/RG members want to communicate to the media on their own behalf.
- A work group member sees a need for greater consistency in the stated goals and to be clear on the objectives the group is seeking to achieve.
- A work group member suggested adding in language around links between resources and the people.
- The I/RG needs to celebrate successes and include language to this effect.

Liz invited the I/RG members to share additional revisions with the Kearns & West facilitation team by December 31, 2021.

Topic-Specific Work Groups

Liz invited Guy Norman to share the proposal for the topic-specific work group. Guy described how the work groups will work with the I/RG to focus on developing actions, assess feasibility, and support priority actions. Guy laid out biological criteria for prioritization looking at population status and impacts on stocks. The matrix draws from information from the [CBPTF report](#) in figure 8 and figure 13, and would allow the topic-specific work groups to start with work that has already been done in the CBPTF. The Ad Hoc Convening Committee outlined the threats facing salmon as follows: habitat, predation, hydro-system, blocked areas, harvest, hatcheries, marine influences, and environmental constraints, and noted that they are all important to address. The Ad Hoc Convening Committee proposed beginning with habitat and predation as topics since other forums are addressing blocked areas and elements of the hydro-power topic. The list is not meant to convey a priority. The work group members should have expertise appropriate to address the topic at hand.

The group had the following discussion about the topic-specific work groups:

- Question: Do the stocks include listed and non-listed stocks? Answer: Yes, the 24 stocks include listed and non-listed stocks.
- Question: The CBC wants to reach high-end goals, but how will the CBC know they are successful? Answer: The Ad Hoc Convening Group proposes periodic progress checks.
- An I/RG member noted that fish passage affects all stocks. Decades of information show that dams impact fish, so addressing fish passage would have wide-ranging benefits.

- One I/RG member shared concern that the CBC will not address Lower Snake River dam removal because they see it as the best way to make meaningful impacts across stocks.
- The group agreed to the following:
 - No one wants to duplicate efforts or take away from ongoing efforts.
 - Other forums are moving forward to address some of the topics, but the CBC will integrate the outcomes from these forums.
 - All topics are interconnected and there are many issues that need to be addressed. The group should be flexible and act quickly in a conducive political environment.
- An I/RG member noted that there are connections between the various threat topics and shared the example, of abundance of suitable habitat in the blocked areas. Some work group members thought that the habitat topic should also include the blocked areas in the Upper Columbia.
 - One I/RG member noted that there are issues with Northern Pike in the Upper Columbia that could potentially spread downstream. However, more salmon in the upper Columbia could relieve pressure from other stocks.
 - One I/RG member reminded the group that other resident fish are important to tribes in the blocked areas.
- An I/RG member suggested starting with an analysis of current structures and funding allocations to understand ways to improve a strategy for implementation.
- An I/RG member suggested looking at stocks rather than threat categories, and then look at various geographies.
- An I/RG member suggested not focusing on marine influences because the impacts are outside of the influence of the I/RG participants.
- Several I/RG members expressed concern that there would be no way to ensure that any recommendations are implemented. The I/RG members are interested in seeing actions happen.
- The I/RG Members want to have accountability for why recommendations are or are not taken on.
- An I/RG member expressed concern that the CBC will be a time-consuming process and expressed frustration with having to attend another table to talk about taking action for salmon recovery.
- An I/RG member expressed frustration that other I/RG members were not proposing constructive alternatives to the proposed process.
 - Another I/RG member shared appreciation for hearing group's concerns with the proposed process.

Before the next I/RG meeting, Liz asked the group to consider alternative approaches to the topic-specific work groups process. The state representatives agreed to draft matrices for the various topics and bring these to the group for further discussion.

Closing Remarks

Liz confirmed action items (below) and mentioned that Kearns & West will reach out to schedule 2022 meetings. Liz then invited Jim McKenna to offer the closing remarks for the meeting. Jim thanked the I/RG members for their participation. He emphasized that the proposal presented by the Ad Hoc Convening Committee is not a final concept, but rather they are seeking input on the

CBC process. The four state representatives heard input from sovereigns and stakeholders, and the group will adapt its approach to incorporate this feedback: for instance, the group will not proceed with the habitat and predation topics. The group has been convened to help achieve the CBPTF Goals and cannot operate in a vacuum. Liz thanked everyone for their participation and focus.

Action Items:

- All: Send feedback on the draft CBC charter to smeysohn@kearnswest.com by **Friday, 12/31**
- All: Consider approaches to topic-specific work groups
- All: Share your feedback on the 11/30 meeting via the survey by **Tuesday, 12/7**
- Facilitation Team: Reach out to schedule 2022 I/RG meetings

Meeting was adjourned at 2:30pm PT