

Columbia Basin Collaborative
Integration/Recommendations Group (I/RG) March 2022 Meeting
March 29th, 2022, 8:30am – 12:00pm PT/ 9:30am – 1:00pm MT
Zoom Webinar

Welcome, Opening Remarks, and Proposed Agenda

Liz Mack, Kearns & West, opened the meeting and invited Chairwoman Carol Evans, Spokane Tribe of Indians, to lead an opening prayer.

Jim McKenna, Office of Governor Brown, provided opening remarks. He thanked everyone for joining in the Columbia Basin Collaborative (CBC) effort. He outlined the history of the process. He noted that the Integration/Recommendations Group (I/RG) met for the first time in November of 2021, and since then, the group has reviewed the Charter and the Topic Specific Work Groups (TSWG) process. Jim outlined the items for the meeting today including hopes for finalizing the charter and taking steps towards convening the TSWGs.

Liz outlined the meeting agenda and reviewed the ground rules. She urged participants to focus on their interests rather than their positions, invent options for mutual gain, separate people from the problem, and practice a balance of speaking time for a productive discussion.

Updates from Around the Region

Liz invited the I/RG members to introduce their teams and to share any updates relevant to the process.

The I/RG members shared the following updates:

- Several members shared about ongoing work in the basin related to fish reintroductions, water quality, and estuary ecosystem restoration.
- Some members expressed support for the Project Team seeking federal funding for the CBC and appreciation for convening this process.
- Several representatives spoke to the need to act swiftly and manage the ecosystems holistically.
- Many entities mentioned staffing and leadership changes within their organizations.
- Several work group members mentioned that other concurrent processes will impact the CBC such as the Treaty negotiations, Murray/Inslee process, Council on Environmental Quality process, BPA contract negotiations with power users, and state legislative sessions.
- Several members emphasized the importance of collaboration to come together, focus on issues, and work on the challenging salmon and water issues.

CBC Charter Review

Liz opened the Charter Review session by reviewing the purpose of a charter. She noted that the charter is a living document and can change over time. She shared the charter review process thus far: the project team presented a draft charter to the I/RG, heard general feedback at the 11/30 I/RG Meeting, received comments from I/RG members through the month of December, established a Charter Review Committee to further revise the document, and the revised draft was circulated to the full I/RG for another round of review. Liz emphasized that the group is in the final stages of review.

Liz introduced Paul Arrington, River Economies, who reported on the Charter Review Committee which reviewed the comments from the I/RG members on the charter. He highlighted the discussion about how to ensure scientific integrity and the topic of a steering committee to help the Project Team develop I/RG meeting agendas.

Liz invited I/RG members to share their thoughts on the draft Charter. A summary of the discussion is below:

- Several members expressed interests in a steering committee to provide shared guidance for the group, reflect the diversity of the I/RG, and deepen the relationship between the I/RG and the Project Team. These members expressed interest in having an opportunity to provide input on the agendas for the I/RG.
- Several members shared concern that the proposed steering committee was not as diverse as the I/RG, added more process that could complicate the collaborative, and seemed redundant to the I/RG. Several work group members emphasized the importance of keeping policy-oriented discussions within the I/RG.
- The Project Team was open to a steering committee idea or other means of coordination.
- I/RG members noted the need for transparency and that an additional committee could reduce transparency. Members offered a suggestion to dedicate time at I/RG meetings to confirm agenda topics for upcoming meetings. The group agreed to try this approach. The facilitation team will also keep a running list of future meeting topics and circulate draft agendas for I/RG input prior to I/RG meetings.

Topic Specific Work Groups

Liz introduced the session by inviting Mike Edmondson, Office of Species Conservation, to share about the TSWGs. He shared feedback from the 11/30 I/RG meeting, the proposed structure and purpose, and outlined the proposed topics. He stated that the groups could include scientists and people involved in regional processes who can help coordinate. Mike introduced the topics that were identified in the Columbia Basin Partnership Task Force (CBPTF) that can serve as a starting point for the CBC TSWGs.

Guy Norman, Office of Governor Inslee, presented a proposed approach for utilizing the CBPTF information as the biological foundation for the TSWGs. The Project Team invited members of the I/RG or their technical staff to participate in a Biological Sub-group to review the CBPTF information and WG approach. Guy acknowledged that although many of the I/RG participants were involved in the CBPTF, this is an opportunity to ensure all support and have ownership for the methods. The TSWGs will be convened later in the summer after the Biological Sub-group agrees on the biological foundation.

The I/RG members had the following discussions:

- Question: How do the TSWGs relate to the Columbia Basin Partnership Task Force?
Answer: The TSWGs will take the information from the CBPTF report and develop draft recommendations and conduct feasibility assessments for actions.

- Question: Are the TSWGs focused on short-term/long-term goals or low, medium, or high-goals? Answer: The groups are aiming for the high-range goals, but recognize that it will take time to achieve these. The groups can first track how fish are doing compared to the low-end and medium abundance goals.
- Question: What is the order of operations of this process and how would the Biological Sub-group fit into the larger process? Answer: The work from the Biological Sub-group would be endorsed by the I/RG and then handed off to the TSWGs to begin assignments.
- Question: Since watershed reports identify actions to advance salmon recovery and NOAA has recovery plans for listed stocks, how can the TSWGs utilize existing plans to assess actions? Answer: The TSWGs can utilize existing and previous work as a starting point and focus on feasibility assessments.
- Question: What happens if the Biological Sub-group cannot reach agreement on assessments of the science? Answer: The Biological Sub-group will work to find agreement but if that's not possible, they will document the discussion and bring that to the I/RG.
- Question: Would organizing the TSWGs by watershed rather than threat category be beneficial? Answer: The CBPTF looked at stocks as a whole and threat categories across the basin; the matrices are a starting point to look at more specific proposals for actions that could be taken at the watershed level.
- Multiple I/RG members discussed the human aspect of these project i.e., the cultural, traditional, social, political, and economical dynamics of salmon and steelhead recovery, and how this was critical to a holistic understanding of the issue. One member requested that human dimensions be added as a topic for these work groups. One I/RG member noted social and cultural issues could cause impediments to items moving forward and the need to get ahead of such issues prior to implementation.
- One I/RG member stressed the need for these work groups to be based in science and emphasized that the goal of these groups is to move into a feasibility stage of the process as soon as possible.
- A member shared a concern that prioritizing money across the threat categories is challenging since there are many urgent needs and limited resources.
- One I/RG member shared concern over how tribal fisheries were captured in the matrices and requested more acknowledgement of them moving forward.
- A member noted that hatcheries are closely tied to harvest and should be considered together.

Gary James, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, offered to present analysis of the CBPTF information and a potential approach for the TSWGs. Due to time limitations, Gary was not able to present the information, but will share more with the Biological Sub-group.

The group agreed to move forward with the proposed Biological Sub-group approach and check-in on the status at the next I/RG meeting. Liz asked I/RG members to share their representative for the Biological Sub-group via email.

Approach Going Forward, Confirm Upcoming Topics, Next Steps, and Summary

Liz went over proposed upcoming topics: report out from the Biological Sub-group and assignments for the TSWGs. She then opened the floor for questions and additional topics. One

I/RG member requested that the I/RG coordinate with other forums doing similar work in the Columbia Basin. Liz emphasized that all are welcome to send ideas for topics for future meetings.

Liz confirmed the following action items:

- **All:** Please review the attached draft charter with the Tribe, agency, or interest you represent and let us know if you approve. Please avoid wordsmithing or editing this version. Instead let us know if there is anything that is unacceptable so we may work with you to address your concerns. We are asking for a response from **everyone** no later than **Tuesday, April 18th**.
- **All:** Please email Samantha Meysohn the name of your representative who will participate in the Biological Sub-group by **end of day, Tuesday, April 5th**. As a reminder, the Biological Sub-group will be examining and coming to agreement on the biological foundations for the WG. Each I/RG member can choose to serve on this sub-group if they bring the correct technical expertise, delegate their spot to another individual from the group they represent, or abstain from joining. We will be reaching out to schedule two meetings of the Biological Sub-Group in April and May before the next I/RG Meeting.
- **All:** Please complete the meeting feedback survey by **end of day Tuesday, April 12th**. These surveys are helpful to hear how we can support productive meetings that meet all of your interests.
- **Gary James:** Share presentation on the biological foundation for the WG at the upcoming Biological Sub-Group Meeting.
- **Project team:** Draft an agenda with input from today's discussion for the next I/RG meeting and circulate it for review.
- **KW:** Draft a meeting summary and send to the I/RG for review by **end of day, April 22nd**.
- **KW:** Circulate a Doodle Poll to survey the I/RG for your availability for a June I/RG meeting by **end of day, Tuesday, April 5th**

Closing Remarks

Michael Tehan, NOAA Fisheries, thanked everyone for their participation and willingness to engage. He acknowledged the sense of urgency and the need for sound processes moving forward. Michael noted that this is a complicated time for the basin, and there are many people working on these issues throughout the region. He noted further collaboration is necessary to ensure success of this effort.

Meeting adjourned at 12:00pm PT