

Draft Agenda for WLC-TRT Meeting

May 25, 2004

University of Portland

Franz Hall, Murphy Room (on the 4th Floor)

10:00-3:00

Goals of Meeting

- Discuss interim guidance regarding hatchery listing policy
- Finalize template and process for review of subbasin plans
- Obtain feedback from TRT on watershed case study
- Understand strategy for developing ESA recovery plan
- Decide general content for TRT work plan

Schedule

10:00-10:10	Welcome and Introductions
10:10-10:45	Updates: 1) Hatchery Listing Policy, 2) BiOps, 3) Population Evaluation Report, 4) EDT memo
10:45- 12:00	Strategy for Review of Subbasin Plans
12:00-12:30	Lunch (30 minutes)
12:30-1:30	Update and Discussion of Watershed Case Study
1:30-2:00	Strategy for Recovery Plan Development
2:00-3:00	WLC-TRT work plan
3:00	Adjourn

The Details...

Hatchery Listing Policy

As I'm sure you all know, a copy of the summary draft hatchery listing policy was recently leaked to the press, and has garnered a bit of attention. The complete draft hatchery listing policy and proposed listings are scheduled to be published in the Federal Register on May 28 (three days after our meeting). Although the draft hatchery listing policy has the potential to have an impact on the work of the TRT, we won't really understand that impact until it is published and we begin to work through the implications of it (ultimately, guidance on how TRTs should respond will need to come from the Regional Office). The most recent version of the HLP (of course it has an acronym) that I have seen was the one leaked to the press a couple of weeks ago. The HLP and listing decisions are currently being finalized in DC. I don't know what they will say in the final draft. We need to wait for the actual policy to be published.

Even after the HLP is published, it will be some time before NOAA has guidance on what it means for the development of recovery goals and recovery plans. The last draft that I saw was very vague, and there is not internal agreement on how the policy should be interpreted. And, of course, the final wording of the policy is still in development. I therefore suspect there will be a period of some confusion and I have asked for interim guidance. So far, the message has been to carry on. We can reassess that strategy once we see the policy. The topics for our meeting agenda should not be dependent on the HLP; we need to do these things no matter what it says.

Strategy for Review of Subbasin Plans

On May 28, the subbasins will submit plans to the NWPCC. (The LCFRB will submit its plan to NOAA at the same time for approval as the ESA recovery plan for the Washington portion of the Lower Columbia ESUs.) NOAA has said that it will use these plans as “building blocks” for ESA recovery plans. The TRT task is to review these plans as potential building blocks. The TRT needs to:

- Describe scientific strengths and weaknesses of the plans
- Identify gaps for the development of an ESA recovery plan
- Suggest ways to improve the plans

The audience for the TRT review will be the NOAA Fisheries Regional Office (RO). The RO will then be responsible for taking the subbasin plans and working with subbasin planners and internally to develop the ESA recovery plan. The exact process for moving from subbasin plans to ESA recovery plans that address All-Hs and the full ESU is still in development. However, it is clearly important to NOAA to have an understanding of the scientific content of the plans and how the scientific work in the plans could fit into an ESA recovery plan. I see this review as “taking stock” of the current plans before deciding on the next steps.

The following WLC plans will be submitted on May 28:

- LCFRB – 11 subbasins on the Washington side LCR from the Chinook River to the Wind River, inclusive. This plan will also include an estuary and Lower Columbia mainstem component
- Big White Salmon
- Hood River
- Willamette (all tributaries upstream from confluence with Columbia)
- LCREP – This will essentially be the same estuary and lower Columbia mainstem as submitted with the LCFRB plan but will also contain LCR watersheds on Oregon side downstream of the Willamette.
- Columbia Gorge mainstem

The deadline for reviews is August 12, and this is a lot of material. Therefore we have proposed that the WLC-TRT focus its review on the LCFRB plan and provide only “first impression” reviews of the other subbasin plans. The LCFRB plan is likely to be most developed and intentionally goes beyond the requirements of the council’s subbasin planning to explicitly address ESU recovery planning issues. These additional issues include ESA delisting criteria, “all-H” integration and an ESU-scale recovery perspective (i.e. prioritization among subbasins). These additional issues will not be a focus of the Council’s reviews. The LCFRB has also committed to ongoing revision of its plan to meet the needs of ESA recovery planning and is interested in collaborating with the TRT on analyses during the revision phase. Therefore this plan is the highest priority for TRT review.

The other plans (i.e. Oregon plans and White Salmon) will likely have a more limited focus on freshwater habitat as is consistent with the NWPCC guidance. NOAA would like scientific comments on these plans from an ESA recovery perspective, but given the limited resources of the TRT these plans should not be our main focus. It will be important for “taking stock” of the current plans to have some understanding of what is happening throughout the WLC, but we can’t go into everything in equal depth at this

point. The ISRP will be reviewing these plans and NOAA can also utilize information from those reviews in deciding next steps.

As an approach to getting all this done, I suggest that the entire TRT take on the task of reviewing the LCFRB and that subpanels look at each of the other plans. There would be 4 panels

- LCFRB (entire TRT- 10 people)
- Willamette (3 people + Paul)
- Big White Salmon and Hood (3 people +Paul; these two plans will be relatively small and it make sense to group them)
- LCREP and Gorge Mainstem (3 people + Paul)

Thus, everyone on the TRT will look at two plans; the LCFRB plan and one other. I'll try to look at all of them (this could take an extremely large amount of caffeine.) We will likely divide up the LCFRB plan into sections as we did when we reviewed the LCFRB draft technical foundation. The approach to dividing up review of the other plans will be up to the subpanels. We will need to identify a lead for each panel. If we use this approach, please consider which subpanel you would like to participate on.

To make sure we use a consistent approach to all the reviews and to ensure that we don't miss any topics, I'm working on a draft review template that I will email out early next week. This template steals heavily from the NWPCC review template and the NOAA RO review template. I've modified some components to give it that special TRT sparkle. Please review this before the meeting as our goal is to finalize the template before we leave.

Watershed Case Study

The NWFSC case study team has been charging ahead on the Lewis River case study. Ashley will present an overview of the project to date, describe where it is headed and lead a discussion to get feedback on the project.

Strategy for Recovery Plan Development

This will be a brief presentation by Patty on the strategy and time line for completing ESA recovery plans, followed by brief TRT discussion. This should help give some "big picture" context for the TRT's work. We are working on some nifty gant charts for this. Largely because of budget constraints, there are lots of uncertainties about how to complete many of the steps in developing the recovery plan.

WLC-TRT Work Plan

As described in the draft memo being put together from Bob Lohn to the NWFSC (Attached) the TRTs are being asked to put together a work plan. (Note that the memo from Lohn is still in draft; if you have any comments please send them to me ASAP.) We do not have time to complete a work plan at this TRT meeting, but it would be useful to take a little time to brainstorm about what this should contain. There are many things that could affect the work plan that are outside of the TRT's control at the moment (e.g. the HLP, NOAA's strategy for generating recovery plans) and I find the task of creating a work plan a bit challenging. It will be good to get feedback on this.