

**FORUM ON MONITORING
SALMON RECOVERY AND WATERSHED HEALTH
SUMMARY MINUTES**

DATE: September 3, 2008

PLACE: Natural Resources Building

TIME: 9:00 a.m.

Olympia, Washington

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Bill Wilkerson	Chair, Forum on Monitoring Salmon Recovery and Watershed Health
Kaleen Cottingham	Director, Recreation and Conservation Office
Chris Drivdahl	Director, Governor's Salmon Recovery Office
Jim Cowles	Designee, Department of Agriculture
Ginny Stern	Designee, Department of Health
Bruce Crawford	Designee, NOAA Fisheries
Carol Smith	Designee, Conservation Commission
Josh Baldi	Designee, Department of Ecology
Tim Smith	Designee, Department of Fish and Wildlife
Jim Cahill	Designee, Puget Sound Partnership
Rob Wilson	Designee, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Bob Metzger	Designee, USFS Olympic National Forest
Jeff Breckel	Executive Director, Lower Columbia Salmon Recovery Board
Julie Morgan	Executive Director, Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board
Terry Wright	Designee, Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission
Kit Paulsen	Designee, City of Bellevue
Pete Schroeder	Designee, Lead Entity Advisory Group
Dick Wallace	Northwest Power and Conservation Council
Bob Nichols	Governor's Executive Policy Office, Salmon Recovery Funding Board

IT IS INTENDED THAT THIS SUMMARY BE USED WITH THE NOTEBOOK PROVIDED IN ADVANCE OF THE MEETING.

A RECORDED TAPE IS RETAINED BY THE RECREATION AND CONSERVATION OFFICE AS THE FORMAL RECORD OF MEETING.

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Called to order 9:07 a.m.

Agenda Item #2: Approval of July Minutes

Bruce Crawford noted that he represented the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration at the July meeting, instead of Barry Thom, who was listed in the minutes.

The Forum **APPROVED** the May 2008 minutes as corrected.

Chair Wilkerson reiterated that the Legislature assigned the Forum on Monitoring Salmon Recovery and Watershed Health (the Forum) the task of creating a list of monitoring priorities, and if the Forum provides a list indicating that "everything is a priority", the Forum's credibility will be questioned. Chair Wilkerson asked Ken Dzinbal, Executive Coordinator of the Forum on Monitoring, to describe the Forum's budget review process and outcomes (agenda item 3).

Agenda Item #3

Review and Discussion of Forum's Role and Operational Structure

At the September meeting, a number of Forum members volunteered to form a workgroup to develop criteria for ranking monitoring proposals. The proposed criteria include a set of pass/fail questions, and a set of ranking questions. For a proposal to be ranked, it must first pass all of the pass-fail questions (below):

1. Does the proposed monitoring address a high-level question or high-priority research question?
2. Is the proposed monitoring best characterized as effectiveness monitoring, status & trends monitoring, compliance monitoring, or validation monitoring? (definitions in CMS)
3. Does the proposed monitoring complement or support other monitoring or planning efforts?
4. Is it clear who needs and will use the data? (Will the proposed monitoring provide data of sufficient confidence to support actual management decisions?)
5. Is this the right entity (or state agency) to perform the monitoring activity?
6. Does this proposal avoid duplicating work being done by any other entity?

Bob Nichols noted that the pass/fail questions seem general and asked how they help filter proposals. Josh Baldi explained that the screening separated proposals that were not focused on monitoring, but were focused on data management. Bruce Crawford noted the statute does mention data management systems. Ken agreed that data management systems associated with monitoring programs are fair game for budget proposals.

Craig Partridge was pleased to see the Forum's recognition of the agencies' screening process within the Forum's criteria. Ken then explained the following ranking questions:

Proposed Criteria

1. **Will the proposed monitoring provide data needed for Endangered Species Act delisting and support Clean Water Act requirements?**
 - a. Proposal integrates fish recovery, water quality, and watershed health = 3
 - b. Proposal provides data primarily needed for only one major objective (ESA, CWA) = 1
 - c. Doesn't = 0
2. **Will the proposed monitoring provide high priority data identified in an adopted salmon recovery or watershed plan?**
 - a. Salmon recovery plan + watershed plan = 3
 - b. Either salmon recovery plan or watershed plan = 1
 - c. No = 0
3. **Does the proposed monitoring fill a data gap or baseline identified in the Comprehensive Monitoring Strategy High Priority Actions?**
 - a. Yes (top 10) = 3
 - b. Yes (11-22) = 1
 - c. No = 0

4. **Does the proposed monitoring provide data required by (or fill a gap identified in) the State of the Salmon in Watershed report, or the State's Integrated Water Quality Assessment report?**
- a. SOS + IA = 3
 - b. Either SOS or IA = 1
 - c. No = 0

Ken noted that question number two was the most difficult to craft. The idea is to integrate salmon recovery with watershed health. Plans that meet both objectives will score high, ones that assist with either salmon or watershed health rank medium, and no connection to either will score low.

Forum Discussion:

Bob Nichols said he is struggling with the working definitions of watershed health, water quality, and salmon recovery. Alex Conley felt that for salmon recovery he recommended linking it to the salmon recovery plans. Bob Nichols clarified that at the state level, the Forum needs to be able to abstract out salmon recovery in Washington State, so when monitoring is discussed there is a standard language.

Chris Drivdahl noted the state has not yet decided on an indicator for watershed health. Terry Wright asked how Ken is preparing to work with the Puget Sound Partnership (PSP). Ken said he expects the PSP's Action Agenda to be written in a way that moves toward watershed health and salmon recovery. Bruce Crawford answered Bob Nichols' question about defining watershed health as a "properly functioning watershed" as defined by the Monitoring Oversight Committee in the Comprehensive Monitoring Strategy. Chair Wilkerson agreed with Terry that the Forum should refer to the PSP since that is the Forum's chosen "policy train". The Chair noted that if the Forum is going to be a policy body, they should judge proposals by what watershed health means to the Forum. The Chair noted that the Forum does not need to have a clear definition for salmon recovery and watershed health, the key is to help make criteria.

Kit Paulsen agreed that a definition is not as important as sequencing and prioritizing monitoring activities. Jim Cowles asked about number three on the list of proposed criteria, and was concerned about disrupting existing programs or not giving credit for existing programs. Ken noted that the Forum's criteria aligned with the Washington State Framework for Monitoring Salmon.

Carol Smith complimented the workgroup on their efficient and good work. Josh Baldi asked if the state's interest is met in local recovery plans, and pointed out as an example that the screening questions do not address regulatory needs. Bob Nichols noted that he does not see a tension between state interests and regional interests in the watershed plans. Bob would like to know if there is a tension between the two interests. Josh noted that he was asking the question, but does not know the answer. Alex Conley added that the recovery plans do have a regional focus. He recommended adding criteria for meeting local and state priorities.

Kit Paulsen noted that the Forum's role has been responsive instead of proactive, and suggested the Forum examine how they can be more proactive in preparing for the next biennial budget. Jeff Breckel added that in being proactive, the Forum should help the agencies in meeting the criteria. Bruce Crawford recommended moving toward aligning the PSP Action Agenda and the CMS.

Chair Wilkerson asked Jim Cahill and Dick Wallace if monitoring and data management issues are separate or linked. Jim noted that there will be proposals for both, but there are gaps in the CMS for prioritizing questions to investigate. He explained the Partnership took the proposals to the Science Panel but was unable to reach any conclusions. They are working to get the proposals into the biennial science work plan. Dick Wallace echoed that data system integration needs to be separated from monitoring. The Power Council wants to be able to interpret data that is being gathered from monitoring. Chair Wilkerson agreed that monitoring data needs to be accessible.

Bruce Crawford noted that the Office of Financial Management has asked how the data systems will fit together, but not where the data will be stored. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is currently working to identify existing databases that are accessible. Terry Wright asked how the Forum will address data gaps as it goes forward in the next budget cycle. Chair Wilkerson responded that the Partnership's action plan is supposed to address recovery, including data gaps, from now until 2020. The PSP realizes this is an unreasonable undertaking, and acknowledged that planning needs to be modified in the future.

Craig Partridge **MOVED** to outline six points for a letter to be signed by the Chair:

1. Monitoring Forum subjects proposals to an objective, analytical process
2. Top three proposals meet the dual test of salmon and watershed health
3. Identifying the importance of regulatory compliance
4. Hydrography layer is key to monitoring
5. Proposed projects address agency priorities
6. Forum recognizes parallel efforts with the Power Council and Puget Sound Partnership

Craig asked that staff work on improving the language in the letter. Dick Wallace **SECONDED**.

Forum Discussion:

Bruce Crawford stated that NOAA is supportive of the top three but he is concerned about number four. Kit Paulsen asked to add next steps, such as soliciting input from the regional organizations including the Partnership and Power Council. Craig noted that Kit's point was included in his sixth bullet point.

Jeff Breckel recommended that status and trends monitoring be done statewide. Josh Baldi agreed with Jeff Breckel's suggestion. Chair Wilkerson and Ginny Stern advocated for a clear and concise letter to the legislature.

The Forum **APPROVED** the motion for staff to draft a letter for review and approval by the Forum, incorporating the six points noted above.

Agenda Item #4 Data Management Updates

1) Scott Redman (Puget Sound Partnership) presented the Partnership's Inventory of Ecosystem Monitoring in the Puget Sound Basin. The Partnership is developing a web-portal for ecosystem monitoring. By the end of September, Scott hopes to use the portal for planning monitoring efforts. The Partnership's portal could potentially merge with the Natural Resources Information Portal. The goal is a portal that links to actual data and not just information about data. The system is getting ready to go live so organizations can update their information within the portal. Jim Cahill added that the Partnership is preparing a business needs assessment to help with developing a data system.

2) Ken Dzinbal provided an overview of RCO's Data Exchange Network Grant from the Environmental Protection Agency. A data exchange network provides several advantages as a way to share data. Partners agree to use a common vocabulary, standardize data schemes, and share data over the internet. A current example is the Pacific Northwest Water Quality Data Exchange, which allows states to share water quality information among themselves and with EPA. The Puget Sound Partnership will be the project manager for creating a data exchange network for juvenile salmonids in Puget Sound.

3) Steve Rentmeester (NOAA), John Tooley, (Ecology), and Brodie Cox (Department of Fish and Wildlife) discussed their collaboration to develop a web-based database for status and trends data. Their data model recognizes that the "object of study" (e.g. fish, log, stream) may be consistent between studies, while the method of measurement may vary. The data model depends of documentation (metadata) so that users can more easily share and used data

4) Ken Dzinbal gave a presentation on the Salmon and Watershed Information Technical Advisory Committee (SWIMTAC). He recommended the Forum use SWIMTAC as an advisory body for data management issues. Forum members discussed this but did not come to agreement. Members suggested forming a workgroup to identify data management issues and approaches to addressing them. Terry Wright, Josh Baldi, Bruce Crawford, Rob Wilson, and Ginny Stern volunteered to serve on the workgroup.

The Chair agreed that a small workgroup be formed to develop data management recommendations. He suggested the Forum ask the agency directors if they would like the Forum to oversee a group similar to SWIMTAC. Ginny Stern, Kit Paulsen, and Jeff Breckel recommended that the Forum workgroup determine how to craft the letter to the agency directors. The workgroup will discuss "what's next?" and ask agency directors for feedback on the Forum's work with a group like SWIMTAC.

Agenda Item #5 Protocols – Status and Next Steps

Ken distributed the list of protocols collected by the Forum in its earlier inventory. Bruce Crawford asked how the Forum wants to pare down and standardize the list of field protocols. Ken replied that the Forum first needs to know what protocols agencies are actually using. Kaleen suggested Ken send the list to Forum members so they can respond with whether or not their agencies are using the listed protocols. Bruce Crawford and Ginny Stern discussed the role of protocols in the quality of data.

Agenda Item #6

Follow-up from July 16 Forum Meeting: Discussion: “What help can the Forum offer to Regional Organizations?”

Julie Morgan and Jeff Breckel presented an overview of the regional organizations in Washington State and the Council of Regions (COR). Regional organizations rely on monitoring data gathered by state agencies, so it is important for regions to express their monitoring priorities to those agencies. Julie and Jeff made three requests of the Forum:

1. Provide an avenue for early dialogue between the state and federal agencies as monitoring plans, budgets, and priorities are developed.
2. Provide assistance and communicate priorities identified by regional organizations and local governments as related to monitoring.
3. Help regional organizations develop a funding strategy to support regional monitoring needs.

In the 2009-2011 biennium, the Council of Regions requests that the Forum facilitate a dialogue between state agencies and regional organizations to refine the budget development process to better meet monitoring needs in recovery regions. COR would like to see the Forum develop a workgroup to discuss the aforementioned requests.

The Forum discussed how to coordinate monitoring efforts among the regions. The Forum asked Jeff and Julie what the regions need from the Forum. Chair Wilkerson directed the regions to develop a list of high priority monitoring requests and present the list to the agencies and the Forum.

Agenda Item #6

Proposed Meeting Dates for 2009

Ken asked the Forum to review the proposed 2009 meeting dates.

ADJOURN

Meeting adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

Bill Wilkerson, Chair

Next Meeting: December 3rd, 2008

Room 175 A & B, Natural Resources Building, Olympia