

Lead Entity Advisory Group (LEAG) Report

Salmon Recovery Funding Board

July 13, 2007

prepared and submitted by LEAG Chair, Jeanette Dorner

Lead Entities are now deep in the middle of their local processes for the 2007 SRFB round. Fourteen of the lead entities were represented at our LEAG meeting in Edmonds in June and this report summarizes some of the key discussions we had that day as well as other recent Lead Entity news.

SRFB Round 8 Recommendation

Lead entities at the last LEAG meeting unanimously requested that the SRFB make a final decision as to how much funds will be available this round at your July meeting. Many of us are already in the final stages of working with project sponsors and our committees to craft a strategic project list that will need to match how much funds are available to us this year. Not having a target number by the July meeting means that we will have to do post September deadline adjustments of project costs and potentially project scopes in order to meet our target. This will almost certainly cause confusion and a lot of extra project review and communication needs between lead entity coordinators, lead entity citizen committees, project sponsors, our SRFB project managers, and the SRFB Review panel.

We understand that there may still be some uncertainty because of ongoing decision making about how much this year's federal allocation will be. We would hope that a solution could be found to avoid having to wait until the federal allocation is resolved before giving a target amount to each region, such as choosing an amount that is certain and allocating whatever is received beyond that amount to next year's round.

Lead Entity Program 2008 supplemental request

We are working with WDFW staff to craft a supplemental request to the 2008 Washington State legislature to increase the support for lead entities to continue to work with our recovery regions and the state to facilitate the development, funding, and implementation of cooperative, locally supported, and technically sound high priority salmon recovery projects across the state.

Lead entities play a key role in connecting the local science with local community decision makers to ensure that the best projects for salmon are being developed and supported. Lead entity coordinators are tasked with facilitating and coordinating the process in their area and ensuring representation to the state. As regions have formed across the state lead entities have had the additional significant task of coordinating with the region and responding to regional requests for assistance in the regional recovery planning process. The lead entity scope has also expanded beyond having a basic strategy and generating a list of projects once a year to things such as: assisting project sponsors to ensure successful project implementation, participating in all H integration discussions, coordinating with watershed planning, developing a monitoring and adaptive

management plan, and working with and sometimes managing other funding rounds (such as Community Salmon Fund, the Puget Sound ESRP fund for nearshore projects, and the Family Forest and Fish Passage program),

Despite this considerable increase in the scope of the responsibilities and time necessary to meet those responsibilities the lead entity funding has not increased since the beginning of the program in 1999. The reality of current lead entity funding is that most lead entities are not even fully funded through their state lead entity contracts for one full time staff position, not to mention the tremendous increase in necessary travel costs that many of the lead entities now face due to the increased need for regional and state coordination.

WDFW staff and LEAG are working with lead entities to craft a clear description of the expanded role of lead entities to accompany the request for additional support for each lead entity. We are proud of the essential role we have played throughout the state to bring together local community interests to develop a common strategy with real projects that will make a significant contribution to salmon recovery across the state. In order to build on these successes and ensure that we don't lose the talented, committed, and effective lead entity coordinators we already have across the state additional support will be necessary.

SRFB Project Conference II

We heard at our LEAG meeting that the IAC Salmon Program staff were considering organizing a second SRFB Project Conference. LEAG would like to state that we strongly support organizing a second conference. There was a lot of value gained from having the opportunity to focus our discussion on projects and hear about what people across the state are doing with SRFB funds to protect and restore salmon habitat.

New Lead Entity Coordinator and staff

We have a new Lead Entity coordinator for the Okanogan area: Charlene Beam. Charlene attended our June LEAG meeting and introduced herself to everyone. We also met Angie Begosh who is now assisting Alex Conley with the Yakima lead entity's coordination work. We welcome both of them to our lead entity community.

WDFW is working on a notebook for new Lead Entity coordinators to help orient them to the program and explain some of the roles of lead entities to help smooth the transition for new coordinators. We are also continuing to set up mentoring connections between experienced coordinators and new coordinators.

New LEAG organization and structure

We have finalized our new LEAG organizational structure that allows for equal representation of all the lead entities across the state with a nine member Executive Committee. We nominated four Lead Entity representatives to fill the four positions that became vacant at the end of June and have submitted their names for approval by WDFW Director Jeff Koenings. We will have our annual election for Chair and Vice-Chair at our August meeting.