

Lead Entity Advisory Group Report

Salmon Recovery Funding Board

September 2008

prepared and submitted by LEAG Chair, Richard Brocksmith

The following are some highlights from our recent Lead Entity Advisory Group (LEAG) meeting in Leavenworth on September 23rd as well as other updates on lead entity activities.

Lead Entity Program

All lead entity (LE) invoicing, reporting, and reimbursements were completed on time and at budget by the end of fiscal year 2008. New contract amendments have been completed and mailed out to all lead entity host organizations for fiscal year 2009.

WDFW and LEAG officers worked with the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) to develop the decision package for expanded LE Operational and Administrative Support 2009-2011, as authorized at the July SRFB meeting. This decision package was submitted to the Office of Financial Management on September 2nd, which will inform the Governor's budget decisions. The package focused on LE roles in Washington's bottom-up approach to salmon recovery in engaging local communities in salmon recovery to bring forward the highest priority projects for funding. The package also included draft performance measures and a potential division of funds among lead entities, both of which will be refined if the decision package is funded.

2009 LEAG meetings have been formally scheduled approximately one month before each of the 2009 SRFB meetings so that we can provide timely discussion and response to SRFB policy questions as they arise. We are also scheduling conference calls after each SRFB meeting to ensure SRFB topics and decisions are well communicated and to continue to improve our own LEAG processes.

LEAG, COR, and SRFB Coordination

Several actions are currently underway in recognition of the continuing need for coordination between lead entities and regional recovery organizations, as well as the SRFB's intent to develop a strategic plan that includes a review of the human infrastructure needed to ensure our success. First, the Council of Regions (COR) and LEAG have initiated discussions to improve our partnership in implementing critical functions inherent in our programs at a regional and statewide scale, and to coordinate our programs' priorities for the coming year. Second, we have begun working with RCO staff to assess LE core and enhanced functions, how that is evolving, what funds are and are not available to implement those functions, and how we integrate with our respective regions. At the October SRFB meeting, you will hear some preliminary results of this effort that were obtained by a survey completed by each LE organization. Third, we will work with RCO and COR to discuss the results, how they vary across the State, and how we can facilitate development and implementation of SRFB's Strategic Planning effort to move our shared mission forward. Fourth, we continue to cross-pollinate COR and LEAG discussions by incorporating briefings and ensuring representatives attend respective meetings.

2008 and 2009 Grant Cycle

On September 8th, 132 projects were submitted to SRFB for the 2008 grant round from 27 lead entities. All projects have been locally reviewed, improved, and ranked, and funding requests have been refined to meet allocation targets provided by SRFB. There is general agreement that the new, standing Review Panel process has been helpful in early interaction and project improvement, and we are looking forward to their final review before we present projects to SRFB at your December meeting.

There is also a sense that LEAG will only have minor recommendations for improvements to the 2009 Grant Cycle, given the large strides made in recent years. We'd like to thank SRFB staff for their hard work on this topic.

Regional Allocation Task Force

A LEAG representative has been participating in the Regional Allocation Task Force (RATF), and briefings are being provided to LEAG leadership and members. We are encouraged that the RATF came to similar conclusions that LEAG made recently about focusing our efforts on increasing the overall project funding where possible, while providing flexibility and efficiencies in the current program.

WDFW Watershed Steward Team Briefing

LEAG continues to improve integration with relevant salmon recovery programs/staff in WDFW, as this was identified at our LEAG Retreat as a needed improvement. In September we were given a presentation by WDFW staff about the structure, purpose, and responsibilities of their Watershed Steward Program. That program's ability to be a conduit of science from the policy and technical arms of the Department is a critical function for salmon recovery and as a result of these briefings will be better coordinated and utilized by lead entities.

Salmon Recovery Monitoring

LEAG is continuing to survey lead entity organizations regarding draft monitoring positions put forward in a discussion paper in summer 2008. The purpose of the paper is to outline in common language the various types of monitoring, describe a common set of broad questions and programs relevant to the LE Program, and lay out common positions on these programs that help us improve our projects. Though we haven't been able to wrap-up this effort yet, the initial results suggest there is a strong interest in improved communications with existing programs relevant to habitat project development. To that end, we would like to request that SRFB direct its project effectiveness monitoring consultants to present methods and results to LEAG at our next meeting in November.

Habitat Work Schedule

We had a very successful and well attended celebration of the new and improved Habitat Work Schedule on August 19th. Many representatives from lead entities, regional organizations, regional fish enhancement groups, state agencies, educational institutions, and other planning processes were in attendance. We had excellent presentations from many of our elected and appointed leaders, including Puget Sound Partnership (PSP) Chair Bill Ruckelshaus, U.S. Representative Norm Dicks, Secretary Ralph Munro, and SRFB Chair Steve Tharinger.

WDFW staff and LEAG continue to work with the vendor on database and public portal enhancements, coordination with RCO and PSP needs, discussions with regional recovery organizations regarding programmatic action tracking, and enhanced trainings for lead entities and project sponsors. Lead entities and project sponsors are still working to increase the quality and quantity of projects in the database. We are also working to develop the infrastructure and content needed to implement the systematic Large Woody Material planning process that is moving forward with RCO, GSRO, and other state and federal agencies.

Lead Entity Outreach Committee

This committee continues to move forward in advancing LE outreach in local media and community events. We are also beginning to prepare for our Legislative Outreach Day on March 10, 2009 where we will be meeting with state elected officials to carry our shared salmon recovery message.