

Council of Regions Report

Salmon Recovery Funding Board

February 13, 2009

Prepared and submitted by COR representative, Steve Martin

COR met on January 6th. The focus of that meeting was regional programmatic funding and infrastructure capacity request to SRFB:

- Possible strategies for regional budget request to SRFB were discussed. A guiding principle is regions would like to maintain critical functions, services, and accountability to local communities and SRFB while implementing cost-saving efficiencies
- Goal is a consensus request for a collective budget amount, with 6 deliverable areas as last biennium for each region, heightened accountability through specific actions/deliverables, and overall reduction of total new money request
- Regions recognize that the February SRFB meeting will be a fairly high level discussion, with more detail needed in May
- Important consideration is how much of unspent funds from 07-09 biennium may be carried over to complete current tasks or used for new ones, and whether it would be “pooled” for all regions to use. Resolution of this affects the size of the new ask
- A big question the SRFB will consider is the level of human infrastructure costs to be maintained when the expectation is for an approximately 20% reduction in project funds
- RCO will likely summarize requests for the Board in a table that shows 07-09 award and 07-09 expenditures, but will not likely recommend an approach or level in their presentation to the Board.
- Regions will show where they are incorporating efficiencies into their request
- LEAG and COR members expressed a desire for consensus on budget requests to the SRFB
- Budget Update Report prepared by the regional directors has been provided to the SRFB and will be discussed at this (February 12-13) meeting

Assignment: Regions should email brainstorm suggestions for efficiencies to Duffy by January 20. RCO should note in presentation to SRFB that these are early stage concepts. Regions ask that RCO facilitate discussions among affected parties, then develop some thoughtful suggestions for SRFB discussions later in the year.

Assignment: COR members should pursue further discussions with LEAG on relationships and tasks of regions and lead entities, including making regional and lead entity contracts complementary, and other efficiencies that might be employed

Assignment: For February 6 COR meeting, Regions are to bring firm estimates of 07-09 unspent \$\$ and proposed 09-11 request. RCO staff noted that it will be important for regions to clearly display what they are asking for, how it will be used, and how they are reducing/increasing current costs.

4. COR Calendar and Miscellaneous

- June – December quarterly reports due at end of January. Copies to RCO and GSRO
- Meetings for 2009 are tentatively scheduled for February 9 (web conference); April 17 (Shelton), June 19 (SeaTac), August 21 (Ocean Shores), October 16 (SeaTac), and November 20 (SeaTac)
- RCO sponsored project conference is April 15-16 in Shelton. There will be a salmon “recovery room” for telling the regional stories. Registration will be in mid-February
- Morgan agreed to continue as chair through the budget development cycle, rather than hold election in March
- Breckel, Martin, and Ryan are lead for COR on advising GSRO on essential functions if there are staff cuts

Washington State Regional Salmon Recovery Organizations
2009-2011 Regional Organization Budget Update to the SRFB

February 12 – 13, 2009

Introduction

The Salmon Recovery Regions recognize that salmon recovery efforts are facing significant financial uncertainty and that there is strong likelihood that funding reductions will occur in the upcoming 2009-2011 biennium. These funding reductions dictate the need to reinforce statewide priorities, look for new efficiencies, and revise regional organization's work plans in order to continue to make progress toward recovery while maintaining the essential infrastructure and partnerships needed for long-term success.

Background

The Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) plays a central role in state salmon recovery efforts by funding habitat protection and restoration projects, certain monitoring efforts and programmatic activities such regional organizations and lead entity operations. The funding allocated by the SRFB for these purposes is provided through both state and federal appropriations.

Governor Gregoire's proposed budget calls for an \$8 million reduction (from \$18 million to \$10 million) in state contributions to the SRFB for the next biennium. The Governor's budget would further condition the funding with a proviso that instructs the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) to evaluate opportunities to increase efficiency and coordination and to allocate funding based on this evaluation.

While it appears the 2009 federal funding contribution to the SRFB may be similar to that for 2008, no final decision has been made. Currently, the proposed federal Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund (PCSRF) appropriation appears to be approximately \$67 million dollars, similar to the previous year. There are current efforts in D.C. to increase that amount to \$90 million dollars, but that remains an outside possibility.

With a likely reduction in state funding, the SFRB faces the challenge as to how best to allocate available resources and still maintain a credible and viable salmon recovery program. The regional organizations recognize that this situation will result in a funding reduction for many, if not all, activities supported by the SRFB, including regional organization operations. Regional organizations are poised to continue their efforts to achieve greater efficiency in their operations and activities.

Guiding Principles

- A disciplined, efficient, and coordinated collective budget request for regional organizations respectful of SRFB over-all budget reductions that is supported by Lead Entities, RCO, and GSRO is critical for continued and coordinated local, regional, state and federal progress.
- Core services to be retained even with a modest budget reduction include:
 - Completing recovery plans and advocating recovery actions
 - Coordinating actions implemented across the 4 H's

- Tracking and reporting accomplishments towards recovery
- Leveraging and coordinating funding external to the SRFB for operations and implementation
- Supporting and facilitating collaborative decisions
- Refining and managing recovery plans
- Coordinating and documenting monitoring and adaptive management
- Implementing communications strategies
- Managing finances
- Strategies to enhance base funding levels in the current and future biennia will be developed.

Strategic Approach

While any reduction in funding will be a setback to salmon recovery efforts and the level of core services, the regional organizations are committed to working with the SRFB, RCO staff, and the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office to forge a funding strategy that will continue to make meaningful, albeit reduced, progress and that will sustain infrastructure that is critical to long-term success.

SRFB funding provides the foundation upon which the regional organizations have built their programs. It has allowed the regional organizations to put in place the infrastructure for basic functions needed to coordinate and support efforts to develop and implement recovery plans. However, the regional organizations also recognize the need to supplement this critical core funding from the SRFB with other funding sources and partnerships in order to fully implement our plans. Efforts to broaden our funding base will continue to be a key priority in the next biennium.

The regional organizations have a demonstrated history of seeking out and implementing efficiency measures to leverage resources. In some cases, efficiencies have been achieved through the integration of programs such as recovery planning, watershed planning, and habitat restoration. Efficiencies have also been achieved through acquiring technical and administrative services through partner agencies and local governments thereby reducing direct staff costs and minimizing contractor services. Each regional organization will continue to pursue such efficiencies. We will also explore opportunities to achieve additional efficiencies through inter-regional agreements focusing on tasks we share in common.

To assist the SRFB in making its budget allocation decisions this May, the regions are preparing a collective base-level funding request and incremental funding "add-back" packages. Regions are focusing their collective base-level funding request and work plans towards a 10% budget reduction from the collective 2007-2009 level. However, in an attempt to be flexible toward the reality of the situation, a range of work plans and associated budgets are being developed. The incremental funding add packages will be prioritized within and across each region and will clearly describe the service levels or deliverables that can be achieved for each proposed funding increment ultimately adding up to our current level of service.

Finally, the regions will present individual work plans and a collective budget request to the SRFB in May that will be respectful of the budget situation as it stands at that time or SRFB direction offered at the February 12-13 meeting.