

Pend Oreille Salmonid Recovery Team Citizen Advisory Group Meeting

Draft Meeting Minutes April 20, 2011

Scheduled 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm Kalispel Wellness Center, Usk

Facilitator: Nick Bean, Lead Entity Coordinator, Kalispel Tribe of Indians

Present: Nick Bean (KNRD), Carol Mack (WSU Extension), Charlotte Yergens (Town of Cusick), John Hankey (PO County Commissioner), Warren LaVille (Landowner), Leonard Davaz (Landowner), Tommy Petrie Jr. (Pend Oreille County Sportsman Club), Ed Hamilton (Citizen/Fisherman), Becca Cory (Community Health Advocate/RN), Norris Boyd (Citizen/Landowner)

Meeting: Called to order by the Coordinator Nick Bean at 6:00 pm.

Introductions: Given by each attendee at 6:05 pm.

Announcements:

- The agenda was approved as is yet the group anticipated an open discussion style meeting as appropriate.
- There was a public WDFW northern pike management meeting on April 19th and the group felt that a conversation regarding the status and potential management of northern pike in the Pend Oreille River would be appropriate for this meeting.
- Carol Mack discussed the forward progress of the Pend Oreille Water Trail Project. She indicated that a concept plan was being developed with a chapter on interpretation and education/outreach. Involved agencies and interested parties should be thinking about possible projects to be included in the plan which would be ultimately supported by all of the participating partners.
- There will be a workshop Friday at the Gregg's Addition site to demonstrate (hands-on) planting techniques. Everyone is welcome to attend and assist in the workshop. Additional demo-site workshops will be held later in the spring.
- Watershed Roundtable meeting is on Friday April 29th at 9:30 am at the Cusick Community Center. Group meets 1-2 times per year.
- Nick overviewed the general structure and objectives of the POSRT for new attendees.

Strategy Revision (and other general discussion/topics)

- Before over viewing the Strategy changes, Nick reviewed the background of the document, the structure, and the goals and objectives of the Strategy. If anyone wants a copy Nick will them the current version via mail (CD or hardcopy).
- Initially the TAG wanted to give the Strategy more of an emphasis on westslope cutthroat trout (WCT) recovery and protection. Nick presented the "new" criteria emphasizing WCT and their habitat to the TAG and the criteria were ultimately not approved. The TAG determined that the existing prioritization criteria, focusing on bull trout (BT) were justified and remained in place.
- The major changes aside from structural edits included: simplifying Appendix A to a tabular list of SRFB projects funded to date and add a link to Habitat Work Schedule instead of project summary pages; changes to the priority action tables based on input from the TAG and respective agencies with jurisdiction to the affected location; modifying the species maps to reflect new distribution and habitat; adding northern pike information to the non native section; having two columns for bull trout populations and individual sightings (Table 1) instead of a single column for bull trout; adding or updating the section of prioritized barriers and add a section of unscreened diversions; and re-ranking/evaluation of subbasin priorities. Nick will work to hopefully get the revision completed for approval early this summer.
- The discussion sidetracked to discussing what we have accomplished over the last 10-11 years. Nick discussed that fish passage is in the works at all 3 of the hydroelectric facilities on the main stem river, we have restored a significant amount of habitat for WCT and BT, as well as created access and continuity of habitat through the extensive removal of fish passage barriers. Nick reminded the group that this group is focused on habitat restoration and some major steps will need to take place before seeing significant success for at least BT. There is and will continue to be discussions on the need for a BT/WCT hatchery to supplement populations. This if it takes

place will be a major step to recovering populations. Since this is a major undertaking, funding, logistics, partnerships, jurisdictional issues, etc. will need to be discussed and will likely slow down the process of developing a hatchery. We need to remember that this group (POSRT) is laying the groundwork for the other future achievements necessary for recovery. We must remain focused on habitat and be patient.

- A question came up on the status of BT in Lake Pend Oreille and Priest Lakes and Nick indicated that he knew that redd surveys are taking place and lake trout netting efforts are ongoing. The Tribe is also looking at the Priest River to determine population levels and distribution of WCT. In the event locations (spawning, rearing, etc.) are identified in areas not previously considered to be a priority, the group may determine that these new areas are prioritized.
- The group discussed how the CCA Creek project is the one identifiable project that we can measure true success. The Tribe and WDFW are currently translocating WCT from Middle Creek to CCA. There were questions regarding why we are taking fish from existing populations. Nick explained that fish that are genetically similar are the ones being used and the source population was evaluated to ensure it could handle having fish removed. Hatchery fish at this time are not being used since the objective is to conserve the genetics of the existing fish not simply stock creeks for sport. Nick did not have all of the information on why Kings Lake fish are not being used but Todd Andersen could be contacted to resolve any of these questions. Many of the larger WCT in the river are primarily fish entrained from Lake Pend Oreille.
- A question arose regarding the concerns over pike and native salmonids in the mainstem PO River. Nick iterated that although the river is a migration corridor for bull trout, out migrating juveniles and migrating adults would have to make their way through a pike "gauntlet". Tributary mouths, which are often heavily populated with pike, could ultimately be target areas for predation on native adult and juvenile salmonids. The group discussed some of the highlights of the pike management meeting the night before and will discuss pike and the impacts to recovery goals as the management process continues and more information is available. The group was reminded of the financial impacts of pike since the POSRT alone has been involved in a native salmonid recovery project investment of \$4-5 million.
- A citizen questioned, understanding that we can assist habitat in tributaries, how are we going to address the mainstem Pend Oreille River conditions that are not suitable for native salmonids. Nick explained that the river is a corridor for migration and although some areas are suitable, the majority of the river is not. Historically the river was not necessarily pristine cold habitat but trout used it in mass for migratory purposes which provided a fishery at specific times of year. Resident fish will remain in the tributaries and possibly the mouths. Further down in the system there may be fluvial populations if the habitat conditions are suitable.
- Concerns remained on why we haven't invested money and time in creating a fishery in watersheds where we have invested a significant amount of recovery on habitat. LeClerc Creek came up as an example and Leonard was concerned that nobody comes to the watershed to fish. The non native electrofishing removal program in certain areas of the LeClerc watershed came up and the group was concerned why brook trout are being removed and no fish were being planted. Nick explained that removing brook trout where brook and cutthroat (WCT) trout coexist will remove the pressure on WCT and allow them to be successful. The group wanted to know why these projects don't have public meeting to discuss these issues when they are permitted. Nick explained that all resource management agencies are required to have permits through the State or Federal governments depending on the specifics of the project. WDFW, IDFG and USFWS all issue permits for fish collection or research and the permitted agency is required to report catch annually prior to reissuing a permit. This question would have to be addressed through the issuing agency. Nick was asked about a point of contact with the State (WDFW) to ask questions regarding electrofishing permits and public input. Bill Baker was recommended as a start or the regional office in Spokane. The group felt that there was a difference between electrofishing for research and removal; Nick further explained that removing brook trout will allow WCT populations to increase and this program is in a very small portion of the watershed. Ed felt that projects focusing on the health of the watershed are good regardless of whether or not we are stocking native fish right now. Leonard wanted to reiterate that fish shouldn't be taken away unless they are replaced.
- Norris emphasized that this group is focused on ensuring that we invest the funding in an appropriate manner. We should be identifying appropriate and beneficial ways to invest the tax dollars that benefit native fish. He's not as worried about removing a few brook trout because there are plenty more out there.
- Nick stressed that the POSRT is focused on habitat restoration and we need to remember that. Stocking fish is outside of what we do but is good to discuss at appropriate times.

Project Ranking-CAG Involvement

- Charlotte brought up a question regarding what the timber companies' role is in the habitat restoration arena. In the past a goal was to get the timber companies involved in this process. Nick mentioned that there are Stimson representatives on the TAG. She thought that it may be appropriate to have timber company employees listen to

the CAG conversations and become invested as a landowner or concerned citizen. Federally mandated requirements are outside of what Charlotte is discussing here. Some of the outreach may need to be refocused to these individuals. We may need to see if the other timber companies would like to hear more about us and be involved in this process as landowners not agency representatives. Nick does occasionally talk to the Stimson representatives and explains the CAG discussion. He will think about a strategy to assist this. One method may be to have more joint meetings between the TAG and CAG.

- Tommy mentioned that having CAG only meetings is nice since they are more comfortable without TAG members present. Better discussions also ensue in CAG meetings whereas members may not be willing to be as open in joint meetings. The CAG members like having the separate rating and ranking meetings and they are satisfied with the way it turned out last year.
- Conflict of interest will always be an issue since we have sponsors on the TAG, people working for the sponsoring agency on the TAG and CAG; with a relatively small pool for advisory group members and sponsor there is no real way of avoiding this issue. Other Lead Entities have issues but since they are larger they have ways of addressing these issues. Having elected members, a chair and conflict of interest policies work for them but due to the limited membership, sponsors, and tightly knitted community we cannot mirror these techniques.
- We may need to have a follow up meeting to address the ranking determination in the event a sponsor is unsatisfied or the TAG has issues with the outcome.
- The CAG felt that using a point system, especially when they may not agree on the outcome or there are too many to evaluate, may not be appropriate. They would like to basically put them up on a board and discuss the public input on each and simply rank them 1----?

Education and Outreach

- Klündt Hosmer is being contracted to develop the education and outreach materials. The contract is being developed for the website. This contractor specializes in branding as they did for the Tribe so they should be really effective at developing our needs.
- Since the Tribe consulted with this agency to develop the website it is cheaper than a redesign. Nick will also be trained in managing the website which will ultimately cut costs down. The website will have a calendar with meeting dates and a placeholder for documents such as meeting minutes, agendas, the POSRT Strategy among other items. There will be multiple pages and links describing the process, success, projects, CAG and TAG, goals, fish information, etc.
- Due to budget limitations on the Lead entity grant, we will only be able to contract the website at this time. The new contract will be in place July 1, 2011 and at that point the additional materials will be contracted for development and production.
- The objective is to get the recovery message out and involve new people and organizations in the process.
- Nick brought up the project presentation day and mentioned it is tentatively scheduled for September 21, 2011. This would involve sponsors presenting past and current projects. Nick asked for feedback from the CAG. Would this be involving CAG and TAG only or more of a public approach? It may be beneficial to have both a presentation day and a field day where we would tour projects.
- It was brought up that the website may educate the public since it was evident that many people didn't understand the status of native salmonids at last night's pike meeting.

Implementation Schedule

- Having an implementation schedule for projects over the next several years will help us organize and run more efficiently. Nick did not get to this discussion at the last TAG meeting but we have gone back and forth with the idea with limited progress.
- The group was shown a printout of the implementation schedule and described the structure of the document.
- Last year the CAG made it evident that they would like to see larger project be phased where appropriate. Norris brought up whether the CAG should make a commitment for the project in its entirety (phased) or one phase alone. This is a difficult decision. Having match, understanding cash flow, timing of the project all play roles in the decision making process.
- Based on the conversation Nick updated the group on the SRFB projects funded last year. The Granite LWD project is working on NEPA this year and implementation in 2012-they are looking at finding funding for the Idaho water; the Kapelke Diversion Screen should be installed this year and completed; the MB LeClerc Creek Restoration (phase I) project is going to be implemented this year and ready to submit for phase II during this funding cycle.

Meeting Wrap-up Discussion; Upcoming Meetings/Items:

- The next CAG meeting is on May 25th at the Wellness Center from 6-8pm.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:00 pm