Minutes of the October 12, 2017 Board of Directors Meeting  
As Approved by the Board on January 18, 2018  

Meeting held from 1 to 4 pm at the YBFWRB Office  

Members Present:  
Adam Fyall (Benton County), David Lind (Yakama Nation), Terry Keenhan (Yakima County), Obie O’Brien (Kittitas County), Nancy Lillquist (City of Ellensburg), Bob Elder (City of Prosser), Dave Brown (City of Yakima), Jim Leary (City of West Richland) and Jay McGowan (City of Cle Elum)  

Staff Present:  Alex Conley (Executive Director), Tricia Snyder (Lead Entity Program Coordinator)  

Others Present:  Steve Martin (GSRO), Lance Hoyt (City of Toppenish), and Ken Tolonen.  

After an informal pizza lunch, the Board met for a work session focused on communications planning. During this session, the Board reviewed and commented on the Board’s revised draft communications plan and discussed with Steve Martin of the Governor’s Salmon Recovery Office how our work fits into the statewide salmon recovery communication plan developed by the SRFB. Steve gave an overview of the Washington Way, the Governors Salmon Recovery office and the history of salmon recovery in Washington. The group discussed the need to show watershed management is a part of economic development, the increasing focus on predator impacts on salmon runs, and the need to address potential climate change impacts on our work.  

The business meeting of the Board was called to order at 2:15 pm.  

1) Approval of Agenda and Minutes  
Vice Chair Adam Fyall opened the meeting and all present introduced themselves. The Board reviewed the meeting agenda and the draft minutes for the 8/3/2017 Board of Directors meeting. The 8/3/2017 minutes and the agenda were approved as submitted with consent of all present.  

2) Announcements  

Update on Recent Fires: The Board reviewed the impacts of the recent large fires in the Upper Yakima and Naches basins on salmon recovery efforts.
Board Completed Projects Tour: Tricia updated the Board on the upcoming October 31 tour of completed SRFB projects, and encouraged Board members to attend.

Staffing Changes: Alex noted that two temporary staff members have moved on after doing excellent work here with us. Jason McCormick is focusing on his growing water resources consulting business, and Ashton Bunce has been hired by the Yakama Nation as a habitat biologist working out of the US Forest Service Naches Ranger District. The Board signed cards thanking them for their work on behalf of the Board.

Upcoming Meetings with Partners: Board staff noted that they will be introducing the Board and its work to the Benton County Conservation District (on November 8) and the City of Toppenish (on December 4). Interested Board members were encouraged to participate.

Capital Budget Update: The Board discussed the current status of the state capital budget and its impact on our work and that of partners.

3) Correspondence

The Board briefly reviewed the letter to the Governor addressing the impacts of the capital budget shortfall sent by the Council of Regions. The Board had agreed to sign on to this proposed joint letter at the August Board meeting.

4) Lead Entity Program

2017 Yakima Basin SRFB Grant Round: Tricia gave a presentation to the Board on the status of the 2017 grant round. Only one project requires further state review, and several of our alternate projects look like they will be funded using YBIP funds. All project funding is on hold until the state’s Capital Budget is approved (hopefully by March at the latest).

Grant Review Committee Status: The Board reviewed the status of the Technical Advisory Group and the Citizen Committee and highlighted the vacancies for citizen representatives from the Yakama Nation and Benton County. Benton County city and county representatives nominated Shawn Mellgren to fill one of the vacant Benton County seats; Shawn’s nomination to the Citizen Committee was accepted based on the consent of all present.

BLM Funding for Ringer Road Area Work: Tricia reviewed our new 5 year funding agreement with the BLM. It is providing $15,000 to cover a capital-budget related short-fall for the Cowiche Creek Siphon Project being constructed by the North Yakima Conservation District this month. It will also fund restoration work on BLM land at the upper end of the Yakima Canyon. As a first step the Board is seeking to a) complete a vegetation restoration plan for the entire site, and b) complete groundwater monitoring to evaluate the feasibility of excavating the groundwater fed channels proposed by BLM. The Board approve the contract and scope of work for vegetation restoration planning to be completed by the Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group and delegated to the executive committee final selection of a contractor to complete the groundwater monitoring.
5) **Review of 2016 IRS 990 Form**

The Board reviewed the 990 tax return prepared by Bob Villbrandt, which the IRS requires us to submit annually to maintain our status as a 501c3 non-profit organization. The Board approved submission of the 990 to the IRS as presented, based on the consensus of all present.

6) **Communications Updates**

The Board agreed to finalize the Communication Plan following a last round of Board email review. Alex will circulate the edited plan following the meeting for a one-week review.

Tricia presented the draft Communications Work Plan, which identifies specific actions in the communications plan that will be completed in the next year. The Board asked for the opportunity to provide feedback so that the final draft can be reviewed and approved at the January Board meeting.

7) **Board Logistics**

The Board reviewed the proposed position description for a half time operations manager, and provided several suggestions for edits. The Board request that the revised description be sent out for email review prior to advertising the position; all present approved the job description provided no significant issues are raised in the final review.

The Board also discussed strategies for filling the vacant recovery coordinator position.

The Board discussed continuing to hold one-hour work sessions and an informal lunch before meetings; there was general enthusiasm about the proposal, and members requested that staff reach out to the US Forest Service to set up a work session with their staff to discuss how we can work together on fisheries recovery efforts. Board members also discussed reaching out to congressional staffers about joining us for a future work session. One Board member noted that they have a conflict on Tuesdays prior to 2 pm, and requested that we consider alternate meeting days.

8) **Policy and Budget Updates**

The Board briefly reviewed the state of state and federal budgets and their implications for the Board’s work, but did not propose any specific actions. The Board also reviewed Dan Newhouse’s proposal to amend the ESAS to require better coordination with local and state governments, and talked about reaching out to his staffers to discuss the role a local entity like the Board has played in ESA implementation. Board members recommended reaching out to Josh Lozano, Newhouse’s natural resources staffer, about joining us for a future work session.

9) **Recovery Program Updates**

Alex gave a brief update on the status of Yakima Bull Trout Action Plan updates and noted the recent completion of the following technical products:
a) In August, Jason McCormick finished the 2016 Yakima Basin Fish Passage Barrier Assessment Project, available here.

b) Geoff McMichael completed his report on predation on juvenile salmonids in the lower Yakima; the final draft is currently under review by the Yakama Nation.

c) Hoda Sondossi completed a Geomorphic Assessment of the North Fork Teanaway River, which is currently under review by partners.

d) This summer, the Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group and the US Forest Service used funding from the Board to complete a comprehensive assessment of fish passage on US Forest Service lands in the Manastash and Taneum Creek watersheds. This data is being used to prioritize steelhead recovery actions in these priority watersheds.

The Board discussed proposed future work to update the Yakima Steelhead Recovery Plan and to address how climate change may change priorities and prospects for steelhead and bull trout recovery.

9. Public comment

No public comment was received. The meeting was adjourned at 4 pm.