



YAKIMA BASIN
FISH AND WILDLIFE
RECOVERY BOARD

MINUTES

July 25, 2007 Board of Director's Meeting

As approved at the 8/30/07 Meeting

Time & Location: 5:30 – 7:30 pm at old Yakima Health District Conference Room

Attendance:

Board: Paul Ward (Yakama Nation), Leo Bowman (Benton County), Mike Leita (Yakima County), Terry Keenhan (Yakima County alternate), Dave Brown (City of Yakima), Nancy Lillquist (City of Ellensburg)

Staff: Alex Conley, Executive Director, Angie Begosh, Program Coordinator

Other Participants: Michael Tobin (North Yakima Conservation District), Joel Freudenthal (Yakima County), and Richard Visser (WDFW)

Review of Agenda & May Minutes

Vice Chairman Leo Bowman called the meeting to order at 5:40 pm and confirmed the presence of a quorum. David Brown asked to add proposal for Yakima Basin Watershed Implementation to the Agenda. It was decided this would be addressed in agenda item #9. May minutes were reviewed. Paul Ward moved to approve, with a second by Dave Brown. All were in favor to approve minutes as written.

SRFB Funding Round Update

Alex Conley updated the Board on the 2007 Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) grant process. The SRFB has allocated \$25 million to the 2007 statewide grant round, so the Mid-Columbia Region's 10% allocation is \$2.5 million. Klickitat County is expected to have between \$465,000 and \$565,000 in funding requests, so Yakima Basin will have about \$2 million available. The Board received 10 applications for a total of \$2.3 million. Richard Visser commented on Technical and Citizen's Advisory Group activities. Presentations by applicants went well; initial comments from the CC and TAG are guiding revisions to proposals.

Alex updates the Board on the status of Citizen's Committee membership. Kittitas County has a full membership of four, and Yakima County may have one vacancy. Benton county may have two; we also need to confirm Yakama Nation member participation. Leo Bowman recommended that we contact the Benton County Conservation District to recruit additional CC members.

Alex reported on the SRFB Project Pamphlet Tiffany is constructing. This project reviews and documents progress on all projects funded through the SRFB in the Yakima Basin. Alex passed around the current version for review; a final version should be available soon.

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Alex also noted that two past projects (Easton Reach Acquisitions Phase I and II) looked like they would not be completed as planned, and that applicants were developing a proposal to shift funds from those projects (~\$600,000) to another funded project. Proposed changes will be reviewed by the TAG and then the CC. SRFB will allow these funds to stay in the Yakima Basin if the project(s) proposed are clean and well put together.

Review/Approve letter on grazing/ESA lawsuit issues

Alex noted that Jeff Tayer had hoped to be available to comment on this issue. The WDFW grazing pilot areas proposed for 2007 are not located in the Yakima Basin. The way the Western Watershed Center's letter of intent to sue is written, any grazing at all is considered to be a "take" under the Endangered Species Act. The area of concern in Kittitas County isn't near steelhead or bull trout habitat. Jeff Tayer wanted to assure stakeholders that the Regional Plan wasn't worded to include similar language. Board members reviewed the letter Alex drafted. The general agreement was that the letter was worth pursuing, but needed to be re-written to ensure balanced interpretation. Mike Tobin asked that a copy of the letter be provided to the North Yakima Conservation District. Alex agreed to develop a revised draft.

Board Logistics Update

Alex introduced Angie Begosh, the Board's new Program Coordinator, and reported on her progress and projects. Alex also provided an update on the search for a long-term office location. Vice Chairman Bowman emphasized that this needs to get done. Dave Brown noted that both the Yakima Basin Water Resource Agency and the Yakima Basin Watershed Conservancy would be interested in exploring the possibility of sharing office space. Paul Ward noted that The Nature Conservancy might also be looking for new office space.

Alex noted that while the Board has had an excellent experience with Tiffany Bishop, our current Americorps Volunteer, he has not applied for a volunteer in 2008 due to the increase in the fee for project sponsors from \$8,000 to \$14,000. The Board supported the concept of developing a part-time intern program in partnership with one of the local colleges.

Alex invited Board members to attend the tour of Ellensburg-area salmon recovery projects for Mike Gregoire (the governor's husband) on July 30.

Review of 2007-2009 IAC Regional Organization Contracts

Alex explained the current status of the Board's contracts with WDFW and the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO, previously IAC). He noted that the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife contract for the Board's Lead Entity role was is on a uniform statewide template and that does not significantly differ from past contracts. The Board asked about the commitment to provide updated bylaws; Alex noted that he had submitted the existing by laws with the last contract, and that they had been accepted without any comment or request for change. The Board also requested clarification on the conflict of interest policy requirements. The Board then reviewed the presented scopes of work and budgets for the two regional organization operations contracts with RCO and approved finalizing all three contracts pending final review and signature by the chairman. The Board encouraged Alex to advertise for and hire the administrative assistant as per the proposed contracts.

SRFB Vacancy/Eastern Washington WA representation

Larry Cassidy has resigned from the SRFB, and a second resignation is anticipated. This will create two vacancies on the SRFB. These positions are voting positions and appointed by the governor. There is currently no representative from Eastern Washington. This is a 2-3 day a month commitment. If the person selected is a current regional board member, they would be request to step down from the regional salmon recovery board due to the potential conflict of interest. Leo Bowman commented that it would be good to have a city council or county commissioner serve as a representative. The Board agreed to let Alex know of individuals who would be interested in serving in this capacity.

Review of Recovery/Monitoring Plans Status

Alex summarized progress with NOAA on the Mid-Columbia Steelhead roll-up process; there will be a draft plan this year, later in the fall. Alex also updated the Board on its role in allocating \$40,000 made available by NOAA to genetic analysis of Yakima steelhead that will directly inform recovery plan implementation.

Coordination with Watershed Planning Efforts

The Yakima Basin Water Resource Agency has approved its Detailed Implementation Plan, and is forwarding it to Yakima and Benton County for approval. Alex discussed having the Board provide formal input to the YBWRA; Board members recommended that the Board not do so at this time, but continue to encourage coordination between recovery planning and watershed planning in the basin.

Sagebrush Steppe Initiative

Alex briefly described the Sagebrush Steppe Initiative, which has brought together diverse state, federal and local partners to promote conservation of central Washington sage steppe. They are exploring hiring a coordinator and had asked about the possibility of having the Board act as fiscal entity, and provide office space and payroll. Board members emphasized that while this could be something to consider for the future, it would be premature at this time.

Financial & Activity Reports

Alex explained year end equipment purchases and the changes in health insurance providers. There were not any questions on the balance sheet. No comments were made on the Executive Director Activity Report.

Scheduling of Future Meetings

The next meeting was tentatively scheduled for August 30th. The Board discussed designating either this meeting or the September meeting s as the annual meeting.