

MID COLUMBIA RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION FORUM

June 6, 2011

Columbia Gorge Discovery Center, The Dalles, Oregon

MEETING NOTES

(As of July 1, 2011)

Introduction:

The first meeting of the Mid Columbia Recovery Implementation Forum (MC Forum) convened at 9:00 am on June 6, 2011 in the Columbia Gorge Discovery Center, 5000 Discovery Drive, The Dalles, Oregon. The meeting was open to the public but oriented on those involved with or interested in the recovery of Mid Columbia steelhead.

The objectives of the meeting were to:

- Present the status of Mid Columbia steelhead recovery implementation,
- Present NOAA's findings from its recently completed 5-Year status review, and
- Discuss opportunities for Forum members to coordinate implementation efforts.

Over 40 people attended the meeting or participated by phone (not all at the meeting signed the participation roster and not all on the phone clearly identified themselves). Attachment 1 provides a list of those who did sign in or who identified themselves as participants on the phone.

These notes document the general points raised and suggested follow-on steps; they do not provide a transcript of the proceedings. The formal presentations provided the meeting's substantive content; those desiring copies may download them from http://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/CRP/mid_columbia_river_plan.asp.

During the meeting, a number of participants asked questions or raised issues. Attachment 2 provides a summary of those questions and the answers provided.

Opening Comments:

Ms. Donna Darm, Assistant Regional Administrator for Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), provided opening comments. Key points:

- Noted that the change in Regional Administrator and recent reorganization of the NMFS Northwest Regional Office will not result in a change to the NMFS strategy for salmon and steelhead recovery. NMFS is committed to and fully supports the completion of locally produced recovery plans and implementation through a partnership of local, state, tribal, federal, and non-governmental entities.

- Expressed appreciation for the work being done by the meeting participants to implement recovery in their respective basins.
- Introduced Scott Rumsey as the new Salmon Recovery Branch Chief within the Protected Resources Division at NMFS.
- Provided an overview of the architecture of the Mid Columbia steelhead recovery plan and introduced the implementation organizational structure.

NOAA 5-Year Status Review:

- Presented by Scott Rumsey.
- Presented the findings regarding fish status and trends monitoring. Presented the viability status of the populations and major population groups (MPGs) comprising the Mid Columbia steelhead distinct population segment (DPS). NMFS will publish its conclusions later this summer in the federal register pending review by NMFS headquarters.

A copy of the presentation slides may be found at
http://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/CRP/mid_columbia_river_plan.asp

Management Unit Activities and Issues:

- Representatives from the Oregon (Adrienne Averett), Washington Columbia Gorge (Nora Berwick, David McClure, Bill Sharp) Yakima Basin (Alex Conley), and Southeast Washington (Steve Martin) management units (MU) provided a short overview of implementation activities within their respective MU.
- They also identified issues in which MC Forum participants could join to address that spanned multiple management units.
- A copy of each MU presentation may be found at
http://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/CRP/mid_columbia_river_plan.asp

Recovery Plan Implementation - Opportunities and Challenges:

Each MU lead provided suggestions where joint effort between management units and local/state/federal agencies could enhance implementation efforts.

- Oregon MU (Averett):
 - Funding. Governments at all levels will likely reduce funding in coming years. Implementation entities could coordinate funding efforts for greater efficiency.

- Permitting and Endangered Species Act (ESA) consultations: Requested assistance in expediting permits for habitat restoration and other implementation-oriented actions from permitting agencies.
- Local recovery plan implementation: Work with local private landowners to ensure high priority projects are implemented. Among these priorities are increased in-stream flows.
- Research, Monitoring, and Evaluation (RME) coordination.
- Outreach to stakeholders.
- Yakima Basin MU (Conley):
 - Question: Do we need an MC Forum? If so, to do what? Alex's suggestions:
 - Provide link to Federal Caucus to identify key projects.
 - Coordinate “bundling” of high priority actions across MUs that fall within agency jurisdiction (e.g. Corps of Engineers). Coordinate with that agency to encourage agency support for the funding of those projects.
 - Alex noted the MC Steering Committee's recent efforts to do this – and the challenge of proceeding quickly with obvious actions versus taking a more deliberate (and time consuming) process to identify correct priorities.
 - Identifying project advocates for MC steelhead recovery actions. Requested support in approaching funding entities (e.g. Congress).
 - *NOTE: Some discussion ensued about the different levels of comfort among MC Forum members – especially government agencies - in directly engaging in efforts to obtain funds.*
 - Noted the value of MC Forum entities working together on large projects due to their scale and tendency to involve multiple users.
- SE Washington MU (Martin):
 - Suggested crosswalk of key projects as identified in the MU presentations in order to identify priorities across MUs and MPGs.

NOAA Implementation Tracking Pilot Project:

- Introduced by Scott Rumsey. His presentation is available at http://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/CRP/mid_columbia_river_plan.asp

- Demonstration provided by Shanna Dunn. NMFS' Northwest Regional Office is developing a pilot implementation tracking system in coordination with NMFS' Southwest Region. Recovery domains selected for the pilot study include California's Central Valley, the Mid Columbia, and Upper Columbia. Her presentation is available at http://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/CRP/mid_columbia_river_plan.asp
- NMFS is developing business rules to guide tracking system operation and will share those rules for comment once drafted.

MC Steelhead Monitoring and Evaluation:

- Presented by Tom Cooney.
- Copy of presentation is available at http://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/CRP/mid_columbia_river_plan.asp
- Noted the three levels of science teams identified in the Mid Columbia recovery plan. These were the MU level (identified in MU plans), DPS level (identified in the roll-up plan), and regional science resources available to plan implementers.
- There is a need, however, to further identify the role of the proposed DPS level team. Suggestions:
 - Support improved status assessments.
 - Research fish / habitat relationships and update current action effectiveness assumptions.
 - Monitor habitat response to protection and restoration actions and assess the impact of those actions on fish response.
- Noted that the key focus for RME is the need for integrated approaches to uncertainties across the management units. Proposed a list of high-payoff monitoring actions that would address key uncertainties and information gaps.
- Recommended establishment of DPS-wide and management unit specific science teams to help design needed RME actions.

Tasks and Next Steps:

- ODFW (Adrienne) offered to store today's meeting materials on the ODFW Mid-C website and make available to meeting participants. ACTION: Averett (ODFW) and Donnor (NMFS).
- Notify MC Forum participants once this site is created and accessible. ACTION: Mogren.

- Confirm / create MU science teams, as needed. ACTION: MU leads, in coordination with Cooney.
- Create DPS science teams. Identify participants. Once participants are identified, develop scope of team activities for review and discussion by the MC Steering Committee. ACTION: Cooney as convening lead, in coordination with Management Unit leads.
- Summarize MU level RME efforts within the next 4-6 months (no later than mid December 2011). Intent is to provide transparency of RME work and to identify gaps between MU efforts. ACTION: DPS Science Team (once established) in coordination with NMFS and the MU leads.
- Develop outcome and criteria to guide data collection across MUs. ACTION: DPS Science Team (once established) in coordination with MU leads.
- Outline an adaptive management approach at the MU and DPS levels. ACTION: DPS Science Team (once established) in coordination with NMFS and the MU leads.
- Develop DPS-wide outreach and communications plan to provide transparency, public information products, and message coordination. ACTION: Morlock (NMFS) in coordination with MU leads.
- Schedule annual check-in meetings of the MC Forum. Convene additional meetings as warranted by circumstances. Develop a standing distribution list of Forum members from which individuals may unsubscribe if no longer interested. Intent of list (or website) is to keep interested parties informed and obtain some sense of support and direction as implementation moves forward. ACTION: Mogren (NMFS facilitator) in coordination with NMFS and the MU leads.
- Develop work plans for following products:
 - Funding issues/concerns policy meeting. ACTION: Steering Committee.
 - DPS Science Team products. ACTION: Science Team, with Cooney as convening lead.
 - DPS Bundling Team products. ACTION: Bundling Team, facilitated by Mogren.
 - Outreach projects. ACTION: Morlock, in coordination with MU leads.

Attachments

1. Meeting Participants
2. Summary of Questions and Issues

ATTACHMENT 1

Meeting Participants

June 6, 2011

Name	Organization	Email	Phone	Notes
Averett, Adrienne	ODFW	Adrienne.W.Averett@state.or.us	(541) 962-1839	Presenter
Berwick, Nora	National Marine Fisheries Service	Nora.Berwick@noaa.gov	(503) 231-6887	Presenter
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Cooney, Tom	NMFS – Northwest Fisheries Science Center	tom.cooney@noaa.gov		Presenter; On phone
Conley, Alex	Yakima Basin Fish and Wildlife Recovery Board	aconely@ybfwr.org	(509) 453-4104	Presenter
Courter, Ian	Cramer Fish Sciences	courter@fishsciences.net		
Cox, Brodie	WDFW	brodie.cox@dfw.wa.gov	(360) 902-2776	On phone
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Dunahay, Dave	Central Oregon Flyfishers	dunahay@bendbroadband.com		
Dunn, Shanna	Oceans Associates contracted to NOAA	Shanna.Dunn@noaa.gov	503-231-2135	Presenter
Foltz, John	Klickitat County	johnf@co.klickitat.wa.us		
Furfey, Rosemary	National Marine Fisheries Service	Rosemary.Furfey@noaa.gov	(503) 231-2149	

MC Recovery Implementation Forum
Meeting Notes

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Meagher, Loren	Central/ Eastern Conservation District	lorenmeagherekcd@gorge.net		
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Mogren, Rick	NOAA	Rick.Mogren@noaa.gov	(503) 872-2793	Facilitator
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MC Recovery Implementation Forum
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Sharp, Bill	Yakama Nation	sharp@yakama.com	(509) 865-5121 x 6355	presenter
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ATTACHMENT 2

Summary of Questions and Issues

Meeting participants raised the following questions and issues throughout the course of the day's discussion:

- Value added by MC Forum:
 - Coordinate DPS-wide RME actions and share the results.
 - Coordinate climate vulnerability assessments.
 - Coordinate project implementation, to include mustering of political / local support as appropriate (NOTE: Not all Forum participants were comfortable with an overt political role.)
 - Share information on effects of mainstem actions that transcend MU and local efforts.
- Comments by Klickitat County Commissioner regarding the value of the MC Forum:
 - Primary an information-sharing vehicle to provide updates to policy and poetical leaders to provide transparency to implementation efforts.
 - Noted the political nature of salmon recovery. Consequently, obtaining the trust and support of local landowners and constituencies is critical for success.
 - Noted need for local discussions regarding land use policy and the impact of current policies on the recovery efforts.
 - Noted value in coordinating DPS-wide RME to ensure “apples to apples” consistency between MU efforts.
- Suggested Forum roles:
 - Information sharing with the public and regional policy leaders.
 - Vehicle for consensus building on key issues (or, if consensus not achieved, to measure the degree and nature of opposing views).
 - The MC Implementation Steering Committee can provide convening leadership, but the Forum will need more regional input and participation than steering committee provides.
 - Assist in identifying key projects for congressional funding; note that regional support for a given action increases political "clout" in seeking funding. In response to discomfort expressed by some regarding direct lobbying of Congress, the thought was offered that the Forum could provide the information to those who could seek federal funding.
 - Most of the “low hanging fruit” has been accomplished. The remaining actions are more challenging and complex – the Forum could assist in

coordinating those efforts and demonstrating their value to a wider constituency than can the MU leads. For example:

- Demonstrate the economic benefits of recovery to local communities (*NOTE: potential outreach task*).
- Share success stories.
- Forum meetings should be periodic, at least once per year. The Steering Committee, through NMFS, can organize additional meetings or conference calls as the situation dictates.
- DPS Science Team:
 - DPS science team is called for in the recovery plan and will be established. Sequence:
 1. Establish or confirm existence of MU level science teams.
 2. Establish DPS team.
 3. Once established, DPS team develops draft scope of activities for review by steering committee / MC Forum.
 - NWFSC (Cooney) will serve as convening lead to get DPS science team established. Once established, the team can determine its own leadership.
 - Participation will be open to credentialed scientists from federal agencies, state agencies, and the tribes. Participation by scientists from non-governmental entities is to be determined.
 - A primary goal of the science teams will be to inform the next round of NOAA's 5-Year status reviews.
 - The key job of this team is to review and incorporate other regional science efforts underway by co-managers in science efforts. Avoid duplication of effort. They may also review MU implementation efforts to determine gaps at DPS level.
- Adaptive management:
 - Recovery implementers are to use RME information to adapt programs over time – question is how to use RME information to adapt plans over time.
 - Forum can play role in the interface between science and policy in deciding new or modified actions.
- NMFS Implementation Tracking system:
 - Issues / questions raised:
 - How does the NMFS system link with tracking systems established by the states and others?
 - System will have web links to other tracking sites and reporting systems.

- The system should distinguish between projects and actions.
- NMFS is developing the system business rules. Among topics to be addressed:
 - Who edits databases and is authorized to make entries.
 - How QA/QC will work.
- MC Steering Committee:
 - Forum agreed there is value in having the MC Steering Committee continue to meet.
 - Use steering committee to develop (with NMFS) and oversee the education and outreach plan.
- Levels of implementation work:
 - There are two levels of things that need to be done:
 - Track and implement local projects as identified in each MU plan.
 - Identify key, high priority projects that span MU plans or cross jurisdictional boundaries that will need special help to get implemented (example: Mill Creek on Walla Walla).