



Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
Fish Restoration & Enhancement Program Board
 Meeting Minutes



Date: March 22nd, 2024

Location: Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Headquarters – Salem, OR

Fish Restoration & Enhancement Program

Board Members

- | | |
|---|---|
| Dave Grosjacques – Recreational Fisheries Rep | Troy Laws – Commercial Gillnet Fisheries Rep |
| Tom VanderPlaat – Recreational Fisheries Rep | Susan Chambers – Fish Processing Industry Rep |
| Fred Cholick – Recreational Fisheries Rep | Kay Brown – Public at Large Rep |
| Brett Montague – Commercial Troll Fisheries Rep | |

ODFW Staff

- | | |
|--|--|
| Marty Olson – R&E/STEP Program Coordinator | Curt Melcher – ODFW Director |
| Sara Hart – R&E/STEP Program Assistant | Scott Patterson – Propagation Program Manager |
| Mike Gauvin – Recreational Fisheries Program Manager | Shaun Clements – Inland Fisheries Program Manager |
| Bryce Hansen – Construction Projects Manager | Brent Hinnert – Hatchery Coordinator, Clackamas Office |

Guests

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Steve Janego – STAC Member | Carl Cole – STAC Member |
| Jessica Eubank – STAC Member | James Fraser – Policy Director, Trout Unlimited |
| Roger Lindquist – STAC Member | |

Call to Order & Introductions

D. Grosjacques called the meeting to order at 8:30am. Would like to push for pride within the R&E program. He would like to make sure there are signs at all our funded projects. We should be very proud of what we have accomplished. Also, teamwork - we have always worked as a team and need to continue to do so. Even if we disagree on things, we can still accomplish a lot. Introductions of the new and returning board members and the ODFW Staff. Brett Montagues first meeting, welcome!

Agenda Approval

Discussion:

D. Grosjacques: Read through the Agenda to review what we will be accomplishing today and the guest speakers for today. During 2pm session – he would like to talk about how to communicate better between RE, STAC, and

STEP. Also, what meeting rules we need to be careful to follow.

M. Olson: Hard copies of the agenda are available at the sign in table.

Motion: F. Cholick motions to approve the agenda. Motion is seconded by K. Brown. Passed unanimously.

September 2023 Meeting Minutes Review and Approval

Discussion:

D. Grosjacques: Minutes from the previous meeting were great.

K. Brown: It took while to figure out why all the engineering plans for Astoria High School were included in the meeting packet, and then the minutes reminded her why. Having thorough minutes are very important. Page 2 - Summary of money spent by the board on the construction manager.

M. Olson: Wanted to share the Astoria plans, they have a stamp now from an engineer. Also, has a presentation about the Construction Manager position and money spent for that later in the meeting.

K. Brown: Page 5 – She did not remember being voted in as Vice Chair, but willing. Minutes say she is off the board in December of 2025, but this should read as 2024 – minutes need amended.

Page 7 – Yancy Lind said he wanted to see match money for pHOS study. Have we done that?

M. Olson: Yancy Lind voted no because he wanted to see match money spent on the project but not that the board was going to be requiring it. That reasoning for his “no” vote was being shown in the minutes.

D. Grosjacques: We do not have to explain why you are voting no on a project, but it is helpful.

M. Olson: It is especially helpful for presenting to the Commission, so they understand why the “no” votes happened.

K. Brown: Wants to highlight that they have discussion about the future meeting this September being held in southern Oregon.

T. VanderPlaat: Page 9, last paragraph – says R. Laws is quoted, but should say “R. Monroe” – minutes need amended.

- **ACTION ITEM:** Sara will amend the previous meeting minutes and get them posted to the website.

Motion: K. Brown motions to accept the minutes with the amendments listed above. Motion seconded by T. VanderPlaat. Passed unanimously.

Board Member Updates

D. Grosjacques:

Lives between the Umpqua and Rogue rivers and fishes both. On the Umpqua he works with ODFW staff closely and they are currently collecting broodstock with the help of local fisherman. Reedsport STEP hatchery only does fall Chinook and had issues with a pipe that got clogged with a dead salamander and killed some eggs. South Umpqua last year they did not collect enough Coho for broodstock, big difference this year where they had a lot of fish. Winchester dam problems: owned by 67 LOs who have property on the river. Last summer’s repairs got extended too far out and the dewatering event killed about 500,000 lamprey. ODFW is now suing the landowners and contractors for \$27mil. Rock Creek Hatchery burned down in fires in 2020. Would like to see a plan for rebuilding, no one has had answers yet. Rogue River area has a new STEP biologist, Monica Magdelana. Cole River Hatchery is having electric and filtration problems. Looking at getting a federal grant to pay for very costly repairs. Winter steelhead run is looking good by high water has made it hard for fisherman to catch fish.

T. Laws:

Just started spring Chinook fishing in lower Columbia River. Commercial fisheries are regulated to safe areas where fish are acclimated in net pens and then accumulate to be caught. Commercial prices for salmon are lower than normal, which has been very hard on commercial fisherman. Has worked with Columbia River area management, John North, who oversees that program out of ODFW Headquarters. Fisherman get their quota at the beginning of season but understands there is nothing ODFW can do about prices.

K. Brown:

Lives on the Columbia and sees the seals swimming in the river all day long. Worries about how that is impacting the salmon and the salmon fishery. Seals are fun to watch but understands what a problem they can be for salmon.

F. Cholick:

The east side is technically in its 24th year of drought status, which is a struggle. There are a few places that seem to have water this year, but a lot of places are being hit hard. The steelhead run was low, and the hatchery had a hard time collecting enough broodstock on Deschutes. Agrees with Yancy (from previous meeting minutes) that there isn't enough focus on trout. Seems to be a lot of revenue from license sales that are spent for trout fishing, therefore we should be focusing on that more. Gathering volunteers has been a struggle. There was an ODFW study to look at stomach contents in planted trout in Crane Prairie reservoir, he is worried that the results from that study will result in less stocking at that location, which is a very popular trout fishery. Loves working with Jen Luke, ODFW STEP biologist out of the Bend office, says she is amazing to work with. It is disappointing that she is the only STEP biologist in all of eastern Oregon. With everything going on in the Klamath river basin, it is the largest dam removal in history, and it is going to be super important to do more studies in that area to see the impact of the removal.

K. Brown: Asks F. Cholick about challenges in getting volunteers? **F. Cholick:** Yes, it's been very hard to recruit people. Has had to call in a lot of favors, but those favors are running out. **K. Brown:** That has been a pattern not just in outdoors areas but in all areas, volunteering is down.

K. Brown: For Klamath basin studies, are we looking to get another STEP biologist? **M. Gauvin:** No. There is no money in the SFR fund for more staff. Already had to delay hiring replacement STEP biologists in some areas to help save money. **T. VanderPlaat:** Mike mentioned a possible fee increase coming on. Should we be pushing for some of that money to go to STEP biologist? **M. Gauvin:** That fee increase is just to cover cost of operating and isn't going to be a surplus of funds. **D. Grosjacques:** Would more money be allocated to R&E? **M. Gauvin:** That is something that the Board needs to ask for. **T. VanderPlaat:** Yes, that is not something the agency can lobby for, that is something this Board will need to be proactive about asking for. **M. Gauvin:** R&E is very important to the agency; it is not out of the question to ask that with a fee increase should come an R&E allocation increase. The conversation is still ongoing, the fee increase isn't a sure thing yet.

B. Montague:

Our commercial fishing season was slated to open for salmon on March 1 and not close until April 2nd. A lot of the fish that are being caught that are from California rivers. States that he is pro-hatchery but also an avid steelhead fisherman and understands the importance of wild fish. Commercial fish has three options for fishing, and they don't know how that is going to pay. Seems to be a dying industry in Oregon which is a shame. Consumers do not care about wild vs farmed as long as the color is right, but the farm salmon meat is colored. He sits in on various California meetings to stay on top of how the fishery is going, but it is not looking hopeful. The outlook for the Klamath basin bounce back after dam removal is very positive though. Fishing closures have been hard to deal with in the past, but fisheries do see a bounce back after those closures, hoping for that this time outcome this time as well. The biggest struggle in the industry is education of the public and their consumers.

T. VanderPlaat: Washington county eggs-to-fry is a big program; he helps a lots of schools with that program. Excited for the hiring of a new north coast STEP biologist, Kyle Wilson. Tagging in the north coast will start soon. **M. Olson:** Comments that the position for a STEP biologist in Clackamas has flown, interviews are happening in April.

S. Chambers: absent

Discussion:

R. Lindquist (STAC member): Would like to talk about a steelhead tagging project in the south coast. The project is to find out how many steelhead are returning to the Rogue and Chetco rivers. They are putting satellite tracking tags on 10 steelhead kelts that will release after about 6 months and send tracking information through satellite so they can find out where steelhead are going in the ocean. **D. Grosjacques:** Who in ODFW oversees that

project? **R. Lindquist:** John Weber and Frank Drake. **B. Montague:** Fish regulate themselves by depth by species, this could be why we don't see them in the ocean fishery very often. **T. VanderPlaat:** S. Janego and I went to the Oregon AFS Conference in Bend earlier this month and had an amazing time. There as a plenary talk on collaboration with multiple agencies and countries on the high seas trolling and looking at different salmonid species in different areas of the ocean, even they did not find very many steelhead. **M. Gauvin:** Steelhead are very surface oriented, which means that trolling nets often miss them, but it also means they are a lot more temperature dependent and ocean conditions can affect them more.

STAC and R&E Together

Presentation by S. Janego – Chair of Salmon and Trout Advisory Committee

T. VanderPlaat: Would like to see a greater recognition for, and more recruitment of volunteers. Those volunteer hours are one of the most valuable recourses for the agency. It is important to understand the cultural changes that are happening and how different generations recognize how they can contribute to their community. Would like R&E and STAC to come together more. ODFW has some of the greatest volunteer opportunities in the state, need to get the word out there.

D. Grosjacques: Agency calculated that recent year's volunteer hours equaled as much as 53 full time jobs.

S. Janego: Went to Oregon AFS conference and found it a very valuable experience. Seeing the younger generation have passion for these topics was really encouraging. The plenary speaker talked about how everyone has their own superpowers - each person on a team has their strengths and using those individual and difference strengths, we can come together and do big things.

STAC has the volunteer powers, the public voices, and the club connections. The mini-grants program is smaller money, but those projects grow into big things for their local communities and have a statewide reach. R&E has major budgets and must show accountability to license fee.

Bringing together R&E Projects with the use of STEP volunteers could help to lower project costs, it gains public involvement, creates a feedback loop, and makes it so we can have even more projects that benefit fish and anglers. This also creates a shared experience that we can learn from and benefit from in the field.

Our volunteers are super valuable, but number of people volunteering has been dropping off in recent years. Ideas for projects can be harvested from these volunteers, STEP biologist, STAC members, and R&E members. Any of those ideas could turn into projects which is great for the volunteer base and that is great from community involvement and positive for fish.

F. Cholick: We need an added bullet point here about how many youths in the communities are benefiting from these volunteer programs (eggs to fry, fishing events, etc.)

S. Janego: We know that volunteer hours are being underreported.

F. Cholick: How do we go about harvesting project ideas from the community? How do we be more proactive? We need to broaden to the public instead of just ODFW and its committees.

S. Janego: We need to boost the volunteer base before we start to gather ideas from more places. Don't boost the marketing before the manufacturing.

M. Gauvin: Are the projects we do now getting stale? Can we make sure our current projects are going well before we start looking for other ideas? How and where do we do outreach? Need to spread the load of our current volunteers and recruit more people.

T. VanderPlaat: Local fishing groups have so many ideas for projects, but ODFW has so many regulations that they feel like they can't do what they want to do.

M. Olson: That is where is important to share the reasoning why our regulations exist.

S. Janego: We need to investigate what projects are relevant and still important to the people. If a local STEP biologist can recruit a team lead or coordinator to lead a larger group and recruit volunteers, that would really help.

T. VanderPlaat: Really need the younger generation to come forward and come up with ideas. What is the best way to interact with those people and learn what they value their time being spent on. Fishing is a complicated activity and can be expensive, it takes effort. Teaching it can also be hard because catching a fish is not always easy.

R. Lindquist: A few years ago, Senator Merkley came to Gold Beach high school and the students specifically asked about Oregon's forests and salmon. This next generation are worried about the planet.

M. Gauvin: There is more non-consumptive angling that is becoming more popular, and we need to recognize that, and we may need to adapt. The agency is trying to create more opportunities for people who don't want to hunt or fish, but still want to see or interact with the wildlife.

S. Janego: Our volunteer base is aging and there is a lack of communication, there are lots of state requirements for volunteers that are a big barrier to some. Also, there is a lack of diversity in our volunteer base (ethnicity, age, gender, etc.) It is time for ideas and actions. STAC and R&E working together is valuable. Getting an R&E person at STAC meetings and vice versa to communicate and keep each other in the loop.

J. Eubank: Has gotten really involved in egg-to-fry and family fishing day's events. Wants to make sure that opportunities like these are not getting overlooked. These are great opportunities for teaching parents and kids about fish and fishing and spreading the joy of fishing and for native fish throughout the state.

D. Grosjacques: Having and spreading that enthusiasm for the resource is very important.

S. Janego: Does not want to take volunteers for granted. Need to learn how to recruit properly and get people involved. If people are wanting to volunteer somewhere, they might go somewhere else if we don't show them our opportunities.

ODFW Update

Curt Melcher, ODFW Director presented.

Curt is retiring as of April 1, 2024. He wanted to come to thank everyone for their time and resources. The department is very appreciative of everything that the R&E Board does. Curt gave us a background on his long career as an ODFW employee, where he started as a temporary field worker. Shares that he has faith that the agency will continue to function in his absence – because of the great team that is still here.

New director recruitment process: ODFW statute says the Commission is responsible for hiring the new Director. 27 applicants are currently being screened. A sub-group of those will go to the Commission for them to score their applications and choose the finalists. Three or so finalists will be publicly announced and go through final interview process with the Commission. Right now, the process is scheduled to be finished by May 10th. There will be an interim director, Davia Palmeri, until the new permanent director is hired. The governor is very interested in who will be the next director and will be involved in the process but does not have a choice over the Commission.

ODFW Budget process: Over the last several years we have really turned around the financial situation of agency. Operating expenses that are very high, and we used to not have a reserve fund month to month, which was a scary way to operate. Through position cuts (mostly in administration), fee increases, and a fundamental change to the way we spend money on a day-to-day basis – we have steadily increased funds so now we have a significant cash reserve. New state level administration always comes with changes to the budget process, the state wants a lot of oversight of ODFW's budgets. We are currently looking at a possible license fee increase, which we should know for sure in the next few weeks.

Challenges in the future: For seeing water issues with drought and heat. Fire impacts have been significant. The large-scale hatchery resilience project has started. There will be money for looking into climate change and future issues, but those have expensive solutions.

D. Grosjacques: What percent of funds that come from federal money? How stable are those federal funds?

C. Melcher: Two components: 1. contract dollars for specific purposes (i.e. hatcheries) those funds are flat so with inflation, that is a struggle. Those funds are also not flexible, meaning they cannot be spent on other programs. 2. Wildlife and sportfish restoration: Those funds are more flexible, come from fees on fishing tackle, etc. These funds depend on the total land mass of the state and on number of license sales. They have slowly been decreasing. People are buying tackle from out of country, where they can avoid the excise tax that comes with US sold products. SFR Fund is largely flat, some up and down.

M. Gauvin: Some US companies have changed how they label their products to make it non-fish tackle to get

around taxes.

C. Melcher: The wildlife side is a lot different – that money comes from gun and ammo tax, changes a lot with the political environment.

T. VanderPlaat: Thank you for your leadership, especially from a fiscal standpoint. ELS system has been a success.

C. Melcher: Talked briefly about the history of the ODFW license system. It is a big change, and some people are resistant, but it has had success as well.

T. VanderPlaat: Three key challenges for the new director moving forward?

C. Melcher: Big picture challenges are 1. water issues - quantity and quality. 2. As the director you must “be the weaver” and put all the pieces together. Listening to the staff, but also be willing to question how things are being done. 3. Have an exit strategy.

T. VanderPlaat: The Commission positions have changed to match the states watershed districts, is that going to be a big change?

C. Melcher: It spreads out the Commissioner’s location to around the state more and gives the east of Oregon three Commission members instead of two. He has a hard time getting the Commission to recognize that they don’t represent a single district, they represent the whole state. This makes it so changes in congressional districts won’t matter.

K. Brown: Thanks, Curt, for his leadership. When Curt was appointed, she remembered him as a seasonal employee. Appreciates time and effort that he has given to the agency. If the SFR Fund dollars are stable, we want an additional STEP biologist in eastern Oregon. Suggestions, on how to make that happen?

C. Melcher: Just keep working at it. Funds are a combination of fee raises and other funds. There are lots of permanent staff on the SFR funds and that puts a lot of pressure on those funds. With that flat fund it is hard to hire permanent staff with those dollars, benefits/retirement/raises/etc. all put a lot of pressure on a flat fund.

T. Laws: Can you speak on future of commercial salmon fishing in Oregon? Do you see continued support of that?

C. Melcher: It is a shadow of what it used to be. There is so much anti-commercial rhetoric out there and more battling for the limited resource supply will continue to happen. The fishery pressure has changed with the amount and type of fisherman putting pressure on it. The Commission is happy with where the commercial sector is right now, don’t see it changing.

B. Montague: What about commercial trolling?

C. Melcher: The troll side is complicated because the different states are catching each other’s fish. Salmon runs in central California valley is not going to improve much in the future. Klamath basin has some hope for future runs.

F. Cholick: What have been your highlights as Director?

C. Melcher: ELS has been a success. Major success is how we have changed the way we view our customers. Especially pertaining to hunters (restoring preference points if you weren’t able to go on a hunt you drew, getting rid of strict deadlines on buying license before the season start).

R. Lindquist: The Commission has a lot of people still working even though they have expired terms and lots of vacant positions. Why is that?

C. Melcher: I technically work for the Commission; I am their one employee. Those expired positions are still allowed to keep working. Commission appointments have to be approved by the governor or senate and can be very controversial, it is hard to get them confirmed. For the last 15 years or so, the governor will package commissioners together to get them all approved together. This seems to make things go smoother.

S. Janego: There are changing generation demographics. If you were able to hire the next director, what would they need to be success?

C. Melcher: They need to have a healthy respect for hunting and fishing and ODFW’s customers. If we didn’t have those things this agency would be 20% of what it is.

B. Montague: Any specific highlights coming out of the R&E program?

C. Melcher: The Willamette falls fishway was a big and important program. On a small scale, but still important is the fish cleaning stations at the ports. The funding of Bryce Hansen’s position as construction manager was also an important and smart move.

J. Eubank (STAC member): There has been a lot of talk recently about volunteers – the older generation, recruiting younger people, getting people excited. Do you have any advice about how to recruit?

C. Melcher: There has been some pushback from volunteers about the process. Some people, even law-abiding, will still refuse a background check. There are important steps to be taken to make sure our volunteers are safe

and have the proper paperwork filled out. That is a barrier.

D. Grosjacques: The biggest change he has noticed with Curt here is ODFW listens to their customers now, they did not always used to be that way.

Budget Update, Emergency Grants, Project Modifications, & Project Progress

- **ACTION ITEM:** Presentation at next meeting to show an understanding of how the voting works and how the internal review system works.

Marty Olson gave a PowerPoint presentation.

Rollover Projects

ODFW Hatchery Bundle – Cycle 4 Nehalem Pond repair. \$35k coming back to R&E.

Fish Facility Bundle 21/23 – Trout Farm, Holiday Pond, 7th St Pond, Empire Lake, and Yellowjacket Lake. Most of these projects are complete, others are just about done. Yellowjacket Lake still has some work to be done. \$60k coming back to R&E.

Fish Facility Bundle 19/21 – Junction City Pond and Metolius. Both projects and done and all funds are spent.

Construction Project Manager 21/23 – Money is being used to help cover 21/23 fish facility bundle costs.

Budget Update

21-23 Projected ending balance (Ending balance, returned funds and carry over) = \$1,447,113

23-25 Projected Revenue (At the start of Cycle 1, what we think we will sell for fishing licenses) = \$4,453,580

Projected Available Funds (add previous 2 numbers) = \$5,990,713

Taking out the carry over projects = \$928,192 leaves Remaining Balance = \$4,972,521

Cycle 1 we awarded (does not include \$500k for reserve) = \$4,107,089

Left remaining balance to award to projects for the rest of biennium = \$865,432

Cycle 2 we awarded = \$353,363

Remaining “reserve balance” in the bank = \$512,069

This is why we didn’t have a Cycle 3 solicitation for projects, because we are nearing the amount we like to keep to have remaining reserve fund.

Actual ending balance from 21-23 = 1,140,418 (\$306,715 less that projected)

23-25 New projected revenue (updated Feb 5, 2024) = \$4,054,609 (\$398,971 less than projected)

New projected available funds (adding two numbers above)= \$5,195,027

Which is a difference from the previous projection of = \$705,686

Reserve funds + remaining funds = \$512,069 – there is no reserve fund, only remaining.

Projected ending balance = **-\$193,617**

February license sales had positive influence, and more were sold more than previously projected. ODFW is watching this closely and will keep the board updated.

D. Grosjacques: The big money meeting was a year ago and we spend most of the money in that Cycle 1 meeting and then also quite a bit at the Cycle 2 meeting. Wants to make it clear that the board is not spending money they didn’t have. They allocated money on a projection that they had, but the projection has changed. This shortfall is not the boards’ fault.

M. Olson: This is not meant to point fingers at who may be at fault. It’s just sharing information.

D. Grosjacques: Should we be more careful about how much money we spend in Cycle 1?

M. Gauvin: That is something to consider. Cycle 1 is when the administrative budget and all the big bundles get approved, which is good and important. Funds are based on projections for money we do not have yet, could still get better depending on spring license sales.

D. Grosjacques: Prior to doing big bundles, the hatcheries would all come with different project proposals, was very time consuming and hard to deal with. Now Scott Patterson comes in and gives one big bundle proposal of all the projects that are needed for that biennium. The board can still change details of the bundle and don’t have to approve the entire thing if there is one or more parts they do not want to fund.

F. Cholick: The bundles seem valuable in Cycle 1 because it gives those projects more time to get done.

R. Lindquist: All the money comes from just angling license fees? **M. Gauvin:** Yes, \$4 just from each license sold, not from tags.

T. VanderPlaat: There is a potential for the projection to be 10% less than expected. Should we change the amount that we keep in our reserve?

D. Grosjacques: Does the applicant know how much money is left in the pot?

M. Olson: Yes, applicants communicate with me. Closed cycle 3 applications.

D. Grosjacques: Can you table projects during Cycle 1 solicitation if we aren't sure we are going to have the budget for it? Maybe push those to Cycle 2 or 3?

M. Olson: Yes, we can, but it gives the projects less time to complete and also would need to give the applicant a reason for tabling.

M. Gauvin: The money is in a dedicated funds for R&E and any money left over will rollover to next biennium, that is in statute. If we don't allocate it, it rolls forward. However, the legislature still constitutes how much money we can spend in a biennium.

R. Lindquist: Why do I have an end date for spending STEP money?

M. Olson: Projects have an end date that they need to spend their money by. Ideally, we do not want to have rollover projects between biennia. The current rollover projects were a very special case because they were not able to be completed due to the pandemic. We don't want to make a habit of it.

T. Laws: How is inflation affecting our funds?

M. Olson: It has affected it a lot. Projects project how much money they will spend but sometimes months later prices have risen and that is not enough to cover expenses of project. It's important that applicates show us a line-item list for their budget, that helps get more in the ballpark for money spent.

B. Montague: There are some commercial licenses that have not been sold and that is affecting this money as well.

S. Janego: Is there an increase in federal dollars? **M. Olson:** No, this is all license and state money.

Return Funds

List of definite money coming back to R&E:

- 21-033 Hatchery Bundle, 23-013 Poison Creek Aerator Project, and 21-003 ODFW Fishing Facility Bundle
 - \$97,277 total

Possible return funds:

- Admin projects = Grant Management System, Emergency Account, STEP Education, STEP Fish Food
 - \$140,000
- Cycle 1 Approvals:
 - Cape Meares Weed Treatment
 - Diamond Lake – had some money come through Good Neighbor authority they can use. Greg Hutchko wants to wait and use GNA funds next biennium, so he does not have to come back to R&E next biennium. Will continue to talk about this, but since funds were already approved, we can't ask for it back. Will continue this conversation with Greg.
 - Totals possible return funds = \$426,227 – doesn't include return funds from open projects. Puts us back in the black, but most of these funds are not a sure thing.

M. Olson suggests not having a Cycle 4 solicitation.

T. VanderPlaat: Is there a procedural requirement for letting the Commission know when we have returned funds? **M. Gauvin:** Not a specific report, it just goes in the annual report.

T. Laws: When do we have to know if we can have a Cycle 4 solicitation for projects? **M. Olson:** Should be soon, within the next couple months.

R&E Project Split

Restoration= 56% Enhancement= 44% Sport= 89% Commercial= 11%

Moving forward we may want to consider that our funds are based on a projection, and we may not have wanted to allocate 50% to the Restoration side during Cycle 1.

Emergency Grants

Gary Vonderohe, STEP Biologist Charleston District Office – present online to talk about his project in need to emergency funds.

S Fork Coquille River Access Project: \$4,000 request

Drift boat river access road, ODOT owned, rutting accrued on the access road from storms this winter. The road is so bad that an anglers' airbags went off on his truck driving slowly over the ruts. An OSP officer was on 2-wheels trying to access the ramp – it is dangerous. Gary is currently working on tracking down contractors. Working with ODOT and Coquille STEP group. Plan to fill in with big base rock and then smaller rock on top for safe driving. They are also planning on putting in rolling water bars to keep water off the road. ODOT says they do not maintain this road but will allow others to maintain it, requires only a little bit of paperwork. It is a popular access point for steelhead fishing this time of year and a summertime access point for small mouth bass fishing.

T. Laws: Do liberation trucks use this site?

G. Vanderhoe: No, that spot is located upstream.

T. VanderPlaat: What is the utilization of this ramp?

G. Vanderhoe: Peak steelhead season we will see 20-25 boats per day.

B. Montague: Did the contractor give any insight on the life of rolling water bars.

G. Vanderhoe: The contractor is confident it will work; he does a lot of restoration work. They assume there will be some maintenance involved the future.

K. Brown: Do you have an idea of water levels in this area? Will they reach the project area?

G. Vanderhoe: At the highest water levels the water won't touch this area and should not affect the construction area.

B. Montague: Is 1in rock on top big enough to not get washed away with the next storm? Is this just going to be a band aid.

G. Vanderhoe: We might be able to go bigger if we need to. We will consult with the contractor for those decisions.

K. Brown: This \$4,000 comes from emergency fund?

M. Olson: Yes, and we have \$93,115 left in the emergency fund.

Motion: T. VanderPlaat motions to approve the emergency grant for the full amount. Motion seconded by F. Cholick. Passed unanimously with members present. (Susan absent/abstained.)

Adjourn for Lunch

Fish Division Update

Shaun Clements, ODFW Fish Division Administrator.

Department is starting to develop a budget for 2025. Starting our public budget meetings in April and the Commission assessment will start in June.

D. Grosjacques: Pertaining to Rock Creek hatchery - where is ODFW on the \$1 million allotment to hatcheries.

S. Clements: Cost to rebuild Rock Creek hatchery is around \$15-16 mil for full rebuild. If water chillers and solar power are needed those are significant cost, upwards of \$26 million. Department is reasonably confident that we will get some money from recent legal battles that are being fought. PacifiCorp fire litigation is one source of funding – legal mediation has started but is still in the works. We don't know how much money we have or when, but it is going to be a while. Currently we are rolling Rock Creeks fish stocks into other hatcheries.

Legislators last session gave ODFW \$1 million to look at vulnerabilities and benefits of hatcheries in Oregon. We have just started working with the outside contractors on economic and cost benefits. It will be looking at viability of certain fish stocks that we are raising, pertaining to long term effects of climate change and brood reliability. Also looking at future needs of hatcheries, angling demand, and conservation impacts. Another contractor is looking at bringing all this information together and then taking that info and looking at each hatchery individually. Will weigh pros and cons of each hatchery. Information should come in around June, public phase of the project will be likely be in August or September. Currently in the process of working on getting those meeting set up. Then we will build a blueprint on how to move forward.

D. Grosjacques: The presentation to the Commission said our hatcheries are old, water is too warm, and

everything is getting more expensive.

S. Clements: It's not just the water getting warm but having enough of it. And thinking about the rising risks from wildfire. We lost one hatchery in 2020 and have almost lost several others. We need to think about a different way to do this business with the threat of fire and low, warm water.

T. VanderPlaat: Any updates on bird and sea lion removals?

S. Clement: Columbia California seal lion removal - Task force is meeting a couple meetings ago. Federal take permits are from back in 2017, we removed about 20 sea lions. It was a successful project; we are seeing very few California sea lions now. Other federal take permits are focusing on stellar sea lion removal. We are starting to get a handle on that population at Bonnaville but is still an issue in the mainstem. Avian predator issue – Cormorants were moved from East Sand Island and began to nest on the Astoria bridge, predation has increased on salmon and steelhead after the move to the bridge. ACOE is not interesting in helping. ODOT is trying to get a handle on what to do about it, the birds are hard on their infrastructure. Need to be mindful of the conversation around those bird species, it is a tricky situation.

T. VanderPlaat: We are advocating for more recourses for the STEP program. The departments tie to volunteers is very important and should be recognized and supported. Talked with Mike Harrington yesterday at STAC meeting and are pushing hard for it.

S. Clements: Agrees that volunteers are very important, and we will keep that in mind.

Hatchery Resiliency Update

Scott Patterson, Fish Propagation Manager.

Scott notes that he agrees that volunteers are super important for the department. Hatcheries use the host system for about 90% of their facilities. 50 facilities and satellite facilities.

Hatchery Resilience Assessment and Development and Recommendation –

R&E funded this work for \$200k last biennium.

Lynker Climate Resiliency Metrics – focus on low flow, water rights, streamflow, flooding, wildfire, fish pathogens, drought, air temperature, precipitation, etc. This study focuses mostly on water temperature and flow.

Most of the hatcheries are funded by federal money, so they need to contribute to this as well.

Fish Pathogens is a more qualitative assessment. There is very little quantitative information. We expect fish disease and mortality to be more problematic. Actions to take: Updating HMS to quantify loss by pathogens, increase expertise in aquatic veterinary medicine (hire another veterinarian), consider a Coldwater resistant strain of rainbow trout (does exist, just not in Oregon yet).

Assessment of Temperatures – The model uses 2016 temperature data to look at changes in 30 years. Listed many state and federal hatcheries in Oregon that have varying temperature increase assessments. Biggest changes will be at Leaburg, Rock Creek, McKenzie and Sandy hatcheries.

We then added projected temperature change and focused on the number of days the temperature doesn't drop below 61 degree. Same hatcheries that are problem today are just going to get worse with time. (Clackamas, Rock Creek, Alsea all over 50 days of above 61 degrees.)

Assessment of Hatchery Flow – Just because stream flow goes down, we are still allowed to take the allotted amount due to water rights agreements.

Climate resilience metrics: lower flows, reservoirs, precipitation, drought. Must verify with watershed flow models, we are looking for places that have more water rights allotted. The assessment calculates the decrease in flow each month and determines available water to the hatchery each month and the water required.

Results – 10-15% drop in flow at most state and federal hatcheries.

New Production Capacity – Calculated monthly water needs using 2022 flow and 2016 temperature to project new water demands after climate change. Assessed water production needs by month, categorizing hatcheries by water deficits and surplus. Produces a table to show output of model (used Alsea as an example, which shows that they will have to up fish production by at least double to account for the loss.) If fish are released early then fewer fish are found to return.

Techniques to Address Reduced Flow – Address old pipelines and valves, use recirculating pump, use liquid oxygen or diffusers, partial recirculation, or RAS.

Techniques to Reduce Heating – Raceway orientation, shade balls, overhead shade structure, chillers (very

expensive).

Most Vulnerable Hatcheries – State hatcheries: Alsea, Bandon, Nehalem. Federal hatcheries: Sandy, Klaskanine, Big Creek, Umatilla.

Hatcheries with Surplus Flows – State hatcheries: Clackamas, Elk River, Fall River, Leaburg, and Oak Springs. Note: there are still challenges with temperature and fish health issues. Federal hatcheries: Bonneville, Oxbow, Lookingglass, Willamette, Marion Forks, Cole Rivers. Note: Still challenges with space and DEQ permit poundage limits.

D. Grosjacques: Can you go over the problems at Cole Rivers hatchery?

S. Patterson: The incubation and early rearing facilities were not well designed and have inadequacies. Filters put in with multiple pumps, but they are not efficient. ACOE is paying someone else to study the issues here. Probably about \$20 million to fix issues.

Needs for Oregon Hatchery Facilities – Umpqua production: Bandon Hatchery needs expanded capacity for local production to free up space at Cole Rivers. Cole Rivers needs added space for expanded capacity. Need to rebuild Rock Creek. Alsea Hatchery: Climate challenges include production capacity and fish pathogens. Need a new hatch house and new rearing containers. Willamette Hatchery: Add temperature control and expand the current RAS system. Raise Coldwater disease resistant rainbow trout. Sandy Hatchery: Climate challenges and fish pathogen issues. Oak Springs Hatchery: Needs water treatment for serial use ponds. Need to convert the adult holding pond into rearing containers. Clackamas Hatchery: Climate change temperature issues. Need to implement hydro chillers and expand the well capacity and explore water exchange for well water. Nehalem Hatchery: Climate challenges with flow and temperature. Need to replace and redesign the raceways for serial use.

R&E Concepts for 25-27 – Nehalem rebuilt. Water change use at Klamath Falls: Would like to raise spring Chinook there for Klamath Basin reintroduction.

T. VanderPlaat: Is there any way to phase the Nehalem project?

S. Patterson: Maybe, but cutting production for that long of a period is difficult. We would need to move fish around for a long time and that is hard to do. You have to tear out all the raceways at once and nowhere for those fish to go.

F. Cholick: How does the \$1 million hatchery resilience allocation fit in to this?

S. Patterson: That money is to check on this work that has already been done.

R&E Construction Project Manager Highlights

Marty Olson, R&E Project Coordinator & Bryce Hansen, Construction Project Manager

Bryce Hansen is in his second biennium funded by R&E. This funding comes along with the administrative bundle.

ODFW Projects: Every ODFW project must go through the engineering review process. Including projects that include, but are not limited to, buildings, construction, renovations, fishing docks, etc. Projects that are funded by ODFW money also get reviewed by ODFW engineering staff.

ODFW has 4 engineers, 1 construction manager, 1 engineering tech (not including Bryce). Currently there are about 70 projects on the list and 11 still unassigned in the que. Any projects with a safety issue get bumped to the front of the line. According to Ryan McKormick with ODFW engineering department it takes around 12-18 months as best-case scenario, before new projects get reviewed. This also accounts for planning, site review, etc. – it all takes a very long time. This is why we came to the board to fund our own construction projects manager position. We bypass the list and go straight into our own review process.

Bryce provides project engineering, design, and review for all R&E projects, bypassing the line for other ODFW projects. He also does project concept and site survey, drafting and design, preliminary engineering design, project bids & contract review, project oversight, and construction.

Other benefits – Bryce is able to work on site at each project to provide contractor oversight and assist directly with construction. He has leveraged R&E funds to secure other grant funds through Travel Oregon and the State Marine Board to help with project implementation. He is also involved with volunteer group engagement and relationship development with the public. He has gotten equipment donations from other agencies and project supplies donated for R&E construction. ODFW now has standardize designs for kiosks and fishing docks because of Bryce's work. He has secured ADA kayak launches that were paid for by the marine board. He got donated gravel and rocks for Junction City Pond (JCP) project. Toledo HS helped build the pier at JCP and the kids got to

fish the pond. He secured an excavator that was donated by the Department of Forestry.

Project highlights:

JCP – Popular fishing pond. Kiosk was old and falling over. Pathways were rough, muddy, and far from the pond. Bryce got involved when the local district staff came to him with their idea to improve the pond. Bryce designed cantilever platforms, ADA platforms, big boulders, and a concrete walkway around the lake. Added benches, hard packed gravel pathway and custom-built fishing rod holders. Results are beautiful and they have already had a lot of positive feedback.

Marr Pond – Located in northeast Oregon, district staff approached and needed help. Benches were old and falling over, there was no ADA access, and no bathroom. Bryce put in cantilever fishing platforms, bathrooms, kiosks, and pathway for ADA access. Facility is maintained by the district staff. They have had tons of positive feedback from local community. This project was done during the pandemic, and it was very hard to find people to work, but he found volunteers and did a lot of the work himself. The ADA safety rails on the platforms are coming soon. Most of the materials for this project were donated.

D. Grosjacques: Before we had Bryce, what did we do?

M. Olson: We waited for the engineering department or we sometimes we bypassed engineering without having plans done.

B. Hansen: Says he is coming up with a design book for future projects that lists all the different things that we can do at a site and then ask applicants what they want at the proposed site. Then it is easy to plug in drawings for his plans. This will save a lot of time instead of having to start was scratch every time.

M. Olson: So many projects would not have been possible without the Construction Manager position. It is a vital position, thank you to the board for allowing this to be funded.

Comparing Roles of R&E, STAC, & STEP

Marty Olson, R&E Coordinator

Compare R&E and STAC/STEP:

R&E: Developed in 1989, funding comes from license sales, grant program exists to increase recreational fishing opportunities and improve commercial salmon fishery, has 3 program staff and 7 board members.

STAC/STEP: Developed in 1981, funding comes from Federal SFR Fund, exists to restore native stocks of salmon and trout and to provide for citizen volunteer participation, has 11 STEP biologist and 9 board members, plus 52,909 hours of volunteer time in 2022-2023.

K. Brown: Who supervises the STEP biologist? **M. Olson:** STEP biologists are supervised by the district staff. **D.**

Grosjacques: This means that they often get pulled off STEP projects to help with other district duties.

R&E Board: 7-member citizen advisory panel that represent commercial salmon and sport fishing sectors, as well as the public at large. They are appointed by ODFW Commission. Board reviews R&E grant proposals and make recommendations to the ODFW Commission. They also engage with the community and stakeholder constituents. Members may serve up to two 4-year terms.

STAC Board: 9-member citizen advisory panel that represents geographic areas. They are appointed by the Governor. The board reviews grant proposals and make recommendations to ODFW. They also engage with the community, volunteer groups and stakeholder constituents. Members may serve two 4-year terms.

Where the money comes from? RE = license sales; STAC = SFR funds

STEP Biologist: Main focuses can vary depend on their geographic locations. Generally, their duties include: Eggs-to-Fry, STEP Hatcheries, Volunteer Engagement, Habitat Rehabilitation, and Family Fishing and Education events.

Where does the money come from?

R&E Program: License sales – fund R&E Grants which go to program staff, services, supplies and board expenses. Also covers the grant management system, emergency grants, publicity, and education, which includes STEP fish food and mini grants.

STEP & STAC: SFR Federal dollars – fund the STEP biologists, personal services, and STAC expenses like travel and meetings.

Public Meeting Rules

Rules: Gathering of less than a quorum is not a meeting – that is 4 members for R&E and 5 members for STAC Social gatherings do not constitute a meeting – i.e. dinners. But members must not deliberate board matters

during social gatherings. Also, need to keep in mind public perception.

Sub-committee or goal setting sessions are subject to public meeting laws. Is this true? Those groups are just coming with ideas to bring back to the bigger group, so that decisions are made at a proper public meeting.

Conflicts of Interest: Potential conflicts need to be announced to the group, but members are still allowed to participate. Actual conflicts also much be announced and then may result in recusing yourself from decision making.

S. Hart: Will announce when members of the public have joined the virtual meeting so that board members know when members of the public are listening.

- **ACTION ITEM:** Are sub-committees subject to public meeting law? Need to look into this.

Administration Discussion

Next meeting planning:

M. Olson: Board has recently been to Tillamook, Newport, and Salem. Meetings cost about \$5,000 per meeting, there is always an option to have a virtual meeting to save money.

T. VanderPlaat: It is possible that there will not be grant proposals in Cycle 4. Would like to schedule a place and time, but if we do not have funds to approve, a virtual meeting would be our best bet.

D. Grosjacques: Would like to invite local legislators to a meeting in Roseburg. This Roseburg or Central Point should be considered.

M. Olson: Reminder, this next meeting will be K. Brown's last meeting.

K. Brown: Is alright with either of those locations, Roseburg or Central Point we can possibly meet at the ODFW offices in either city.

F. Cholick: Agrees with T. VanderPlaat that if we do not have business that required meeting in person, then we should consider meeting online instead.

S. Hart: When do we need to decide if we are having a cycle 4?

M. Olson: Soon. Those grants will be due by the start of July.

- **ACTION ITEM:** When we figure out *if* we are having a Cycle 4 project solicitation or not, get a final decision on where we are meeting or if we will have a virtual meeting.

Date for next meeting set for *September 19th & 20th*.

Potential agenda items for next meeting:

A budget discussion about expectations for future Cycle 1 meetings. Before we walk into next Cycle 1 meeting we need more of an understanding and overview of the process of reviewing grants and how the bundles work.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:30PM.