



Snake River Salmon Recovery Board  
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## Snake River Salmon Recovery Board

### Meeting Minutes - May 15, 2003

Co-Chairman, Jay Holzmilller and Eric Myers, called the Snake River Salmon Recovery Partners Meeting, held in Walla Walla at the Marcus Whitman, to order at 1:30 p.m.

#### **Welcome and Introductions:**

Jay and Eric welcomed and thanked everyone for coming to the Partners meeting. Everyone introduced him or herself and gave their affiliation.

#### **Organizational Structure:**

There are several planning processes underway in the Snake River Region. Snake River Salmon Recovery Planning involves all six subbasins and in the 3 watersheds. Northwest Power Planning Council Subbasin Planning is taking place in Asotin, Snake, Tucannon and Walla Walla subbasins. There is Watershed Planning in Watershed Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) #32 and WRIA #35. Walla Walla Watershed is involved in the Bi-State HCP Effort. The Walla Walla basin in Washington and Oregon is involved in a USACOE GI study to identify strategies to increase stream flow and CIDMP for irrigation efficiency.

The Snake River Salmon Recovery Board applied for a grant in the spring of 2002. They are having landowners help write the plan for salmon recovery. Landowners in each of the five counties volunteered to be on the board and the County Commissioners chose three representatives. The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and the Nez Perce Tribe have three representatives each. The representatives from the counties and the tribes make up a 21 voting member board.

“The primary role of the Recovery Board is to develop a Snake River Salmon Recovery Plan and then coordinate project implementation, funding requests and policy recommendations consistent with the adopted recovery plan. ...the regional salmon recovery plan will be endorsed by the federal fisheries agencies and understood and committed to by our communities ...the Snake River Salmon Recovery Board shall strive to be the entity in southeastern Washington recognized by regulatory and funding agencies.”

The challenges for the region are:

1. ESU's, Recovery Units and WRIA's do not align with subbasin and local jurisdictional boundaries.
2. Coordinating myriad, watershed-specific planning efforts and rolling them together at the regional level by the recovery board into a salmon recovery plan.
3. Integrating Oregon into the regional recovery plan

The regions strengths are:

1. Strong grassroots support provided through well-coordinated Conservation Districts and local agency staff in each watershed.
2. Foundation for regional planning is well established through previous Model Watershed Planning effort, funded through the Northwest Power Planning Council.
3. A considerable amount of existing biological information is available for parts of the region through the Lower Snake River Compensation Plan evaluations project.
4. Trust and credibility has been established among stakeholders and local technical agency representatives.

### **Natural Resource Management Approach:**

Dave Mastin of the Bi-State Habitat Conservation Planning Committee talked about the Natural Resource Management Approach in the Snake River region. All of the planning processes have similar components. Each process will develop a plan, so subbasin, regional recovery and watershed plans will be used together. Once the plans are finished there will be implementation of projects specified in the plan as useful and beneficial. The objective for recovery planning is to achieve sustainable salmon populations in the Snake River Region.

### **Open Discussion:**

A representative from each agency was asked to speak about their expectations for recovery planning.

Steve Meyer from the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office felt that the state is relying on the regions to be successful in salmon recovery and that local support is essential for recovery plans. The federal and state government, recovery boards and landowners have to work together.

Bill Ruckelshaus from the Salmon Recovery Funding Board stated that federal law required states to spend money to restore salmon populations. Funding has gone into actual on the ground projects. Bill is on the Puget Sound Recovery Board and they have found that to make this process work everyone has to be on the same team with the same objectives for the process.

Larry Cassidy from the Northwest Power and Conservation Council understands the recovery board has a tough job ahead of them but what they have already accomplished has never been done before. He is impressed with the job the recovery board has already done and is confident that they can be successful.

Elizabeth Garr is from the recovery division of NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration). The two most important parts for salmon recovery is understanding fish and involving the human element in the planning process. The plans will be based on local efforts and so local involvement is essential. NOAA is required to have a plan for salmon recovery, but they are not responsible for the implementation of the plan.

Susan Martin from United States Fish and Wildlife talked about Bull Trout being a listed species. They are required to have proposed critical area habitat draft recovery plan for

Bull Trout. The efforts to improve habitat that have already been made for salmon will also benefit Bull Trout.

Tom Fitzsimmons from the Washington State Department of Ecology (DOE) talked about everyone having difficulties with the number of planning processes underway. It is hard to make sense of everything and it will be important to get staff into the communities and work with all interest groups. The DOE is required to review water from a quality standpoint as well as for fish.

Edward Kertis from the United States Army Corps of Engineers talked about the improvements that have been made to the dams and offered to have a recovery board meeting at one of their facilities. They are pleased with the progress the recovery board has made.

Valoria Loveland from the Washington Department of Agriculture talked about the opportunity they have to help with salmon recovery through the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). We all need to work together to fund on the ground projects as efficiently as possible.

Larry Peck from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) was happy about the willingness landowners have know to work with WDFW when they had not in the past. They are working on establishing landowner trust. The partnerships between landowners and agencies will be very beneficial to the planning processes.

### **Closing Comments:**

Jay and Eric thanked everyone for coming to the Snake River Salmon Recovery Partners Meeting. The board appreciates all of the support they have received from the agencies and look forward to working together in the future.

There being no further business, the regular meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m. by Steve Martin.

### **UPCOMING MEETINGS:**

**June 19, 2003**

**7:00 p.m.**

**Star Restaurant in Dayton**

**Salmon Recovery Office in Dayton**