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The William D. Ruckelshaus Center is a neutral resource for collaborative problem solving in the State of Washington and the Pacific Northwest, dedicated to assisting public, private, tribal, non-profit, and other community leaders in their efforts to build consensus and resolve conflicts around difficult public policy issues. It is a joint effort of Washington State University, hosted and administered by WSU Extension, and the University of Washington, hosted by the Daniel J. Evans School of Public Policy and Governance.

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WILLIAM D. RUCKELSHAUS CENTER 901 Fifth Avenue, Suite 2900 Seattle, WA 98164-2040 -and Hulbert Hall, Room 121 Pullman, WA 99164-6248

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7	The Ruckelshaus Center Evaluation Team is deeply grateful to the many individuals who gave their time and energy to be interviewed, and to otherwise inform this report.
Rι	Molly Stenovec, Project & Program Manager
	Chris Page, Senior Facilitator for Projects & Strategic Initiatives Phyllis Shulman, Senior Facilitator Maggie Counihan, Project Coordinator
	Amanda Murphy, Senior Facilitator for Projects & Programs

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since 1999, the Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board has coordinated and facilitated the regional structure and organizational processes to support a community-led, collective approach to salmon recovery. The regional structure and organizational processes include, but are not limited to: partnerships on forest and aquatic habitat restoration projects, the implementation organizational chart documented in Section 8 of the <u>Upper Columbia Spring</u> <u>Chinook Salmon & Steelhead Recovery Plan</u>, and project funders.

After more than two decades of salmon recovery, the time has come to evaluate and reflect on the original, still-extant regional structure and processes. The purpose of this evaluation was to gather perspectives about areas working well and opportunities for improving that structure and those processes. From October 2020 through February 2021, an Evaluation Team with the William D. Ruckelshaus Center (the Center) conducted individual interviews and gathered input at regional meetings. The following report provides a summary of common themes without attribution to the speaker or their perspective, which allowed interviewees to speak openly and candidly.

Interviewees repeatedly affirmed their commitment to the work of salmon recovery and the collective effort to restore aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems. Many interviewees described how the regional structure has cultivated trust – especially among tribes and counties – and established social capital among the community, particularly with landowners.

Many interviewees mentioned personal beliefs and values that bring them to the work. Others explained that participating in the regional structure is not only essential to fulfilling their organization/agency mission, but also to make progress most effectively and efficiently on salmon recovery.

While interviewees expressed frustrations with some elements and identified opportunities for tweaks, adjustments, and/or reinvigoration, the Ruckelshaus Center Evaluation Team did not hear interviewees describe the system as broken. After more than a decade, people and organizations and agencies are still committed to the collective effort and regional approach to salmon recovery. That speaks to the soundness and durability of the original regional structure and set of organizational processes—and continued urgency of the work.

Next Steps

The Center operates impartially and supports entities and communities collaboratively tackling complicated issues. As such, the recommendations within the final report are guided by the Evaluation Team's expertise in managing collaborative efforts, but ultimately reflect the calls to action echoed by interviewees: in a nutshell, continue the community led approach and take the work to the next level. It is now incumbent on UCSRB and key entities to reflect on perspectives shared by interviewees and determine how to move forward.

INTRODUCTION

For more than two decades, Washington has pursued a unique and community-led approach to salmon recovery. The Washington State Legislature formalized this approach in 1999 with the creation of regional and statewide salmon recovery funding boards to coordinate implementation. The Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board (UCSRB) is one of seven regional boards and supports the region's community-led approach with work coordinated by two tribes and three counties.

The *Upper Columbia Spring Chinook Salmon & Steelhead Recovery Plan (Recovery Plan)*, adopted by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in 2007, formally documents goals and processes for a voluntary, locally led, and collaborative approach to salmon recovery and watershed restoration. Section Eight of the *Recovery Plan* provides a framework for how the various governmental entities, agencies, and organizations engage in the regional implementation structure and organizational processes. The scope of this evaluation used the original, still-extant regional structure and organizational processes documented in the *Recovery Plan*, but also included project sponsors, funders, state and regional entities with management or decision-making authorities, and other efforts facilitated by the UCSRB (i.e. the North Central Forest Health Collaborative). That broad collection of entities, committees, and teams will be referenced throughout this report as the regional structure and organizational processes supporting a community led approach to salmon recovery, which includes watershed and forest health restoration.

The Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board (UCSRB) recognizes that the region has built a rich legacy of salmon recovery projects. The Board also recognizes that the challenges ahead may not reflect the challenges present when the collaborative effort began. These include (but are not limited to) changes in population growth, demographic shifts, fluctuations in capacity among agencies and partners to participate, the effects of changing climate and ocean conditions on spring Chinook salmon and steelhead, and emerging watershed and forest health restoration priorities. Public perceptions of salmon recovery have also evolved. The UCSRB staff recognizes that an evaluation presents an opportunity for reflection and learning: how systems and teams may have evolved over time, what processes continue to work well, and what areas are ripe for change.

Evaluation Purpose

For these reasons, the UCSRB and Bonneville Environmental Foundation (BEF) asked the William D. Ruckelshaus Center (the Center)² to conduct an evaluation of the regional structure

¹ The *Upper Columbia Spring Chinook Salmon and Steelhead Recovery Plan* is available at: https://www.ucsrb.org/science-resources/reports-plans/recovery-plan/

² The Center is a joint effort of WSU and UW with the mission to help parties involved in complex public policy challenges in Washington state and the Pacific Northwest develop collaborative, durable, and effective solutions.

and organizational processes for salmon recovery and watershed restoration within the Upper Columbia Basin. The purpose was to better understand which aspects of the regional structure and organizational processes still work well, which are not working well, and what changes can support collaboration and increase participation in salmon recovery efforts going forward. While some interviewees talked about how the structure and processes support (or hinder) execution of on-the-ground projects, this effort was not designed to evaluate progress towards salmon recovery or watershed restoration.

The Center's Evaluation Team worked with UCSRB and BEF to develop a set of interview questions that would generate feedback in line with the overall purpose. Interview questions covered general areas of:

- Regional Structure and Organizational Processes
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Decision-Making
- Communication
- Motivation and Commitment
- Changing Conditions

See Appendix A to review all questions and materials provided to interviewees.

As the Center's Evaluation Team reviewed and analyzed interviewee responses, themes began to emerge across questions in terms of suggested modifications. For example, much of what the Evaluation Team heard in response to questions on motivation and commitment related to capacity: the resources and time to do the work, or the need for more capacity to develop and fund more complex projects. Responses connected across questions in different categories, such as decision-making and roles/responsibilities. Other common themes, such as leadership, emerged during responses to multiple questions. Things some perceived as working well were described as challenges by others. The list of themes in the table of contents (and body of this report) reflect the sequence of the interview questions. Sub-sections will appear multiple times so readers may see the multiple ways in which themes emerged across questions.

The narrative of common themes summarizes what the Evaluation Team heard, and the many and interconnected findings of what interviewees perceive as working well and suggestions for modifying or improving the regional structure and organizational processes. Generally, interviewees shared that the regional structure and processes work well and that individuals and organizations, after more than two decades, remain committed to the community-led, collective effort of restoring salmon habitat. Interviewees expressed frustrations with elements of the current structure (and/or personalities)—and they also identified ways that the region can adjust and adopt processes to take on the next generation of work.

Overview of Recommendations and Key Actions

The Ruckelshaus Center assists public, private, tribal, nonprofit, and other leaders to collaboratively address complicated challenges and develop innovative, shared solutions. The Center does not develop solutions. As such, the recommendations within this report are guided by the Evaluation Team's expertise in managing collaborative efforts, but ultimately reflect the calls to action voiced by interviewees: continue the community-led approach and take the work to the next level. Some recommendations suggest tweaks or modifications; others identify opportunities to tend and/or refresh processes. Some are relatively detailed, others broad or more general. Each recommendation includes key actions, which offer more details and/or suggestions of ways in which a recommendation could be developed into tangible action.

As mentioned, it now falls to those working to restore salmon in the Upper Columbia to reflect on perspectives shared by interviewees and determine how to move forward.

EVALUATION PROCESS

Interviews

The Evaluation Team conducted qualitative, semi-structured individual interviews and posed related questions at regional meetings between October 2020 and February 2021. The common themes and recommendations of this report reflect what the Evaluation Team heard during conversations with the 58 individuals who participated.

To identify whom to interview, the Evaluation Team used membership lists provided by the Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board (UCSRB) and a referral process to identify additional interviewees in which each interviewee was asked to identify other individuals they thought would be important to interview.

The Evaluation Team used its best judgement to speak with individuals using the following criteria:

- Involved in, or knowledgeable of, the regional structure and organizational processes for salmon recovery and watershed and forest restoration within the Upper Columbia basin
- Dispersed geographically and throughout the regional structure
- Representative of varied tenure
- Possessing organizational and/or subject matter expertise and leadership
- The overall number of interviews fit within project time and resource constraints

The interviewee list is representative, not exhaustive (see Appendix B for a list of everyone who participated in an individual and/or regional meeting interview).

The Evaluation Team developed a set of interview questions and protocols based on university research principles and best practices in the fields of collaborative decision-making, organizational assessment, and program evaluation. The Team designed the questions with a positive inquiry lens, where interviewees are asked to focus on things working well and make suggestions for changes, with the latter intended to elicit concerns and challenges organically. Each individual interview consisted of the same basic set of open-ended interview questions (see Appendix A), which the Team modified for regional meetings (see Appendix C – Implementation Team, Appendix D – Regional Technical Team, Appendix E – Directors).

Individuals received email and/or phone invitations to participate in a video or telephone interview and could read the questions and some background information beforehand. All interviewees understood that the report would present aggregated information, with no statement attributed to any individual or perspective. Interviewees also could opt out of having their name and affiliation included in the appendix.

Data Analysis and Synthesis

The evaluation process was qualitative, with the analysis and synthesis identifying common themes, things seen as working well, and suggested changes/modifications from interviews. At the conclusion of each interview, team members entered notes (without attribution to the speaker) into a single spreadsheet to enable the analysis of all interviews.

Each member of the Evaluation Team analyzed the interview notes separately and then the four-person team together discussed findings, observations, themes, recommendations and key actions, and successive drafts of this report. The information and recommendations presented in this report reflect interview responses, exploration of and experience with similar collaborative and collective impact efforts, and the Evaluation Team's expertise in collaborative governance and organizational systems and structures.

COMMON THEMES – WHAT WAS HEARD

The following section presents a summary of common themes that emerged during interviews, including elements perceived by interviewees to work well and their suggested changes or modifications. No specific statements or quotations will be attributed to interviewees; however, the list of individuals who shared their perspectives and informed this report can be found in Appendix B.

Interviewee Perspectives: Regional Structure and Organizational Processes

This effort evaluated the regional structures and organizational processes for salmon recovery and watershed and forest restoration in the Upper Columbia Basin (See Appendix A – Materials for Interviewees, Evaluation Questions for a diagram of the implementation plan structure). Specifically, the Evaluation Team asked the following questions:

- What do you see as the strengths, things working well to support collaboration and coordination of resources?
- What improvements or changes do you recommend?

As interviewees pointed out, this regional structure exists within much larger structures (Federal, State, Columbia Basin) and in proximity to other relevant structures at various scales (state and local land-use planning/management processes). Additional themes that emerged from the interviews include overall perceptions of the structure and processes supporting a community-led approach or the "Washington Way," relationships and trust, funding, and capacity.

Regional/National Context

Many interviewees described how external or uncontrollable factors influence salmon recovery in the region. Participants clearly recognize the affects these outside influences have on the recovery work occurring through UCSRB.

These external pressures mentioned by interviewees include:

- State and federal policies and leadership
- Climate change
- Harvest, hatcheries, and hydro (the other Hs)
- Human and social influences
- Conditions in other parts of a salmon lifecycle (e.g. invasive species, ocean conditions, and passage).
- Decisions and activities outside the geographic area of the Upper Columbia Basin, and/or beyond the current scope of the UCSRB.

Interviewee Perceptions of Strengths, Things Working Well:

Regional Structure & Organizational Processes

Nearly all interviewees expressed some degree of support for the overall regional structure and organizational processes, with the caveat that no set of systems or policies is perfect. Many attributed the progress – both in building relationships and restoring salmon habitat – to this locally led, regionally coordinated approach (often described as the "Washington Way") rather than a top-down regulatory approach.

While some interviewees described the overall structure and processes as complex, many also described components of the structure (such as funding processes) as straightforward. Some suggested areas where complexity may contribute to inefficiencies, especially with respect to the quantity of meetings. Others described the regional structure as initially appearing confusing or unclear; however, as they became more immersed or changed roles, they gained understanding and appreciation for the overall design.

Additional perspectives from interviews include:

- The many organizations and individuals participating in the regional structure are committed to salmon recovery and watershed health in the duration of the effort.
- UCSRB has built a well-regarded legacy, in part because of dedication and expertise of staff.
- Widespread desire for getting the best projects moving on the ground, especially those with multiple benefits
- Support for transparent processes and shared stewardship
- Acknowledging the need to address salmon recovery at a regional scale, while soliciting and integrating local knowledge
- Importance of maintaining the voluntary approach to salmon recovery

Relationships and Trust

Although the project team did not ask specific questions about relationships or trust, both arose regularly during interviews. Many acknowledged the value of the trust and relationship building that the regional structure has enabled, especially among tribes and counties. Others noted that building and tending relationships and cultivating local support of habitat projects will continue to be essential components of successful salmon recovery.

A few expressed concerns over the pandemic-induced loss of opportunities to build and tend relationships in person (although always a challenge due to the size and geography of the Upper Columbia) through gatherings, field trips, and informal conversations. However, individuals also acknowledged that virtual meetings have lessened or eliminated travel times (and costs) and thus made meeting participation more accessible.

Many interviewees described ways in which people or entities come with their own agendas but genuinely want to work with others and better understand their perspectives. Many also

described the strains on trust and relationship, in part, due to competition for project development (and funding).

Funding

The Evaluation Team also did not ask specific questions about funding; however, it emerged as a recurring theme throughout all the interview responses—in terms of what is working well and opportunities for change. Interviewees described how issues related to the need for funding, and processes for pursuing and allocating it, are interwoven throughout the regional structure and organizational processes. Participants also shared an appreciation of the overall supply of project funding (more on funding comes up throughout responses to nearly all questions).

Interviewee Perspectives: Challenges & Suggestions for Change or Improvement:

Eco-System Approach, Policy Integration

Many interviewees talked about the need for more integration and coordination—both considering local projects in light of regional impact and priorities and taking a systems approach to policies and initiatives on connected topics. Frequently, interviewees called for the parties in the region to collectively take on more complicated projects (which could run multiple years) and/or involve many project sponsors and funders. Many interviewees pointed to the need for increased coordination among habitat, harvest, hydro, and hatchery (All H) strategies and priorities. Some noted that a more integrated approach and strategy could help those in the region more efficiently coordinate finite resources, while also taking on more complex projects.

Throughout these conversations, many participants pointed to the biological prioritization efforts, led by the Regional Technical Team (RTT) to help guide the development of projects by sponsors, as a critical tool.³ However, some posed questions about how the region could best sequence projects and leverage other opportunities (such as transportation projects) that could contribute to improved salmon habitat and recovery in the region.

Interviewees also mentioned potential benefits from conducting reach assessments (to provide localized data to better guide project development) and expressed support for increased research and monitoring to inform future projects.

With respect to federal policies and leadership, interviewees mentioned a scarcity of alignment (or opportunity) for cross pollination among policies and strategic plans. For example, interviewees noted that the United States Forest Service (USFS) and Washington State Department of Natural Resources (WA DNR) each have their own strategic forest management plans.

Collectively, interviewees identified these additional regional, large scale efforts and/or partners for potential synergy and alignment: Columbia Basin Partnership Task Force, efforts to

³ Available at: https://www.ucsrb.org/science-resources/prioritization/

address invasive species, recreation and conservation initiatives, transportation, and University of Washington Climate Impacts Group.

Funding

Some of the challenges related to funding include maintaining funder commitment to a project that may require multiple rounds of grant proposals and a perception of bias towards larger projects or certain locations (again, more responses on funding emerge through additional responses).

Capacity

Most interviewees feel stretched thin, and juggle multiple responsibilities in addition to salmon recovery and/or play several different roles related to the work. In addition to the limits faced by nonprofits, citizens/landowners, and community organizations, multiple state and federal agencies have insufficient funding or staffing levels to participate meaningfully in Upper Columbia salmon recovery. An often-shared example: the USFS manages significant acreage where habitat restoration could benefit salmon but cannot participate at the level needed to enable projects to advance.

Interviewees also highlighted disparities in capacity, specifically:

- Some organizations have multiple individuals who work full time on salmon recovery while others do not, so the level of capacity to develop projects and pursue funding varies widely.
- With most if not all of the "low-hanging fruit" projects complete, tackling bigger and more complicated (and expensive) projects will require still more capacity or conversations about ways organizations can work differently together to balance each other's strengths and capacity limitations.
- The RTT gets asked to take on more tasks (or could potentially add value in more places) than it realistically has the capacity to execute.

Interviewee suggestions and ideas to address the challenges include:

- Have UCSRB provide funding to local organizations to participate in meetings and/or the regional process, especially in the Watershed Action Teams
- Access to dedicated resources to support project sponsors in cultivating/developing projects
- NOAA could reinstate a dedicated salmon recovery coordinator for the region.

Interviewee Perspectives: Roles and Responsibilities

The Evaluation Team asked the following questions:

- Are roles and responsibilities among entities clearly defined and/or distributed appropriately and effectively? What's working well?
- What improvements or changes do you recommend?

Responses to questions about the roles and responsibilities depended on how an individual or organization is engaged and their degree of involvement in the regional structure. While interviewees had generally positive impressions of roles and responsibilities in the regional structure and organizational processes, many identified areas of confusion and opportunities to increase clarity.

Interviewee Perspectives: What's Working Well

Interviewees described the elements of the regional structure and/or organizational processes they know well in detail. Some expressed uncertainty or diverging perceptions of roles with which they were less familiar.

Roles

- That the work previously conducted by the IT was crucial, and that the IT has incredible potential moving forward.
- Project sponsors play an important role developing and proposing projects that both advance salmon recovery and have community buy-in.
- Many described information sharing to coordinate projects among folks from different organizations on the same WAT as working reasonably well, especially in the Methow.
- Interviewees often described the role of the RTT as working well in reviewing and ranking projects and in developing the biological prioritization for the region.
- Interviewees frequently shared an appreciation for the dialog and mutual understanding enabled by the North Central Forest Health Collaborative.

Organizational Processes

- Participants described the regional processes as generally transparent, though some had uncertainty about the openness of certain meetings or the availability of meeting summaries.
- Participants have high respect for the Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board (UCSRB), especially the staff—although some felt a bit disconnected from them.

Interviewee Suggestions for Improvement or Change

Interviewees described challenges and identified potential changes to clarify roles, responsibilities, and relationships among individuals and entities engaged in the regional structure.

Roles

- Many entities and individuals are engaged in the regional process in multiple ways, e.g., project sponsor AND funding reviewer, or convener AND project partner. Interviewees observed that this wearing of multiple hats can cause confusion about which role an entity or individual may be playing at any given time, which can erode trust.
- Some raised questions about the most effective role for the UCSRB: process coordinator, advocate for local effort at state/federal level, or some combination?

Responsibilities

- Some interviewees expressed confusion about some elements, such as who/what
 entity holds authority or responsibility for specific actions at the policy level and how
 those policies might transfer to the watershed scale. They emphasized the need to
 clarify existing roles and responsibilities prior to making any changes
- Others observed that since individuals may need to understand or make decisions based on detailed technical information, it is vital to make information accessible.
- Interviewees suggested a need to retain and convey institutional memory; a few specifically mentioned turnover in agency personnel and UCSRB Directors (specifically county seats) and the importance of creating and enhancing onboarding processes so individuals can quickly build their capacity to engage and make decisions on technical information.
- Various interviewees mentioned the composition of membership on the RTT (such as
 concentration of fields of expertise, geographic areas of focus) and a lack of capacity
 (not enough available time for the quantity of work). Specific suggestions included the
 addition of social science expertise to the RTT, establishment of term limits for the RTT,
 and/or limitations to the number of proposals reviewed.

Relationships

- With respect to the Citizens' Advisory Committees (CACs), some expressed frustration when CAC project priorities differ from the RTT; however, others felt that the CAC does a good job of bringing in the 'human/social' side of projects.
- The RTT could have a stronger relationship to the UCSRB according to some interviewees.
- Some expressed frustration at the lack of clarity on how the USFS will utilize recommendations developed by the North Central Forest Health Collaborative.

Implementation Team

As noted, many interviewees stated that the IT has leadership potential. Current challenges include inconsistent attendance and a lack of clarity about the IT's role and responsibilities, including decision-making/advisory functions.

Interviewee suggestions for change or improvement for the IT included:

- Identify and strategize ways to address common barriers to implementing projects or other issues raised among WATs, e.g., use the IT as a place for regional conversations to address policy challenges.
- Clarify roles of participating entities.
- Update membership regularly and require each participating entity designate a point person to participate.
- Clarify decision making processes, including whether the IT makes decisions; and
- Updating operating procedures.

Interviewee Perspectives: Decision-Making

Questions on decision-making included:

- How well are decision-making processes working? What do you see as strengths?
- What improvements or changes would you make?

Interviewee Perspectives: Strengths of Decision-Making Processes:

Many noted that decision-making occurs across many entities and organizations in a variety of ways, with various authorities and degrees of power, and at various geographic scales. As a result, interviewees expressed a wide range of views about decision-making, varying according to the areas of the regional structure in which the interviewee engaged. Frequently shared strengths include:

- The UCSRB has a good process and track record of making decisions via a clear consensus process.
- Many participants described decision-making throughout the SRF Board process, including the RTT and CAC processes of ranking projects as clear.
- Even though consensus processes can feel slow, or the areas of agreement can feel broad, collaboration and tending to consensus-decision-making are crucial for identifying durable solutions.
- The North Central Forest Health Collaborative has a clear process for making decisions (many described the meanings of the green, yellow, and red cards) and provides an important forum for participants to articulate areas of support—although some expressed frustration or lack of clarity on how the U.S. Forest Service utilizes those recommendations.
- Many described benefits of the individualized, competitive decision-making processes.
 While this process can create tensions among project sponsors (see challenges section below), many also acknowledged that this pressure helps identify the projects with the most benefit for salmon and support from local communities.

Interviewee Perspectives: Challenges and Suggestions for Addressing Them

Common themes include lack of clarity about what entities have decision-making responsibilities, opportunities to increase regional decision-making, and processes and protocols related to funding decisions.

Decision-Making Responsibilities

Some interviewees expressed uncertainties about which bodies act in an advisory role and which make decisions and (for those that do make decisions) the kind of decision-making process used (consensus, opportunities to express gradations of support and problem-solve, unanimous voting, etc.). Some specifically noted that sometimes the IT or WATs are asked to make decisions and feel that either those bodies are not designed to make decisions or that the "right" people are not present. To address this, it would help to determine and make explicit whether any/all bodies have decision-making roles and, if so, clearly documented decision-making processes.

Regional Decision-Making

Interviewees also called for policymakers on the UCSRB and participating agencies to provide leadership for regional decision-making in general, and specifically about how project sponsors could address project risk and liabilities. Others called for forums, at least to exchange information and coordinate, on issues of regional interest such as invasive species or all H's.

Funding Decision Processes and Protocols

Some interviewees expressed frustration when an individual or entity blocks a project and decried the nonexistent (or unclear) process for problem-solving. Many specifically mentioned the Tributary Committees, where projects seen by many as important and worthwhile do not get funded due to objections by one member. To address this perceived shortcoming, participants suggested the Tributary Committees allow project sponsors to revise proposals after targeted feedback that allows them to address reasons why Committee members did not support funding the project(s).

Some interviewees questioned the decision-making relationships and roles between the RTT and CACs. Their specific suggestions for changes or improvements included:

- Based on the importance of using science and data to guide decision-making, the CAC should either have a smaller or no role in finalizing the determination of which projects get funded.
- More opportunities for communication and coordination between both CACs, and among the CACs and the RTT.
- Modify the "zipper" approach to allocating funding/projects to each county, e.g., by balancing allocation over a longer timeframe than annually.
- Changing the composition of the RTT via term limits, which could provide new perspectives on which projects align with scientific priorities.

Interviewee Perspectives: Communication

Questions regarding communication include:

- How does communication happen among regional partners? What's working well?
- What improvements or changes would you make?
- How would you describe the mechanisms to resolve differing perspectives? What is working well?
- What suggestions do you have for improvements?

Interviewee Perspectives: Working well

Generally, interviewees view so-called "vertical" channels of communication positively, with information flowing smoothly "up and down" (to and from decision makers, elected officials, funders, etc.). Additional examples of communications that work well included:

- Communication for habitat work
- Communication about the SRFB process.

• Presentation of information by UCSRB staff directly at WATs (rather than presenting to the IT and relying on IT attendees to relay information to their respective WATs)

Interviewee Perspectives: Challenges and Suggestions for Improvement

Interviewees identified challenges with communication laterally across teams and committees, basins, and the four Hs.

Their specific issues and suggestions include:

- Sometimes teams operate without information from other group(s) that could help. For example, information about decisions made by a group often stay within that group, when other groups would benefit from knowing about them (e.g., harvest group has information and makes decisions that could help the hatchery group, etc.). Participants suggested establishing protocols encouraging (or requiring) information sharing across teams, committees, the Hs, and entities (as appropriate).
- At times, communication gets redundant. Individuals can get the same presentation at their WAT, the IT, and RTT—maybe even more times if they attend multiple WATs. To address this, while some suggested featuring presentations at the most broadly attended gatherings then making them available to other groups, others said to err on the side of repetition to make sure information reaches those it could benefit.
- Some intentional withholding of information occurs, in part because of competitive nature of project development/funding and/or lack of trust.
- Organizations and individuals can improve communication across hatcheries, hydro, harvest, and habitat.
- Multiple interviewees suggested engaging more with the public. As noted elsewhere, suggestions included seeking funding for community outreach, resuming coffee klatches, and more.
- Those with a non-technical background have challenges accessing technical information/data. Suggestions included making sure detailed technical information gets distilled into easy-to-understand, high-level takeaways—especially for policymakers.
- Some interviewees called for strengthening communications on the effectiveness (or shortfalls) of and lessons learned from projects. As noted elsewhere, participants suggested seeking (or prioritizing) funding for monitoring and adaptive management.

Interviewee Perspectives: Motivation and Commitment

The Evaluation Team asked the following questions on motivation and commitment:

- What motivates you/your organization to participate and commit to participating in the regional structures and processes?
- Are the levels of commitment and motivation sufficient across all layers of the regional structure to sustain long-term efforts? What ideas do you have to enhance commitment and motivation?

Interviewee Perspectives: Motivation to Participate

Many interviewees described personal convictions supporting their engagement in a community-led, collaborative approach to salmon recovery. Some described how their motivations to participate tie directly to their agency/organizational missions. Others credited their commitment to belief that the regional effort is the most efficient and effective way to make progress towards salmon recovery. Community outreach, education, and communication are themes that emerged in terms of activities essential to sustaining (and building) the long-term work of salmon recovery.

Community Outreach and Engagement

Interviewees frequently mentioned community outreach and education as ways to bolster motivation and commitment, specifically pointing to the success of K-12 educational programs to excite and recruit the next generation of scientists and stewards of salmon recovery efforts. Participants believe some good community outreach and education has been occurring, though many described it as not as robust as they believe is needed. Specific points included:

- Sustaining the next generation of work requires community involvement and awareness of both the projects and the entities and efforts engaged in recovery.
- The work is long-term and multi-generational, which makes it important that the community knows of the work and buys into it, to foster the interest in and value of salmon recovery over the long term.
- Community engagement both in planning and during implementation supports durable solutions.

Communication

In terms of property ownership, projects occur voluntarily – at the will of landowners – and interviewees believe that individuals in the community (and/or sponsors) need to *want* to continue the work of salmon recovery. Many interviewees talked about the critical role communication (between landowners and trusted partners; among landowners) has played – and will continue to play – in maintaining engagement in salmon recovery efforts.

Interviewees also expressed support for the outreach work the UCSRB has done: a good job over the years at connecting local government to salmon recovery and communicating the importance of that partnership at state and federal levels.

Interviewee Suggestions to Enhance Motivation & Commitment

In terms of challenges and opportunities to enhance motivation and commitment, many interviewees expressed concerns about "salmon fatigue" or burnout, and suggested ways to sustain participation and engagement.

Additional challenges and suggestions shared during interviews include:

 Increasing community outreach would require dedicated funding. Participants noted that it currently feels underfunded and under-prioritized and shared the following ideas on ways to modify outreach and education:

- Establish processes to avoid/reduce conflicting messages
- Find creative ways to engage the public
- Show how projects benefit other issues in the area
- o Include a regional level of education and outreach
- Engage (reengage) with landowners, orchardists, farm bureaus, irrigation districts, mayors, and city/county planning departments.
- Support for administering and coordinating committees/teams in the regional structure.
- Seek longer-term funding opportunities.
- Develop a strategic plan that includes larger-scale project priorities to motivate partners and key constituencies to cultivate and develop such projects.
- Incentivize long-term projects and/or updates and repair of legacy projects.
- Increase engagement by core agencies (particularly USFS and NOAA).
- Provide facilitation and leadership development for individuals managing/chairing teams/committees

Interviewee Perspectives: Changing Conditions

The Evaluation Team asked the following questions:

- Are the implementation structure and organizational processes nimble enough to respond to changing conditions?
- If not, what modifications if any, might enable that level of adaptability?

Interviewee Perspectives: Supports Nimbleness

Many interviewees described the SRF Board process as responsive to feedback and adaptive. Specifically, participants spoke highly of changes to the application process and timeline and processes to integrate new data (such as the RTT's biological prioritization tool).

Additional elements that support or enable nimbleness throughout the regional structures mentioned include:

- Trust and relationships among individuals.
- Motivation and commitment of individuals to problem-solve.
- Diversity of entities engaged in the collective effort to restore salmon habitat.
- Flexibility of funders (specifically during the COVID-19 pandemic).
- Capacity and resources (also mentioned as something that can hinder nimbleness).
- Sustained funding.

Interviewee Suggestions to Increase Adaptability, Nimbleness

For things that limit nimbleness, interviewees cited limited capacity overall compared to the scope and scale of the work possible, constraints set by policies, obligations to project funders, and onerous bureaucratic processes.

The Evaluation Team heard descriptions of changes over time in the region and how participants recognize the inevitability of future changes; however, most if not all expressed

support for, and commitment to, a community-led approach to salmon recovery going forward. Suggested modifications often focused on ways the region could take on a new era of projects.

Specific suggestions shared during interviews included:

- Increased flexibility and coordination among funders (particularly between the Tributary Committees and SRF Board processes to maximize funds for viable projects)
- Improve communications between subject matter experts and policy leaders so projects and policies are developed in an iterative process.
- Develop approaches to take on regional challenges (such as responses to fires and floods or changes to state/federal policy directives); and
- Modernize the means of engaging or interacting with the public.

Many interviewees called for a more robust and coordinated approach to research, monitoring, and evaluation. Interviewees perceive a gap in funding for such a program which, if implemented, could inform ongoing efforts in community outreach, project development, and interagency communication.

Some of the potential benefits of a more robust monitoring and evaluation effort could include:

- Participants noted that a monitoring program could guide development of projects increase adaptability and responsiveness in the structure and processes.
- More commitment to monitoring could help with communication to communities and providing more robust data for education to policy makers and funders

Interviewee Perspectives: One Change or Improvement

At the end of each interview, the Evaluation Team asked, "If you had to pick one, what one improvement would be your highest priority?" The following list paraphrases and reflects the full breadth of the answers given by interviewees—some statements may represent multiple responses.

Maintain the overall structure & collective effort to restore salmon.

Participation & Engagement

- Create a mechanism to increase participation.
- Make the work relevant to more people and constituencies.
- Increase focus on and funding for education/outreach to landowners.

Integration of forest and aquatic restoration efforts

- Increase communications and leverage synergies across salmon habitat and forest restoration efforts, i.e., stronger connections between SRF Board projects/prioritization and North Central Forest Health Collaborative initiatives.
- Create a map of all the projects happening/completed on USFS land identify gaps to pinpoint needed projects.

- USFS provide a 10-year stream of funding for the North Central Forest Health Collaborative.
- Maintain the North Central Forest Health Collaborative.

Integrated, Regional-Approach

- Better communication and coordination across the H's, potentially through an annual meeting and/or more engagement from NOAA Fisheries and Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW)
- Look at forest health, aquatic, and climate priorities together and develop funding priorities for integration.
- Broaden the scope of Upper Columbia salmon & steelhead recovery efforts beyond habitat.
- Pursue opportunities to develop and implement regional projects.
- Convene a regional summit to map the current landscape of salmon recovery work.

Leadership

- Facilitate periodic workshops to bring all the policymakers/leadership together (e.g. land management and regulatory agencies) to talk about integration of efforts.
- UCSRB increase strategic leadership and advocacy (as opposed to just facilitating conversations) on regional salmon recovery needs.
- Create leadership, direction, and strong participation in the IT.

Organizational processes

- Clarify and communicate the organizational structure and decision-making flow.
- Enhance onboarding process for new board directors, including the technical information needed for decision-making.
- More flexibility among partners and processes on all levels (local, state, federal).
- Reduce barriers to adjust/modify organizational processes.

Improve collaborative partnerships, trust, and relationships among sponsors working in Chelan County.

Engagement within the regional structure

- Have geographic representation for RTT members.
- Increase involvement of the USFS, possibly by adding seat to the Board of Directors.
- Bring people to the table who know how to affect change at the local level.

Capacity

- Recognize and accommodate the different level of resources that organizations have.
- Find ways to maintain the entity's level of engagement when turnover occurs.
- Identify ways to retain and foster institutional memory.
- Providing funding for local organizations to participate in WATs.

• Increase capacity of small NGOs to participate in regional processes and to identify, develop, pursue, and implement projects.

Funding processes and decision-making

- Modify funding processes to encourage project proposals from a broader diversity of project sponsors.
- Reduce political pressure in project decisions.
- Prioritize empirical data and science in making decisions.
- A meaningful acceptance, adoption, and invitation to social scientists and bring them to the salmon recovery table and be willing to make decisions based on that.
- Increase funding for education, outreach, and monitoring.

Communication

- Be more efficient with communication, strengthen diplomacy, and improve regional collaboration.
- Emphasize the importance of communication throughout the regional structure, especially among all the different sectors (the H's and different technical and policy groups) and between committees/teams and the UCSRB

Data and Information

- Develop a summary of salmonid population trends, and a prediction of how many years before the Upper Columbia River passes the line to "functional extinction," then put all options for action on the table.
- Complete reach assessments in all areas with salmon and steelhead presence.

Monitoring & Evaluation

- Increase commitment to monitoring.
- Develop a report card to measure progress/identify lessons learned.

ORGANIZATIONAL TENSIONS AND OBSERVATIONS

The Evaluation Team observed a variety of organizational tensions while listening to and synthesizing interviews; this section describes them with the intent to provide helpful context for the parties engaged in salmon recovery in the Upper Columbia in considering potential adjustments to processes and structures.

Organizational tensions are objectives, values, structures, or processes that appear in opposition. Not necessarily negative or conflicts to be eliminated, organizational tensions can create dynamic energy that motivates, brings focus, and/or supplies diversity of thought, style, and approach. A tension also can exist as a gap between the way things are and a desired future state. Illumination of an organizational tension may reveal underlying issues that impact the fulfilment of objectives. Considering tensions can help an organization decide where to place emphasis and when and whether to balance or otherwise address the tensions.

Some of the recommendations and key actions that follow can assist in addressing or balancing one or more of the organizational tensions.

Locally Based Prioritization - - - - - Broader System-Based Prioritization Many interviewees talked about the need for projects to address specific, local conditions while others emphasized the need to address larger system priorities that focus on integrating all Hs as well as aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems. Multiple interviewees called for strategies to provide or enhance conduits across sectors or issue areas—and many noted the critical need for projects to reflect local priorities.

Questions to consider:

- How do current prioritization processes support the development of larger, more complex projects?
- How do (or how can) all the local projects connect to create a collective impact?
- What can create opportunities to consider and address larger system dynamics?

Advocacy - - - - - Backbone Services & Coordination

(Backbone coordination and services refers to the specific services needed to sustain a collaborative salmon recovery process—to the elements of coordination, facilitation, community outreach, and building and maintaining the capacity for research.)

Some interviewees called for increased advocacy by UCSRB leadership, especially related to state/federal policies and integrating across basins, teams, sectors, and Hs. Others saw the core role of the UCSRB as providing the backbone structure and coordination that support overall implementation of the salmon recovery efforts. It could do both. It could help to discuss (perhaps with the Implementation Team) whether to increase advocacy, and if so, how.

Collaboration - - - - - - Coordination - - - - - Competition

The overall objective of the UCSRB and regional structure is to support the development and implementation of salmon habitat restoration projects consistent with the *Recovery Plan.*⁴ Some aspects of this structure enhance collaboration and coordination among a variety of partners to make progress towards a shared objective; however, the funding landscape operates competitively. This creates an environment favoring better-resourced entities.

Questions to consider:

- Is this competitive funding environment beneficial to overall success?
- Is it fair? If not, should it be?
- In what ways does competition hinder the community-led approach from reaching its full potential?
- Are there ways to incentivize or strengthen collaborative and/or coordinated approaches that enhance overall success and minimize conflicts among project sponsors?

Regional Structure, Organizational Processes - - - - - Individual Styles & Behaviors Several issues arose related to how people behave within the organizational processes. In any organization or collaborative effort, individual styles, personalities, and behaviors will differ. These differences may create challenging dynamics among individuals. Participants highlighted such conflicts and proposed solutions to prevent and resolve them. In some cases, changing structures and/or processes can influence behavior and resolve conflict; providing neutral facilitation for a WAT is an example where changing an organizational process may reduce conflicts.

Questions to consider:

- Will changing organizational structure and/or processes influence individual behavior and prevent and help to resolve conflict?
- Or should the emphasis be on improving relationships and shared understanding among individuals who interact with each other?

Scientifically-based - - - - - Politically-based - - - - - Community-based This triad recognizes the push and pull of what science shows would biologically support salmon recovery and the interests of communities and their elected officials. Political, community, and scientific priorities may not align, creating differences and (in some cases) conflicts in decision-making on approaches for how best to pursue the overall objective of salmon recovery. It may help to discuss these differences with the intent to identify concrete opportunities to increase alignment of priorities.

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⁴ The *Upper Columbia Spring Chinook Salmon and Steelhead Recovery Plan* is available at: https://www.ucsrb.org/science-resources/reports-plans/recovery-plan/

Level of Work Needed ------------------Level of Capacity Available Salmon recovery requires long-term, significant effort. Numerous interviewees noted that with the "low-hanging fruit" projects completed, the next decade of work will require the ability to take on larger, more complex projects. Also, in any given year the number of proposed projects needing review has no limits. The level of capacity available to sustain this effort may not match the level of work needed over time. A discussion on ways to address finite capacity could include ways to hone organizational processes.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND KEY ACTIONS

Interviewees repeatedly affirmed their commitment to a community led approach—and to the urgency of salmon recovery efforts. Many interviewees described the core activities that have been – and will be – vital to making continued progress towards recovering salmon. Some identified opportunities to clarify and enhance the regional structure and organizational processes to support the next decade of salmon recovery efforts. The Evaluation Team did not hear individuals describe the structure as broken. Rather, many interviewees variously said that, "the easy projects have been implemented, now we just need the resources, strategy, means to coordinate at the watershed and/or regional scale, etc., to do the more complicated projects, to take the work to the next level."

The Ruckelshaus Center is not a think tank, nor does it offer policy solutions. The Center operates impartially and supports entities and communities collaboratively tackling complicated issues. As such, the following recommendations are guided by the Evaluation Team's expertise in managing collaborative efforts, but ultimately reflect the calls to action voiced by interviewees: continue the community led approach and take the work to the next level. Each recommendation also includes key actions, which offer additional details and suggest ways to advance a recommendation.

While the Evaluation Team reviewed numerous background documents, listened to hours of interviews, and observed several regional meetings, the Team also has limited knowledge of the regional structure and exposure to the organizational processes. It is ultimately the work of those in the region to reflect on what individuals shared as part of this evaluation and make decisions regarding how to move forward.

Recommendation: Keep sight of things that have been critical to progress towards salmon recovery thus far, as well as moving forward.

After more than a decade, people and organizations and agencies remain committed to the regional approach to and collective effort of salmon recovery. That speaks to the soundness and durability of the original regional structure and set of organizational processes. Interviewees clearly identified several things crucial to the success and progress thus far—that will remain crucial moving forward.

Key Action: Continue community-based leadership and engagement.

As noted during the section on common themes from interviews, most (if not all) interviewees expressed support for continuing the community-led approach to salmon recovery. Project sponsors have and will continue to play an essential role of building and maintaining

relationships with landowners, facilitating conversations between and among landowners, and developing projects that will contribute to overall salmon recovery.

Funding and dedicated resources have played and will play a critical role in providing the capacity for project sponsors to build and tend relationships, conduct outreach and engagement, and participate in the regional structure (especially the RTT and the IT).

Some areas of enhanced focus for outreach programming and relationship building could include:

- General outreach about the value of salmon recovery, the projects currently being implemented, and the overall work and mission of the UCSRB
- Targeted funding for community outreach specific to project development and implementation, K-12 education, and information for boaters and other river users
- Rekindling or building relationships with river users and other recreation interests, irrigation districts, farm bureaus, local elected officials, and city/county planning departments

Key Action: UCSRB continue to provide regional coordination and strategic leadership of the regional structure and organizational processes.

As the coordinating entity for the regional structure and organizational processes, the UCSRB will continue to play an important leadership and coordination role.

Key Action: Continue to provide opportunities for informal interactions (post COVID) to build trust, connections, and relationships.

The regional structure has played a vital role in building trust and relationships—especially between tribes and counties and among communities. The foundation of relationships and trust (built pre-COVID 19) helped to ease the transition to virtual work at the onset of the pandemic. While virtual meetings are more accessible (no travel time!), interviewees expressed concerns about the loss of opportunities for informal interactions and other relationship-building avenues limited by the virtual setting. As conditions allow, in-person gatherings such meetings, field trips to project sites, and legislative tours can again provide valuable opportunities for informal interactions to build trust, connections, and relationships.

Key Action: Celebrate milestones and achievements.

The work of salmon recovery, of watershed and forest restoration, is long-term. Individuals and organizations expressed commitment and motivation to continue the work—and celebrating near-term milestones and achievements will help maintain the energy.

Recommendation: Develop a 5-year strategic plan that identifies opportunities for more integration and coordination among high-level plans, with priorities and strategies for a more systemic approach to salmon recovery in the Upper Columbia to guide project development and sequencing.

Interviewees expressed a desire for the region to take the work to the next level. Some described this as developing larger and more complicated projects involving more partners and funding sources. Others called for more coordination with agencies and entities with land-use or resource management decision-making to pursue opportunities that could benefit salmon (e.g., transportation plans and projects). The Evaluation Team also heard a call for more coordination and integration among all the H's (habitat, hydro, hatchery, and harvest).

Alongside the call for the region to take on bigger, more complicated projects, interviewees also recognized the limits of time and resources. Efficient allocation of time and resources means increasing coordination at the policy level along with a plan that

- identifies opportunities for coordination with other entities,
- supports a more integrated approach to conducting the work, and
- guides the sequencing and the development of larger and more complicated projects.

The Implementation Team could lead the development and oversight of a strategic plan via an iterative process, with guidance and support from UCSRB Directors and staff and insight from other teams, committees, and key entities.

The following key actions provide areas of work to support and guide the development of a strategic plan.

Key Action: Identify the landscape of related local, regional, state, federal, and tribal strategic initiatives, planning efforts, and/or existing plans that relate to or affect Upper Columbia salmon recovery initiatives.

An important first step toward a strategic plan will be to create a common understanding of the myriad plans and priorities within the Upper Columbia Basin that directly or have the potential to contribute to salmon recovery goals, timelines, and geographic scales.

Categories of plans identified by interviewees include work in the following areas:

- climate impacts and resilience,
- transportation,
- statewide conservation and recreation,
- fish and wildlife,
- conservation and natural resources,
- forestry,
- pollution mitigation, and
- invasive species management.

Additionally, there are plans that directly support and coordinate salmon recovery efforts, including the *Upper Columbia Spring Chinook Salmon and Steelhead Recovery Plan*⁵ identifying short- and long-term milestones for salmon recovery and providing programmatic goals on habitat, harvest, and hydro. This *Recovery Plan* guides the annual development of projects and funding decisions. Interviewees called for a plan to guide salmon recovery efforts in the Upper Columbia by increasing integration among all H's and coordinating among the various plans and priorities with ecosystem benefits.

Key Action: UCSRB initiate effort to convene relevant entities to identify opportunities for increased integration and coordination among policies, plans, and initiatives among UCSRB, state and federal agencies, and tribes.

As the coordinating entity for the Upper Columbia, the UCSRB is well-positioned to initiate this convening effort.

Outcomes and discussion items could include:

- Identify areas of alignment among their respective strategies and priorities
- Develop understanding of resources and capacity
- Coordinate areas of work and sequencing of projects/priorities
- Identify opportunities to increase integration and coordination at key points in the regional structure, for example: increase communication/coordination between the North Central Forest Health Collaborative and WATs and/or IT; and/or USFS engagement in the IT

Key Action: UCSCB initiate and catalyze effort to increase communication and coordination among all H's.

The *Recovery Plan* provides a framework for advancing objectives for all H's; however, interviewees conveyed a gap between current activities and the desired level of cross-H integration. Again, the UCSRB is well-positioned to initiate and convene.

Possible topics or outcomes could include:

- Identify areas of alignment among respective strategies and priorities
- Coordinate areas of work and sequencing of projects/priorities
- Identify opportunities to increase communication and coordination among all H's (such as increased dialogue among funding decisions, science conference, etc.).

Ultimately, plans to increase coordination and integration among all H's must dovetail with other regional polices, plans, and initiatives; however, it would help to start with a focused conversation among regional entities involved in habitat, hydro, harvest, and hatcheries.

⁵ Available at: https://www.ucsrb.org/science-resources/reports-plans/recovery-plan/

Key Action: Clarify who is responsible for developing larger more complex projects including community engagement, project development, prioritization, funding, and implementation.

For the Upper Columbia to take on the next level of work, clarifying who is tasked with developing those projects and providing the necessary supports and incentives will be crucial.

Key Action: Take steps to improve and prioritize a regional approach to evaluation, monitoring, and research.

Evaluation, monitoring, and research efforts are underway in the Upper Columbia; however, interviewees called for emphasizing that work. Opportunities to identify emerging needs along with lessons learned from past efforts are important in any effort, but even more so if the region takes a more integrated approach and begins to develop larger, more complex projects.

Recommendation: Clarify roles and responsibilities and enhance relationships among entities and participants in the regional structure.

Key Action: Clarify and document roles and responsibilities of committees/teams, chair/facilitators, and relationship of UCSRB staff to each committee/team.

Many different partners, committees/teams, and entities with varying responsibilities and authorities comprise the regional structure and participate in organizational processes. The level of engagement varies widely. Ensuring that roles, responsibilities, and relationships (whether resource/technical expertise, voting/non-voting members, facilitator, etc.) among entities are clearly defined may help ease tensions among those intimately involved and enable constructive engagement by people less involved.

Key Action: Prioritize relationship building and strategic involvement of NOAA Fisheries, USFS, and other key entities.

While community leadership will remain critical, taking work to the next level will require more involvement from federal agencies at strategic points in the regional structure.

Specific opportunities could include:

- NOAA Fisheries to reinstate a salmon recovery coordinator,
- increased engagement and involvement of USFS, e.g., via the IT and/or the North Central Washington Forest Health Collaborative.

Such strategic engagement could support a more systematic approach to salmon recovery, increased coordination of policies, and creative thinking around capacity/allocation of resources.

Key Action: Increase communications and opportunities for building bridges between the biological prioritization process and community needs/interests.

Some interviewees expressed frustrations that CAC project prioritization can diverge from the RTT prioritization, though others acknowledged that the two groups have different objectives and priorities. The goal is that collectively, the RTT and CAC identify projects with the most potential to have benefits for salmon AND support from the community.

There may be opportunities to strengthen or increase alignment between biological and community needs.

Opportunities for consideration include:

- Conversation between RTT and CAC to share respective priorities/needs, explore
 opportunities to strengthen alignment, and consider potential modifications to
 proposal review process.
- Identify opportunities for considering community needs and biological priorities earlier in the project development/funding review process.
- Require or incentivize project concept review by the RTT prior to full project development to provide early feedback and identify possible joint benefits among projects.
- After (Joint) CAC ranking, close the communication loop with the RTT (via meeting of respective chairs, appropriate UCSRB staff). This would provide an opportunity for a conversation on priorities/ranking, the potential for biggest biological impact, and other considerations, such as opportunities to build success/relationship with a key landowner or landowners in the interest of increasing overall ecological benefits.

Recommendation: Enhance leadership throughout the regional structure and accountabilities to the organizational processes.

As noted above, the regional structure and organizational processes have contributed to more than a decade of trust and relationship building. Nonetheless, opportunities emerged for enhancing leadership and accountabilities.

Key Action: Establish a Leadership Team chaired by the UCSRB Executive Director.

Membership of Leadership Team would include individuals chairing/facilitating teams/committees in the regional structure and could include representatives from other key entities/agencies that have leadership responsibilities/authorities. The Leadership Team could provide a forum for discussion, relationship building, mutual learning, and communication. Members of the Leadership Team could also participate in trainings on facilitation, conflict resolution, the mechanics of decision-making processes, and collaboration tools and methods.

Key Action: Establish mechanisms for mitigating and resolving conflicts.

One approach to bolster leadership and accountabilities throughout the regional structure involves establishing mechanisms and processes for mitigating and resolving conflicts. This could involve a subcommittee of the IT or a small group of staff and others, e.g., the Leadership Team (if established), the UCSRB Executive Director, and/or the Directors.

Key Action: Address conflicts of interest based on individuals/entities playing multiple roles in the structure, e.g., establish a neutral facilitator for each WAT.

As noted, many participants or organizations engage in the regional structure in a variety of ways, e.g., as both convener AND project sponsor. Sometimes this wearing of multiple hats seems to cause confusion, erode trust, or present a conflict of interest. Establishing neutral leadership for WATs provides a path for clarifying leadership roles and addressing conflicts of interest.

Recommendation: Re-envision the mission, role, and responsibilities of the Implementation Team.

Key Action: UCSRB could initiate an effort which includes chairs/facilitators of teams & committees, current IT members, and other entities with leadership authorities to re-envision the mission, role(s), and responsibilities of the IT to establish accountabilities and take advantage of members' knowledge, expertise, and leadership potential.

Potential roles and responsibilities could include:

- Leadership of the regional effort to take the work to the next level, specifically efforts to:
 - Develop and steward a 5-year strategic plan
 - Discuss, communicate, and identify opportunities for policy-level integration, alignment, and coordination of projects (including all "Hs")
- Continue to serve as a regional forum for exchanging information
- Provide final review and guidance for projects prior to presenting to the Board. This step could review biological rankings and community priorities and explore which projects best align with regional priorities and needs.

Based on a re-envisioned role for the IT:

- Determine membership and clearly define individual representatives and alternate roles
- Clearly define the roles of chair/facilitator, staff, and Board
- Establish expectations for participation and attendance
- Determine whether it ought best function as a decision-making body; if so, identify what types of decisions it will make and establish specific processes for decision-making

Recommendation: Establish a more holistic and coordinated strategy to funding and making decisions that supports integration of local projects for regional benefit to salmon recovery.

As noted, project development and proposals currently functions as a competitive process; however, a strategic plan to guide development of larger and more complex projects will also need to establish funding processes that support and incentivize those types of projects from inception to fruition.

The following key actions identify opportunities to incentivize projects that bring forth a more integrated, holistic approach to salmon recovery.

Key Action: Identify the funding landscape and incentives and resources for the region to bring forward projects that feature multiple benefits, collaboration among multiple entities, cross-sector coordination, and link to other projects for a regional benefit.

A critical first step will be to develop a full map of the funding landscape (both regional decision-making and beyond).

With that information in hand, questions to consider include:

- What are the areas of overlap or alignment among funding priorities?
- What resources, supports, and incentives do project sponsors need to cultivate such projects?
- Who else could/should be involved in identifying/developing those projects?

Key Action: Convene conversations to increase coordination and alignment among regional funding priorities and decision-making and, where appropriate, consider modifying regional funding processes.

The UCSRB, with support from the Directors, could convene a conversation among representatives of all the regional funders (e.g. RTT, CACs, Tributary Committees, Bonneville Power Administration), consider inviting other key funders and individuals. Possible outcomes and objectives of that conversation could include:

- discuss opportunities to align or pool funding,
- possible approaches to best achieve shared priorities/objectives,
- opportunities to increase complementary projects and/or link projects for greater regional benefit
- Consider modifying the ranking system and allocation of projects between counties to support these objectives.

Recommendation: Consider improvements to organizational processes.

Key action: Clarify what entities have advisory and/or decision-making responsibilities and review and/or clarify processes and protocols for decision-making (whether consensus, majority or unanimous voting, definitions of support, and methods for addressing/reconciling concerns).

Clear processes for making decisions and communicating those decisions play an essential role in any collaborative effort. Since some interviewees expressed diverging perspectives on who makes decisions and who has decision-making or advisory responsibilities, consider reviewing those processes and protocols.

Some questions to consider during that review:

- Who makes decisions or advises?
- Do existing protocols match that responsibility?
- Are the protocols explicitly articulated and communicated to all participants?

Key Action: Address capacity limitations.

While community leadership and coordination across agencies is a strength of the regional structure, it also presents challenges. Many, if not nearly all, participants in the regional structure and organizational processes have small portions, if any, of their salary/position dedicated to engaging in the committees/teams.

Some opportunities to address capacity limitations:

- Provide resources/stipends for small or under-resourced organizations to participate in committees/teams
- Modify expectations regarding the amount of work committees/teams get asked to perform, take steps to reduce workload
- Impose limitations to number of projects reviewed by RTT/CAC

APPENDICES

- A. Materials for Interviewees, Evaluation Questions
- B. Interviewees
- C. Questions for Implementation Team Meeting
- D. Questions for Regional Technical Team Meeting
- E. Questions for UCSRB Board of Directors Meeting

WASHINGTON STATE LINIVERSITY

WILLIAM D. RUCKELSHAUS CENTER

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

Evaluation of Regional Structure and Organizational Processes for Salmon Recovery in the Upper Columbia

BACKGROUND and PURPOSE:

The *Upper Columbia Spring Chinook Salmon & Steelhead Recovery Plan*, adopted by NOAA in 2007, documents a regional structure and organizational processes for a voluntary, locally led, and collaborative approach to salmon recovery and watershed restoration, including forest health restoration. An organizational chart of the governmental entities, agencies, and organizations who comprise the regional implementation structure and organizational processes is attached and provided to you at the request of the Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board (UCSRB). After thirteen years, now is the time to evaluate and reflect on the structure and processes in place.

The UCSRB and Bonneville Environmental Foundation (BEF) asked the William D. Ruckelshaus Center (Center)¹ to conduct an evaluation of the regional structure and organizational processes for salmon recovery and watershed restoration within the Upper Columbia Basin. The purpose is to better understand which aspects of the regional structure and organizational processes are working well, what's not working well, and what changes can both support collaboration and increase participation in salmon recovery efforts going forward. NOTE: The Center is not evaluating on-the-ground progress towards salmon recovery or watershed restoration.

From October through December 2020, the Ruckelshaus Center will conduct approximately 50 interviews to gather perspectives and reflections on the regional structure and organizational processes for collaboration on salmon recovery and watershed restoration. As an individual or representative of an organization with a role in or knowledge of the regional structure and organizational processes, you have been identified as an interview candidate. We hope you will agree to participate or assist by identifying the most appropriate person at your organization or agency to speak with us. Interviews should take 45-60 minutes—and will occur by phone or videoconference.

The Center will summarize key themes from interviews and provide constructive suggestions for moving forward in a final report. The report will include a list of interviewees and their affiliations; however, no specific statements or direct quotations will be attributed to individual interviewees (to preserve anonymity and thus encourage candor). This report will be available to all who participated in the interview process and any other interested parties via our website. The Center expects to complete the final report in February 2021.

More information on the Center at: https://ruckelshauscenter.wsu.edu/about/

¹ The Center is a joint effort of WSU and UW with the mission to help parties involved in complex public policy challenges in the State of Washington and the Pacific Northwest develop collaborative, durable, and effective solutions.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

INTRODUCTION

1) Please tells us your role and in which sub-basin(s) your work occurs.

REGIONAL STRUCTURE and PROCESSES

As noted, this evaluation focuses on the regional *structure* and organizational *processes* for a collaborative approach to salmon recovery, which includes watershed and forest restoration. The final page shows an organizational chart.

- 2) Tell us about the regional structure and organizational processes:
 - a) What do you see as the strengths, things working well to support collaboration and coordination of resources?
 - b) What improvements or changes do you recommend?

ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES

3) Are roles and responsibilities among entities clearly defined and/or distributed appropriately and effectively? What's working well? What improvements or changes do you recommend?

DECISION-MAKING

4) How well are decision-making processes working? What do you see as strengths? What improvements or changes would you make?

COMMUNICATION

- 5) How does communication happen among regional partners? What's working well? What improvements or changes would you suggest?
- 6) How would you describe the mechanisms to resolve differing perspectives? What is working well? What suggestions do you have for improvements?

MOTIVATION and COMMITMENT

- 7) What motivates you/your organization to participate and commit to participating in the regional structures and processes?
- 8) Are the levels of commitment and motivation sufficient across all layers of the regional structure to sustain long-term efforts? What ideas do you have to enhance commitment and motivation?

CHANGING CONDITIONS

9) Is the implementation structure and organizational processes nimble enough to respond to changing conditions? If not, what modifications if any, might enable that level of adaptability?

WRAP-UP

- 10) If you had to pick one, what one improvement would be your highest priority?
- 11) What else would you like to share?

Appendix A - Materials for Interviewees, Evaluation Questions

- 12) Who else do you think it is important that we interview as part of this review, and why?
- 13) Do you have any questions for us?

LEGISLATURE

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FUNDING SOURCES

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OTHER

COUNCIL OF

USFWS

NWSC)

REGIONS

NPCC

(INCLUDING

NMFS

Upper Columbia Spring Chinook Salmon and Steelhead Recovery Plan August 2007

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Name	Affiliation/Agency
Shannon L. Adams	Yakama Nation, Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board of Directors
Mike Anderson	North Central Washington Forest Health Collaborative
Kristin Bail	U S Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest
Scott Bailey	Chelan County Natural Resources Department
Amanda Barg	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Darcy Batura	The Nature Conservancy
Tori Bohlen	Bonneville Power Administration
Chuck Brushwood	Colville Confederated Tribes, Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board of Directors
Bob Bugert	Chelan County Commi ioner, Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board of Directors
Hannah Coe	Okanogan Conservation District
Joe Connor	Bonneville Power Administration
Kaleen Cottingham	Recreation Conservation Office - Salmon Recovery Funding Board
Jeremy Cram	Regional Technical Team (RTT), Washington State Department of Fish & Wildlife
John Crandall	Methow Restoration Council
Blair Deaver	Aspect Consulting
Marc Duboiski	State Resource and Conservation Office
Crystal Elliott-Perez	North Central Washington Forest Health Collaborative
Steve Fortney	Regional Technical Team (RTT)
Jessica Goldberg	Methow Restoration Council
Tracy Hillman	TRIB Committee, Regional Technical Team
Andy Hover	Okanogan County, Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board of Directors
Chris Johnson	Methow Salmon Recovery Foundation
Jarred Johnson	Yakama Nation
Nicole Jordan	Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board
Tom Kahler	Douglas County PUD
Mike Kaputa	Chelan County Natural Resources Department

Appendix B - Interviewees

Steve Kolk	Bureau of Reclamation
Melody Kreimes	Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board
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Mike Liu	North Central Washington Forest Health Collaborative
Jason Lundgren	Ca cade Fisheries
Ally Lutes	Chelan County Department of Natural Resources, Watershed Action Team
Greer Maier	Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board
Ben Majsterek	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Amy Martin	Okanogan Conservation District, Watershed Action Team
Lloyd McGee	The Nature Conservancy, North Central WA Forest Health
David Morgan	Chelan Douglas Land Trust
Ken Muir	Cascadia Conservation District
Andrew Murdoch	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Craig Nelson	Okanogan Conservation District
Ryan Niemeyer	Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board
Robes Parrish	U S Fish & Wildlife Service
Jason Paulsen	Methow Conservancy
Lisa Pelly	Trout Unlimited
Brandon Rogers	Yakama Nation
Stacy Shutts	Okanogan Land Trust
Hans Smith	Yakama Nation
Marc Straub	Douglas County Commi ioner, Upper Columbia Salmon
ivial C Straub	Recovery Board of Directors
Tom Tebb	Washington State Department of Ecology
Pete Teigen	Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board
Kate Terrell	US Fish & Wildlife Service
Bill Towey	Chelan County PUD
Keith Truscott	Citizens' Advisory Committee
Sarah Walker	Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board
Daul Ward	Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board of Directors (former),
Paul Ward	Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission,
Robert Warren	Bonneville Environmental Foundation
Jen Watkins	Washington Department of Natural Resources
Ryan Williams	Cascadia Conservation District
Justin Yeager	NOAA Fisheries, Regional Technical Team (RTT)

Interview Questions for Implementation Team

- 1 What is your ideal vision of the role and functions of the Implementation Team?
- 2 How well do the operating procedures including accountability mechanisms, decision-making processes support the work?
- 3 What needs to change for the Implementation Team to achieve that ideal vision? What would you keep, change, or strengthen?
 - What else would you like to share? (about what's working well about the regional structure and process? What changes/improvements would you recommend?)

Interview Questions for Regional Technical Team

- 1. What's working well about the RTT and/or regional structure and process? What changes/improvements would you recommend?
- 2. Given the roles & responsibilities of the RTT, how well does the coordination and communication work with the rest of the structure?
- 3. What are the strengths of the RTT decision making processes? What are the challenges and how could they be addressed?

Interview Questions for UCSRB Directors

- 1. What is your ideal vision of the role and functions of the Directors?
- 2. Getting feedback that the region has made significant progress on the smaller, "low-hanging fruit" projects and now the projects needed are more expensive, complex, potentially involving more partners/entities....Is the organization nimble enough and structured appropriately to be able to develop and implement these projects? What changes or suggestions do you have?
- 3. What else would you like to share?