

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Nick Christoph, Okanogan/Colville Lead Entity Coordinator  
Mike Kaputa, Chelan County Lead Entity Coordinator  
Bill Towey, Colville/Okanogan Lead Entity Coordinator

FROM: Bob Bugert, Chairperson  
Upper Columbia Regional Technical Team

DATE: 18 August 2005

SUBJECT: Review of Sixth Round 2005 Grant Applications

---

The Upper Columbia Regional Technical Team (RTT) reviewed the Sixth Round Grant Applications from the Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board to the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB). We met with project sponsors on 12 July to provide initial “fix-it loop” comments on the proposals, toured the proposed projects on 28 and 29 July, and rated the proposals on 17 August. We reviewed ten applications from Chelan County and nine applications from Okanogan County (19 total). Attached are our recommendations to you on the biological merit of the applications.

The RTT placed each project into one of four categories, based on the technical ratings: 1) projects with high merit; 2) projects with medium merit; 3) projects with low merit; and 4) projects that need more information to make a decision. This procedure is roughly similar to the reviews we used for the Second through Fifth Rounds. In general, projects that we rate as “high merit” are in one or more significant subwatersheds, benefit several species and life stages, consider ecosystem or fluvial processes, address one or more causal mechanisms for habitat degradation, and are sustainable. Some projects scored well with the criteria, but we had concerns about their overall benefit, and gave them a lower ranking than the scores would otherwise indicate.

Three projects rated high merit, eight had medium merit, seven had low merit, and one project needed more information to make a recommendation. Some of the project proposals we reviewed were not complete, and feel this hindered our capability to conduct an adequate review. We expect some sponsors may incorporate our comments into their final proposals. Conversely, not all applicants will change their proposals in accordance with our comments, or they may elect not to address them. The SRFB Technical Panel should be aware of this circumstance. Also, we recommend that the sponsor highlight changes to their applications if they intend to submit these for funding from the Tributary Fund.

The proposals from Chelan County seem to be quite expensive. We recommend that the sponsor contact other entities who have done similar projects, particularly culvert replacements. Also, the costs for riparian plantings and log and rock structures seem excessive. In general, their proposals do not have adequate maps and diagrams, and have limited language on monitoring.

We still have concerns about how some projects fit within the fluvial and geomorphic processes of the Wenatchee River. The RTT recommends that project sponsors create or reconnect

side channels, rather than backwaters, to dissipate energy and provide rearing cover for salmonids. The biological benefit to the proposed backwater projects may not be worth the cost. We recommend that if a backwater project proceeds, it should be the Gagnon Site. If it is implemented, it should be done as a demonstration project on backwater creation, and we should intensively monitor its effectiveness for these types of projects for target species. We also recommend that the Site 11 project be considered as a side channel project, rather than backwater habitat.

Some projects should be linked with the Washington Department of Transportation to mitigate for road construction and maintenance. Specifically, the Nason and Peshastin projects should be considered as major long-term projects, cost-shared by many, to address several biological and physical processes.

We suggest that the project sponsors specifically address the RTT project rating criteria in their applications. This would enable the RTT to adequately review the technical merit of project applications. We feel this could be addressed in a single-page cover letter. Often, the 1,500 character project descriptions were not clear.

Attached are three items: 1) a list of RTT members who reviewed and commented on the applications, 2) the scoring criteria used by the RTT, and 3) a compilation of comments on each application. The Regional Technical Team appreciates the opportunity to serve in this important process, and thank the project sponsors for their positive responses to our recommendations during the “fix-it” loop. Please feel free to contact me (509-662-1127) if you have questions or comments.

Cc: Mary Hunt, Chair, Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board  
Barb McIntosh, Salmon Recovery Funding Board  
Britt Dudek, Foster Creek/Moses Coulee Lead Entity  
HCP Tributary Committees

Attachments

**Attachment One:  
Participants in the Upper Columbia Regional Project Review Process  
Sixth Round SRFB Cycle**

Casey Baldwin, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Shane Bickford, Douglas County Public Utility District

Bob Bugert, Biophilia (non-voting member)

Brian Cates, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Tracy Hillman, BioAnalysts, Inc.

Joe Kelly, Bureau of Land Management

Joe Lange, Natural Resource Conservation Service

Jerry Marco, Colville Confederated Tribes

Chuck Peven, Chelan County Public Utility District

Bob Rose, Yakama Nation

Kate Terrell, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Rick Woodsmith, Wenatchee Forest Sciences Laboratory

## **Attachment Two:**

### **Project Review Procedure**

#### **Upper Columbia Regional Technical Team**

1. Each RTT member is given an evaluation sheet (Part 2, below) to complete for submitted projects. Merits of each project (defined in Part 1, below) will be rated from 1 – 5 (defined in Part 3, below). Implementation projects will be evaluated using criteria 1 through 6 (resulting in a maximum score of 30); assessments will be evaluated using criteria 1, 2, 7, and 8 (resulting in a maximum score of 20).
2. If scores for a particular project merit vary too widely between members (three points for example) then the team should discuss their rationale and the reasons for the divergence, which may or may not influence an individual's change of scoring.
3. The RTT chairperson will compile values from the individual final evaluation sheets to give the RTT a "final master evaluation review." (The individual and final master evaluation review will be submitted to the SRFB and UCSRB as documentation of RTT deliberations and justifications.)
4. From this final review, the RTT will separate projects into the four original categories (very good projects, good projects, do not fund, and more information required). This might be done on the basis of how the projects were scored (evaluation results).

#### Part 1: Project Merits

Criteria for biological review of project merits (taken from the draft Biological Strategy). Merit criteria for projects are noted with a P, assessments are noted with an A.

1. Is the project location or assessment within a significant subwatershed or, does it address the priority recommendation in a Category 3 watershed (**P, A**)?
2. How well does the project or assessment address a recommendation cited in the draft Biological Strategy (**P, A**)?
3. Is the project designed within a reach (or other appropriate hydrologic unit) context to maintain or increase stream channel migration, complexity, and floodplain function (**P**)?
4. Will the project connect fragmented habitats, restore the historical range of native fish, or contribute toward those needs (**P**)?
5. Will the project promote life history diversity and/or abundance of native species (**P**)?
6. Does the project have a monitoring component that is appropriate for the project objectives, and has well defined implementation, timing, and reporting formats (**P**)?

7. If the project is an assessment, does it increase our understanding of the biological or physical processes discussed in criteria 1 through 6, or does it improve our levels of certainty addressed in the draft Biological Strategy (A)?
8. If the project is an assessment, will the derived information be readily usable for management actions (A)?

Part 2: Evaluation Sheets (both draft and final)

Columns are organized by the Project Merits. Rows are organized by the different proposed projects. Each cell would contain a 1-5 rating, as defined in Part 3, below.

	Project Merit 1	Project Merit 2	Project Merit 3	Etc.
Project 1				
Project 2				
Etc.				

Part 3: Definitions of Ratings for Project Merits

- 5 = Proposal clearly addresses this Project Merit and will certainly have high benefit to the Project Merit.
- 4 = Proposal clearly addresses this Project Merit and is very likely to have a moderate to high benefit to the Project Merit that can be demonstrated (measured) within a reasonable time frame (within 15 years).
- 3 = Proposal adequately addresses this Project Merit, and is likely to have a moderate benefit to the Project Merit that can be demonstrated (measured) within a reasonable time frame (within 15 years).
- 2 = Proposal may indirectly address this Project Merit or it is questionable if the effectiveness will be measurable within a reasonable time frame.
- 1 = Proposal may indirectly address this Project Merit, its effectiveness may have a cumulative benefit to habitat or stream/riparian function, but these effects are not expected to be measurable over time.
- 0 = Proposal has no relationship with this Project Merit.

**Attachment Three:  
Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board  
Regional Technical Team Comments on Chelan County Project Applications  
Sixth Round 2005 Grant Cycle**

Project Number	Project Name	Reviewers' Comments
C1	Leavenworth Fish Screen	<u>Low Merit:</u> Lacks monitoring strategy. The project would benefit bull trout; uncertainty about benefit to steelhead.
C2	Irwin Off-channel Habitat	<u>Low Merit:</u> Lacks monitoring strategy. Creation of backwater channels may have limited biological benefit. Project may not address limiting factors to salmonids. Buffer should be larger and maintained longer than one year. Concerns about cost.
C3	Site 11 Off-channel Habitat	<u>Medium Merit:</u> Creation of backwater channels may have limited biological benefit. This assessment may lead to a costly project.
C4	Gagnon Off-channel Habitat	<u>Medium Merit:</u> Expensive project. Creation of backwater channels may have limited biological benefit. Stranding may be a concern.
C5	Skinney Creek Culvert Replacement	<u>Low Merit:</u> Stream is ephemeral in dry years. Cost is high relative to comparable culvert projects. There may be higher-priority culverts in other watersheds that should be considered.
C6	Entiat River Instream Habitat	<u>Medium Merit:</u> Poorly developed application. Lacks monitoring strategy. Difficult to evaluate because exact site locations are not identified.
C7	Mill Creek Culvert Replacement	<u>Medium Merit:</u> Diversion downstream has been corrected. Map and photos are needed. Lacks monitoring strategy. Cost is high relative to comparable culvert projects.
C8	Nason Creek Oxbow Reconnection	<u>High Merit:</u> Poorly developed application. Appropriate implementation of Channel Migration Study. Sponsor should be cautious of brook trout use, aquatic noxious weeds, and placement of upstream culvert. Evaluate the alternatives of developing the oxbow into a main channel versus a high-flow side channel.
C9	Peshastin Creek Confluence Habitat	<u>Low Merit:</u> This project should not be done until flows are addressed.
C10	Beebe Springs Channel Reconstruction	<u>Low Merit:</u> Extremely expensive project, artificial approach, high risk of failure, low biological benefit, lacks monitoring strategy. Educational benefit acknowledged. Inappropriate design for geologic and geomorphic setting; simply retain current channel and replace berry brambles with native riparian vegetation.

**Attachment Three (continued):  
Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board  
Regional Technical Team Comments on Okanogan County Project Applications  
Sixth Round 2005 Grant Cycle**

Project Number	Project Name	Reviewers' Comments
O1	Methow Riparian Protection	<u>High Merit:</u> Well-written proposal. Good monitoring and stewardship plan. Include copy of landowner agreement in packet submitted to SRFB.
O2	MVID East Diversion	<u>Medium Merit:</u> Removal of diversion dam and push-up dam is beneficial, and re-connection of side channel is important. However, intake maintenance and sediment transport may be problems in the canal. Consider building a cross vane at canal intake. Evaluate the downstream and upstream effects of dam removal.
O3	Twisp River Conservation Purchase	<u>High Merit:</u> Application is well-written and complete.
O4	Twisp River Native Plant Nursery	<u>Needs More Information:</u> Good concept that has biological merit, but the proposal lacks details on how it will be managed. Also, is it more effective to plant one large seedling rather than ten small ones?
O5	Similkameen-Okanogan Confluence Restoration	<u>Low Merit:</u> High risk project that may actually lower the gradient, dissipate energy and encourage sediment deposition in key spawning area. Lacks monitoring plan.
O6	Transfer Ditch Piping	<u>Medium Merit:</u> Expensive project. Uncertainty about delivery of saved water. Recommend this proposal focus on the diversion only. Lacks monitoring plan.
O7	Okanogan-Similkameen Salmon Habitat	<u>Low Merit:</u> Application is well-written and complete. Very important work, but the benefits to salmonids are not clear, certain, and sustainable.
O8	MVID-West Diversion	<u>Medium Merit:</u> Expensive project. Removal of push-up dam is important. Surplus water should be retained in mainstem channel instead of canal. Lacks monitoring plan.
O9	Omak Creek Culvert Replacement	<u>Medium Merit:</u> Benefit to steelhead is unclear.