

FISH PASSAGE CENTER OVERSIGHT BOARD

Meeting Notes for May 12, 2008 – Walla Walla, Washington

Present: Bruce Measure, John Ferguson, Doug Taki, Dan Goodman, Tony Grover, Steve Crow, Joann Hunt, Kerry Berg.

On the Phone: Sue Ireland, Tony Nigro, Brian Marotz, Michele DeHart, Liz Hamilton, Brian Lipscomb

Chairman Bruce Measure called the meeting to order and went over the agenda. He said Steve Yundt has taken another job and resigned from the Fish Passage Center (FPC) Oversight Board and that Brian Marotz of Montana Dept. of Fish, Wildlife and Parks is willing to replace Yundt. John Ferguson moved that Marotz take Yundt's place on the Board, Tony Nigro seconded, and the motion passed.

Recommended Amendments to the Council's F&W Program

Measure said at the last Board meeting, there was a good discussion about potential amendments to the Northwest Power and Conservation Council's Fish and Wildlife (F&W) Program with respect to the FPC and that the Board's ideas had led to constructive discussions in the region. He circulated a handout compiling recommendations the Council has received pertaining to the FPC.

The question today is whether the Board wants to make any amendment recommendations to the Council, Measure said. What you passed out seems inclusive of what we talked about at our last meeting, said Ferguson. Nigro noted that the Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Authority's (CBFWA) amendment recommendations represent a consensus of CBFWA members and that individual CBFWA member's submissions are consistent with CBFWA's overall recommendations.

Marotz said the only area where Montana's recommendations differ is with regard to hiring a new staff person at the FPC. We don't think it is necessary to hire a person to work with the resident fish managers, he stated. Sue Ireland said that was true of the Kootenai Tribe's recommendations as well.

Liz Hamilton of the Northwest Sportfishing Industry Association said her group supports CBFWA's recommendations and is confident the Council will give deference to them.

Doug Taki asked if the FPC contract will remain with the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC). That will be worked out by the agencies and tribes, in conjunction with BPA and the Council, in the next four to six weeks, replied Brian Lipscomb of CBFWA.

Nigro said Oregon's recommendations are consistent with CBFWA's. In our recommendations, we didn't want anything the FPC is doing now to be lost, especially smolt monitoring, said Taki.

Measure brought up the discussion at the January meeting about data that is "housed" at the FPC. I sent out an extensive memo answering questions posed by Dan Goodman and describing how our data is collected and our data bases used, said Michele DeHart. Has the data repository issue been resolved? Measure asked.

I thought we had reached a general understanding of the data the FPC posts and keeps, Nigro said. Generally, the information that people assume the FPC keeps is actually kept by others like the Corps of Engineers and PSMFC, he noted. Moving data from the FPC is a minor issue because most of the data is held and maintained by someone else, Nigro added.

I was interested in whether there are any efficiencies to be gained that the Board could recommend, Measure said. In my memo, I said the difference between the FPC and other entities is that we are required to display all the data we use on our web site, said DeHart.

I haven't looked at Michele's memo, and I suggest we put this item on the agenda of our next meeting so we can spend more time on it, stated Ferguson. Kerry Berg said he would make sure everyone gets a copy of the memo in advance of the next meeting.

We seem to have gotten some agreement on the big issues surrounding the FPC as a result of the discussions at our January meeting, and I'm pleased at the unity of the recommendations the Council received, Measure stated.

I don't think the recommendations from Northwest RiverPartners are consistent with the other recommendations, said Nigro. CBFWA specifically discussed and rejected RiverPartners' recommendations, he noted.

The Board decided it would not submit recommendations about the FPC to the Council nor would it offer comments on the recommendations the Council received. We provided guidance to the region that helped others in making recommendations about the FPC, and it appears it was a job well done, said Nigro.

What we did was successful, and this will help the Council resolve a controversy that's haunted the region for a long time, Measure stated. There's a tremendous amount of unanimity in the recommendations, and I hope this is the end of a lot of controversy, agreed Hamilton.

Follow-Up Items from January Meeting

Ferguson brought up two items assigned to John Shurts at the January meeting and asked how they had been resolved. The first dealt with reviews of the FPC by the Board, and Berg said that would be taken up at the next meeting. The second concerned language about the FPC's data repository role. Measure suggested sending the correspondence between DeHart and Goodman to Shurts in advance of the next meeting. Goodman said he would distill DeHart's memo down and send out some comments by e-mail.

Ferguson asked DeHart to identify in the FPC quarterly reports whom the data requests are coming from, and DeHart said she would do that. Ferguson asked DeHart if her contract had been renewed, and she said she is operating under an agreement that lasts through November 30, 2008.

New Business and Next Meeting

Ferguson asked DeHart for a "one-minute synopsis" of the smolt migration season this year. Flows have been lower than projected, and the weather's been pretty cold, but the numbers started picking up at the beginning of May and have been steadily increasing, she reported.

Measure said the next meeting would be August 11 in Spokane. By then, Council staff will have produced a draft F&W program the Board can discuss, Berg noted.

Measure said he would take the recommendation for Marotz to be appointed to represent the upriver states on the Board to the Council. The meeting adjourned at 2:05 pm.

Prepared by Susan Whittington, NWPCC Contractor