

Ocean and Plume Science and Management Forum

October 9, 2015

Northwest Power and Conservation Council

Draft Ocean Forum meeting notes

Attendees: Chair Phil Rockefeller, Patty O'Toole, Jim Ruff, Erick VanDyke, Brian Burke, Stacy Horton, Anne Creason, Catherine Corbett, Robert Anderson, Bill Maslen, Bruce Suzumoto, Lynne Krasnow, Dan Rawding, Nancy Leonard, Shane Scott, Marc Trudel

The first order of business was to review and discuss the draft meeting minutes from the March 4, 2015, OF meeting. Chair Rockefeller suggested some changes to the meeting notes. (See Patty's changes to notes.) Lynne Krasnow also had several minor changes to notes that she will send directly to Patty.

Patty explained the purpose of today's meeting and reviewed the agenda. Since the OF charter expires at the end of the month, the main purpose of today's meeting is to review the objectives in the existing OF charter. Is there still interest among OF members to continue to meet?

Patty discussed the objectives in the existing OF charter. The group hasn't been able to make progress on objectives A and B. However, objective C does seem to be valuable to OF members and others. Also, fulfilling objective D has been difficult due to lack of progress on developing management questions in the state of the ocean science report.

Patty also discussed the relation to the Council's research plan, which was originally developed in 2006. The ISRP and ISAB have recently been working on an evaluation of how well the 2006 Research Plan uncertainties have been addressed and on identifying key, high priority research uncertainties under the F&WL Program. The science panels' report should be completed around the end of the year and will address their view of the highest priority research questions or uncertainties under the F&WL Program. The Council will start its revision of the research plan after the first of the year and will need the input of the fish and wildlife managers. There may be a role for the members of the OF.

Chair Rockefeller asked for feedback from OF members on the OF charter and objectives.

Lynne Krasnow said NOAA's 2014 FCRPS Biological Opinion included some re-scoping of ocean actions into two main areas: 1) continued development of key ocean indicators and their application to life-cycle modeling; and 2) evaluating the value of CR estuary and plume habitat restoration to listed salmon, which includes studies such as longitudinally sampling the condition of juvenile salmon as they migrate through the

lower Columbia River estuary and into the plume. This is NOAA Fisheries' interest in ocean and plume research.

Chair Rockefeller said the Council is not a research organization, but does policy and planning. We're primarily interested in the question, to what extent do ocean conditions affect the health and survival of salmon and steelhead and our interior basin recovery efforts? It would be useful to have adequate ocean data to inform upriver management actions, but it's uncertain whether we're able to achieve that goal with the OF at this time. What can the OF do to provide value and benefit to the F&WL Program (as well as NOAA's FCRPS BiOp)?

Bill Maslen said BPA favors making some changes in the existing OF charter, specifically deleting the first two objectives since we haven't been able to make progress in those two areas. However, the last two objectives have been valuable for OF members and the region.

Dan Rawding sees three useful roles for the OF. First, while we haven't made progress on first two objectives, we have made progress on identifying some key ocean uncertainties. Second, he sees a role for OF to assist in developing the ocean aspect of the Council's research plan. Third, the OF can help to address adaptive management aspects of ocean research data.

Lynne Krasnow said the OF provides value by giving NOAA's ocean researchers a forum to share their research information with the salmon managers and the region.

Action: Chair Rockefeller suggested OF members should provide written comments on the charter to Council staff. He particularly requested comments on whether we should make the proposed changes to the OF charter, i.e., removing objectives A and B? He asked if everyone agrees with those changes?

Brian Burke asked if we remove objectives A & B, do we lose the ability to provide management guidance back to ocean researchers? He believes the researchers benefit from input from the freshwater fisheries managers.

Patty pointed out that the final objective D (or revised objective B) does provide the ability for the OF to identify management applications of ocean and plume research data. In addition, the Council's revised research plan should also provide ocean researchers with policy guidance on key research questions and uncertainties related to the ocean environment.

Brian Burke noted that Appendix 1 already contains a useful list of research uncertainties and management questions.

Patty asked if we still needed to have a formal charter for this group? She explained some advantages and disadvantages to having a charter. The members should think

about that issue and we could have another short OF meeting before the end of October to discuss and resolve the charter issue.

Catherine Corbett informed the group LCREP will be hosting the next Columbia River Estuary Conference (CREC) in May 2016. It is held every two years. She asked if it would be useful to dedicate a half day of that science workshop to have presentations summarizing this year's ocean sampling and the status of the warm water "blob" in the North Pacific Ocean? A complication is that we don't usually get too many inland fish managers attending the annual CREC meetings. She asked for the assistance of the Council staff and Forum members in encouraging participation from managers and interested parties from throughout the basin.

Patty suggested we could also set up an OF meeting later this fall to allow the ocean researchers to present their preliminary findings from this year's ocean surveys. She noted that the Forum meetings are generally easy to attend for people that may not have time or funds for travel, since the OF meetings can be attended by conference call and webinar.

Chair Rockefeller suggested that regional coordination funds could be used by tribal representatives to attend these ocean science meetings.

Marc Trudel asked how can ocean science inform inland management decisions and actions? Ocean researchers need feedback from inland fish managers to help guide their research efforts.

Shane Scott said the region's utilities support OF efforts, data sharing and information exchange.

Patty said the OF provides a useful information exchange function by having inland fish managers provide feedback to ocean researchers so that the information flow is not just one-way; from the ocean researchers to managers. We can make a more concerted effort to provide opportunities for managers to share their information and questions. Chair Rockefeller commended Marc, Rich Carmichael, Dan Rawding, Kurt Fresh and Council staff (Patty and Jim) for all their efforts to date on objectives A and B in charter.

Action: Chair Rockefeller then suggested staff should revise the OF charter based on comments received and send a revised version out to all the OF members. Then we should schedule another short meeting before the end of October to consider the need to have a charter and the suggested changes in the charter. We'll also need to discuss any changes in the charter with the Council members, and explain why the OF has fallen short of achieving all the original Council expectations.

Action: Members were asked to send all comments and any additional changes to the OF charter to Patty O'Toole by Friday, October 16th.

Action: Council staff will revise the charter based on comments received today and in writing and send the revised charter out to the OF members, along with the draft meeting notes.

Action: Council staff will also send out a Doodle poll to OF members to schedule a short meeting toward the end of October to review and approve a revised charter.

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