

## **Spokane Watershed Salmon Reintroduction Lead Entity**

**May 25, 2022**

**Attendees:** Eric Doyle, Confluence Environmental; Kile Westerman, WA Department of Fish and Wildlife; Adam Gebauer, The Lands Council; Mitch Redfern, Curtis Johnson and Chad Atkins, WA Department of Ecology; Chris Moan, Avista; Michael Crabtree, Inland Northwest Lands Conservancy; Lindsay Chutas, Walt Edelen, and Dan Ross, Spokane Conservation District; Methea Sapp, Spokane Community College; Jule Schultz, Spokane Riverkeeper; Emily Marvin, AmeriCorp; Conor Giorgi and Casey Flanagan, Spokane Tribe of Indians; Thomas Biladeau, Coeur d'Alene Tribe; Rebecca Brown, Eastern Washington University

Facilitator: Andy Dunau

### **Welcome and Administration**

Andy and Conor welcomed people to the meeting and thanked the Spokane Conservation District (SCD) for allowing the team to use their facilities. The SCD Director, Vicki Carter, welcomed the group.

Andy provided the following updates:

- The Statement of Work agreement between the Spokane Tribe and RCO is complete and being processed.
- A combination of in-person, virtual and hybrid meetings is expected depending on circumstances. Half-day meetings are likely to be the exception not the rule. A regular meeting schedule will be determined as the team gets through start-up activity.
- A web site will be developed to house materials and notices. In the meantime, google drive will continue to be used.
- This summer will see development of by-laws for committee activity and who will be standing participants.
- There are some preliminary activities occurring regarding development of early action habitat projects that extend beyond the current priority of developing a habitat restoration plan.
- Citizens Committee development will occur through the summer.

### **Previous Salmon Habitat Analysis and Reintroduction Potential**

Conor provided a PowerPoint presentation of work that stemmed from the Upper Columbia United Tribes Phase 1 Upper Columbia Fish Passage and Reintroduction 2019 report. See Google Drive for PDF of the PowerPoint.

A key component of the Phase 1 work was investigating the habitat availability, suitability, and salmon survival potential in habitats above Grand Coulee Dam. He reviewed the models, methods and data sets used to consider the intrinsic potential of salmon reintroduction in the Spokane River watershed. The tribe started with the Intrinsic Potential model output originally generated by the Interior Columbia Technical Recovery Team in 2007. The tribe then supported

development of an Ecosystem Diagnosis and Treatment (EDT) model that has been used for salmon recovery and restoration efforts in other watersheds.

For intrinsic potential, graphics summarized habitat availability for spring chinook and steelhead. For EDT, graphics summarized adult capacity and productivity (# of returning adults per spawner), for spring chinook, summer/fall chinook and steelhead.

Conor summarized the “takeaways” as:

Intrinsic Potential:

- Provided a useful geographic distribution of the species
- Can be a helpful tool in the interim (see UW GIS tool)

EDT:

- Did well at incorporating existing data
- Provided consistent metrics for evaluating reintroduction across watersheds
- Data were limited, significant gaps remain
- Developed a framework that can be built upon

### **Redband Recovery Feasibility Analysis**

Casey provided a PowerPoint presentation on development of a Redband Trout Recovery Feasibility Study. See Google Drive for PDF of the PowerPoint.

She discussed previous stock assessments and the 2016 Conservation Strategy for Interior Redband in the states of CA, ID, MT, NV, OR and WA. Recommendations included filling conservation and restoration data gaps, inventory existing stream and riparian habitat conditions, and develop partnerships and coordinate funding.

Given the genetic linkages between native redband trout and steelhead, Casey recommended combining efforts and funding sources. She supported her recommendation by noting:

- Redband Trout were listed as the donor stock for Steelhead in the Phase 1 Reintroduction Plan
- Overlapping habitats
- Steelhead Intrinsic Potential already used in planning documents for potential Redband Trout habitat, and
- Habitats restored for salmon and steelhead will increase Redband habitat.

To do this, the Spokane Tribe is recommending expanding an RFP she initially worked on to do a combined EDT modeling for salmon reintroduction and redband trout within the Spokane River watershed.

## **Developing Limiting Factors Analysis and Salmon Habitat Restoration Strategy**

Eric Doyle with Confluence Environmental Company provided a PowerPoint presentation explaining the history and use of EDT modeling, including it's use in the Okanogan and San Poil watersheds. See Google Drive for PDF of the PowerPoint.

The EDT model has three cornerstones: Habitat Knowledge, Species Knowledge and Species/Habitat Rules. Combined, the model estimates habitat potential and capacity, life stage and population productivity, equilibrium abundance, and life history diversity. An additional outcome is identifying key survival (or habitat limiting) factors.

A “patient-template” analysis is used to diagnose limiting factors and identify protection and restoration priorities. It works by comparing three types of habitat scenarios: a healthy condition, intended to represent the restoration ideal, a degraded (or terminal) condition, and a patient condition, representing both current conditions and “what if” options that include potential changes.

Eric and the team discussed data gaps, e.g.—obstructions, that are not captured and new data that is available, e.g.—Avista studies. The group reviewed the technical next steps and process that the team would go through if it chooses to pursue further EDT modeling.

Eric also shared examples of dash boards and other tools to monitor trends over time.

### **Next Steps and Action Items**

The team discussed moving forward with development of an RFP to initiate EDT analysis. Issues such as the multi-year effort required and challenges filling data gaps were considered. Data, for instance, that needs to be collected on private properties may be a challenge. Also, there will be an extensive need for partner and team support in collection. Options such as the use of LiDAR to alleviate some on the ground data collection were discussed.

The group reached consensus on moving forward with an RFP for EDT that was inclusive of both identified salmon species and native redband trout.

Conor will try to have the RFP ready for review by June 10<sup>th</sup>.

### **Next Meeting and Adjourn**

The team set a date of June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 10:00 a.m. for RFP review. This will be done as a virtual meeting. Andy will provide a zoom link.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.