

Spokane Salmon Restoration Collaborative
Initiating Governments Meeting
September 25, 2024

Attendees: Commissioner Scott Hutsell (Lincoln County); Commissioner Wes McCart (Stevens County); Brent Nichols (Spokane Tribe of Indians); Tom Biladeau (Coeur d'Alene Tribe); Sarah Sirott representing Council Member Kitty Klitzke (City of Spokane); Ben Brattebo (Spokane County)

Staff: Caleb McGivney and Conor Giorgi (Spokane Tribe of Indians)

Facilitator: Andy Dunau, Dunau Associates

Guest: Amy Sumner (Spokane County)

Welcome and Introductions

Attendees introduced themselves.

The meeting purpose is to provide initiating governments an overview of salmon reintroduction and native redband trout enhancement efforts; the roles and responsibilities of the SSRC Lead Entity in supporting salmon reintroduction and native redband trout; SSRC progress and development needs; and next steps in forming the SSRC Citizens Committee.

Spokane River Watershed Salmon Reintroduction

Conor and Tom provided an overview of salmon reintroduction efforts.

The Upper Columbia United Tribes (UCUTs), an association of five member tribes that include the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, Spokane Tribe of Indians, Coeur d'Alene Tribe, Kalispel Tribe of Indians and Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, are evaluating the feasibility of reintroducing salmon. This includes goals for supporting naturally reproducing populations and providing responsible and conservative artificial production. The focal species are non-ESA listed Chinook and Sockeye salmon. A Phase 2 Implementation Plan (P2IP) is guiding a multi-million-dollar effort over a 20-year horizon. This includes extensive research and monitoring regarding fish migration and survival, establishment of hatchery/rearing facilities, and incorporating fish passage infrastructure as needed.

See attached PDF for further details.

Lead Entity Roles and Responsibilities

Andy provided a brief history of Washington State salmon recovery efforts. Lead Entity and Regional Recovery Organizations were created to solicit, develop, prioritize and submit habitat protection and restoration projects to the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB). Until 2021, federal and state efforts to support lead entities were fully focused on ESA listed species. The state now supports reintroduction

of non-ESA listed species to blocked areas, which is why the Spokane Tribe was invited to create the first new lead entity in several years. There are now 26 lead entities state-wide. The SSRC is focused on the Spokane River Watershed, specifically habitat restoration to support non-ESA listed spring and summer/fall Chinook as well as native redband trout.

The Technical Committee was formed in the Spring of 2022 with an initial focus of guiding development of a habitat restoration plan. Future efforts will include setting priorities and helping rank habitat projects.

The initiating governments will establish the Citizens Committee. This committee will ensure priorities and projects have community support. They will also review and provide final ranking of habitat projects before submission to the SRFB.

See attached PDF for further details.

SSRC Progress to Date and Planning

Caleb provided an overview of SSRC progress to date and next steps for planning.

After a filing by the Spokane Tribe of Indians, Washington State recognized the SSRC as a lead entity on February 13, 2024. The filing included resolutions from the six initiating governments present at this meeting.

Outreach has included the launching of a website, spokanesalmon.org, that includes videos, resources, meeting materials, etc. Presentations have also been given at conferences, governmental councils, community meetings and stakeholder meetings.

Caleb reviewed the agencies, NGOs and universities participating on the technical committee. Their early work has focused on a data gap analysis of Ecosystem Diagnostic Treatment modeling published in 2018; implementation of a new EDT model to support a limiting factors analysis and habitat restoration plan; and data collection, inclusive of using interns, that began in the summer of 2024. A timeline showed that in 2026 SSRC expects to run a new EDT model and complete development of a habitat restoration plan.

Priorities through 2025 include reaching out to private landowners as a prerequisite to meeting data collection needs, continuing to collect data (which will be supported by a STOI BIA grant for interns), inputting data into the EDT model, and development of guidelines, materials and processes for entities to submit proposals in the SRFB 2026 grant round.

Funding for the 2025-2027 biennium was also reviewed. Capacity funding will support core staffing/coordination needs. A legislative line-item request has been submitted in order to complete EDT modeling and completion of the habitat restoration plan. SSRCs allocation for habitat project funding is unknown. At the same time, SSRC agencies are working well together to identify and secure habitat project funding from other entities.

Initiating governments asked that they be kept apprised of results from a state mid-October meeting regarding a legislative line-item request. Because they see the request as essential to SSRC development activities, they are interested in letting decision-makers aware of their support.

See attached PDF for further details.

Next Steps

The initiating governments were asked to form and convene the Citizens Committee. A list of potential membership was distributed with a general recommendation regarding number of members. The composition of the committee is expected to align with membership guidance provided in the Washington State Salmon Coalition Lead Entity Reference guide. Specifically:

“The Citizens Committee is critical to ensure that priorities and projects have the necessary community support for success. Citizens Committee members often are the best judges of the community’s social, cultural, and economic values and of how to increase support for salmon recovery over time through the implementation of projects.”

The initiating governments will also be asked to review, edit and approve by-laws for the lead entity that staff is drafting.

Based on the status of the legislative line-item request in mid-October, initiating governments will meet again in either November or January to proceed with next steps.

Adjournment

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned.