**Fish Tagging Forum**

**Meeting Notes**

**Tuesday March 19, 2013**

Northwest Power and Conservation Council

**Introductions/Meeting Objectives/Recap of Last Meeting**

Therese Hampton (chair) welcomed the participants. Kevin Kytola went over the agenda items to be covered today.

**Scenario Analysis – PIT Tags (Kevin Kytola)**

The group worked through the process of defining the role of PIT tags in addressing the management questions and indicators. In addition to PIT tags, the group discussed additional loose ends regarding primary and secondary rankings of all remaining tag types. Results of the discussion are documented in the attached summary table as well as updates to the “spider chart” and Indicator Analysis spreadsheet that will be posted on the FTF web page.

**Action item:** There were a few indicators where discussions were incomplete (Habitat – Management Question 2 – Indicators D, E, F, and G). These indicators will be discussed further at a future meeting.

**SAR Indicators (Kevin Kytola)**

A suggestion was made that the SAR indicators should be removed from each of the various Hs and instead used only in the Population Status and Recovery tab, which is similar to the regional coordinated assessments effort. The question was raised about how that would work when the group defined the Population Status and Recovery tab as applying to only the ESA-listed populations. What about the non-listed populations.

It was also suggested it could be its own separate management indicator. It was noted that although each H contributes to smolt to adult return levels, no H has unique or isolated effects on smolt to adult return levels. SARs are used as a tool or metric by NMFS for measuring various management indicators, such as extinction risk. SAR from tributary to spawning ground is our true measure of success; BON-to-BON (ocean-estuary) SAR and/or LWG-to-BON SAR are other survival indicators. Some BPA projects use two SARs. It was suggested the “ultimate” measure of success should be spawner-to-spawner, or recruit-to-spawner, which includes the egg-to-smolt life stage.

Because the various SAR-related indicators reflect different survival estimates for various life stages, the group agreed to not refer to them all as SAR, rather use their respective life-stage designation.

**Action item:** A small work group was formed to make this refinement and complete work on the SAR spreadsheet. The work group consists of Dan, Pete, Blaine, Tom, Marianne, Therese, Rick and Jason Sweet, who will meet next Tuesday, March 28 at 2-3 pm to re-draft the SAR-related indicator definitions and make the associated changes to the spider chart.

**Cost-Related Topics – Part 1** *Update on latest cost refinement (Rick Golden)*

Rick said there is little new information on BPA’s cost spreadsheet, except for: a) the need to clarify the cost of genetic markers per Shaun Narum’s suggestions; and b) further evaluation of the PIT tag insertion costs in the table. Others should look at those costs to see if they are accurate now.

Kevin asked the group whether it is important to further refine the tagging cost estimates, or do we simply need to compare the *relative* costs of the various tagging technologies? The group agreed to accept and recognize that these tagging costs are probably in the ballpark now and thus should be used as relative scalars for a comparison of tagging technologies. Thus we probably don’t need to continue to refine these costs to try to obtain a “false precision.”

Tony agreed to send out some draft cost summary information to the FTF that incorporates the breakout of costs agreed to at the last meeting (i.e., F&W program direct, indirect and reimbursable).

The group agreed it is important to provide context for the BPA funding relative to coast-wide funding for the CWT program. The group believed the information regarding other funding provided by George Nandor at a previous meeting was sufficient. The group also thought it would also be useful to understand the other funding sources for genetic markers. Pete Hassemer indicated that it will be difficult to “nail down” the cost of genetic markers because the technology is changing so rapidly. However, he will explore and see what he can find. Otherwise, the group agreed we should have all the necessary tagging cost information we need now.

**Action item:** Pete Hassemer agreed to look into other expenditures for genetic markers.

Therese suggested there may be a recommendation to more fully understand the other sources of funding and work on genetic markers in order to share costs or find opportunistic uses of others tagging projects.

**Cost-Related Topics – Part 2** *Update on the cost-effectiveness model (Bill Jaeger)*

Bill Jaeger reminded the group of his need for additional information for the model and said he hopes to receive increasingly more input from the group. He presented information on the status of the current model version, the number of tagged fish versus the number of fish detected, juvenile and adult dam passage, etc.

He also described Figure 1 as an example, which is a comparison of salmon catch tagging costs for both CWT and genetic markers, based on an optimal tagging and recovery mix. While genetics samples many fewer fish, it costs more due to higher analytical lab costs for genotyping compared to CWTs.

He asked the forum for their input on the FTF Indicator Priorities matrix which is intended to capture the similarities and differences in importance of tag information to different groups. It was suggested the model needs a sensitivity analysis on population size, especially for Hanford Reach fall Chinook compared to smaller numbers of SR fall Chinook.

The group then discussed the purpose of the IEAB economic modeling effort. Tony explained the IEAB is trying to assist the FTF with the cost-effectiveness issue for fish tagging and that the FTF needs to determine the value they hope to derive from it. The model is becoming more informative, but the group will need further clarification from Dr. Jaeger on some of the model assumptions and costs to be able to assist him in the IEAB’s modeling effort. The FTF determined that they would explore recommendations first and then determine how the model might support recommendation development.

**Action item:** The FTF agreed to take the lead and determine if there were scenarios that the economic analysis tool can model in support of the development o recommendations. The group agreed to do this at the March 28 FTF meeting. Tony will call Bill Jaeger and let him know of this discussion.

**Discuss Role of Harvest Management Questions and Indicators in the Council’s F&W Program -- Areas of Interest and Importance of Indicators (Kevin Kytola)**

Tony provided background on how the Council staff determined whether various indicators are identified as “high or moderate” or “neutral or no” importance to the Council’s F&WL Program. He explained the NW Power Act does not give the Council management authority over fisheries – such authority was left to the fishery managers, e.g., states, tribes and federal fish agencies. Instead, the Council’s F&WL Program is focused on mitigation actions at and above Bonneville Dam, and is intended to complement the activities of the region’s fish and wildlife managers. The Gorton amendment to the NW Power Act called for the Council to take into account the estuary and ocean conditions. Thus the Council is not a decision maker for harvest actions in the CRB, so most of the ocean harvest actions and related indicators are not a high priority for Council. An example of an exception to that would be a Council interest in tributary harvest indicators above Bonneville Dam.

It was pointed out there may be a linkage to the F&WL Program with upriver stocks which are harvested in the ocean. Some of the NMFS BiOp’s RPAs concerning harvest effects on listed stocks also have connections with the Council’s Program.

Tony asked the FTF members to identify their own interests and need for tag-related information to meet their own responsibilities and authorities. This would facilitate an understanding of where there are differing and shared interests.

There was discussion about the difference between management responsibility, regulatory authority, interest, and funding responsibility. As an example, Guy Norman suggested that BPA may have a funding responsibility based on the NMFS BiOp RPA 62 concerning harvest monitoring, as well as the all-H analysis for the BiOp, both of which require information about harvest impacts. Bill Maslen reminded the group that BPA’s funding for F&WL Program actions is not intended to be “in lieu of” others’ funding responsibilities for things like harvest monitoring.

Action Item: After some discussion, it was suggested that prior to March 28, each entity mark up a spider chart similar to what Council staff had done previously to indicate their level of interest (high, moderate, neutral, or none) in each indicator. The level of interest should be based on”responsibility to ensure adequate data is collected to support the indicator and their ability to influence (or participate in) implementation”. The responsibility should be pursuant to specific legal or policy drivers. For example, the Council staff did their assessment based on their responsibilities associated with the F&W Program Plan and the NW Power Act. Similarly, a State fisheries agency would conduct their assessment of interest based on their responsibility relative to US v. OR and/or State fisheries management policies.

**Begin Crafting Potential Recommendations (Kevin Kytola)**

This item will be discussed at the next FTF meeting.

**Action item:** Tony Grover agreed to send out the start of a memorandum to the Council that attempts to document much of the common understanding that has been developed by the forum to-date. Tony indicated that he has been formulating specific recommendations but they are not included in the current draft memo.

**Recap and Plan Next Meeting**

Next meeting is scheduled for March 28, 2013, at the Council conference room.

Agenda items will include: a) discussing the outcome of the SAR spreadsheet work group; b) begin discussing FTF recommendations; and c) discuss economic modeling scenarios and/or cost effectiveness assistance from the IEAB.

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