**Fish Tagging Forum**

**Meeting Notes**

**Thursday March 28, 2013**

Northwest Power and Conservation Council

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

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

**SAR Indicators**

Kevin said the goal for the group today is to finalize the SARs portion of the Management Indicator Analysis spreadsheet and spider chart. Kevin summarized the subcommittee’s discussion of SAR indicators. The subcommittee decided to leave the various SAR indicators as depicted on the spider chart (except for the estuary SAR indicator, which was dropped), but to further refine the definitions of the various SAR indicators.

Dan Rawding has the assignment of developing a working definition for smolt-to-adult returns (SAR). Dan will work on this assignment next week and will circulate a draft working definition to FTF members. Kevin mentioned that some folks have already provided their input on the SAR issue already, and Dan will take that input into account.

The group decided to add “recruit-to-spawner” as an indicator metric on the Population Status and Recovery tab. Kevin pointed out the group still needs to assign some tagging technologies to this indicator.

**Action:** Kevin agreed to work with Dan, Guy and Pete to tentatively assign tags to the recruit-to-spawner indicator next week and send it out to the full FTF when completed.

**Evaluations to Support Recommendations**

To date, only the Council and the BPA Customer group (through Therese) have expressed their rankings of “interest” in the various indicators that support their responsibilities. Guy said it was difficult to do this exercise because he thought there are various levels of “interest;” for example implementation responsibility, support responsibility and general interest. It’s not all black and white, e.g., there are also gray areas of responsibility. Leah said Grant County PUD is expecting to work on their interests next week.

Tony discussed BPA’s increasing funding history of the Council’s F&WL Program, and cautioned the group that the current $250 million per year in funding for the Program may not continue to increase but may have reached a “funding plateau” now. Tony strongly urged the subject matter experts, e.g., the FTF members, to make the recommendations on tagging projects, and not others who may not be subject matter experts.

Randy Fisher pointed out the F&WL Program spending is largely associated with FCRPS BiOp implementation. Others recognize the BPA F&WL spending is limited.

Bill Maslen said Bonneville would like to prioritize funding of on-the-ground projects rather than more RME projects. There may be opportunities for regional cost sharing for some of these tagging projects especially where the projects are not only a Bonneville responsibility.

Marianne indicated the various tagging technologies provide the region with different tools for fisheries management.

Dan Rawding presented the results of his [evaluation](/media/6664656/1ary-and-2ary-tag-applications-Management-Questions-rawding-28march2013.ppt) of the Primary and Secondary rankings of tag applications for each tab of the Indicator Spreadsheet; this evaluation did not include any of the SAR indicators. He concluded that no single tag technology will answer all the management questions. PIT tags (48%), followed by CWTs (33%), are the most versatile and heavily used tag types. Acoustic and Radio Tags have specific applications, primarily for passage route and survivals at dams. Genetic markers are the newest technology and it probably has the most potential for future applications.

Pete pointed out that PIT tags are the primary and only tag technology to address predation questions, whereas other tag technologies could address other management questions. Need to factor in geographic scope of tagging programs in CRB, too. For example, genetics are more widely used in the Snake River Basin.

Randy said the FTF should consider what the future use of tags will be, e.g., for all the Hs. Dan said his evaluation already shows strong secondary (SS), weak secondary (WS) and Future application of the various tagging types.

Tony said he likes the analysis, but it doesn’t seem to account for geographic differences or the different weights of the management questions.

Marianne said the evaluation doesn’t show the “uniqueness” of particular tags, such as CWTs for ocean harvest. Doug Marsh said we should try to color code unique tags, and which indicators have several tag types. Tony told the group to review Table 4 in his draft memo from last week, which tries to address that issue. Marianne indicated that she has provided comments on that table because it did not seem to include harvest or hatchery.

Guy and George both like this evaluation as a broad-based, high level summary analysis – it’s easier to understand and read than the spider charts.

The group thought these charts could be useful as an attachment to the decision memo. Some members thought the memo shouldn’t be constrained by a size limit since the FTF has been meeting and deliberating for 1.5 years now.

Randy said it seems the total cost of the various tagging programs ($60M) will be a key piece of information for Council members, with PIT and acoustic tags having the largest costs now. Therese pointed the group to Table 5 of the draft memo and indicated that the primary area of focus for the Council members will be those costs directly influenced by the Fish and Wildlife Program.

Bill Maslen said the 110 or so management questions may not be the same management questions the region will need in the future – the group needs to be forward thinking about future tagging needs. Pete said the FTF should review the full suite of tagging technologies to address the various management questions, and look at trade-offs. The tags are the tools used to address the management questions.

Guy said that the return of information from a given tagging technology may vary depending on whether we have good or bad ocean conditions. What tag technology will help us understand the ocean conditions better?

Randy asked what is Bonneville’s “fair share” of the tagging costs? That fair share needs to be identified so this group can develop better recommendations.

Therese suggested the customers ask the following questions when considering program and cost-effectiveness evaluation: a) are the tags effectively answering the management questions? or b) can this information be provided more cost efficiently? and c) is it BPA’s responsibility to provide this information?

Dan Rawding presented the results of a [second evaluation](/media/6664659/tag-application-AllvsHighQuestions-rawding-28march2013.ppt) that compared tag applications for all indicators to the Council’s high priority ranked indicatorsfor each tab of the Indicator Spreadsheet. Tony said the charts showing the Council staff’s rankings didn’t really change the level of interest or significantly skew the relative reliance on the various tag types compared to all the charts with all of the indicators.

Kevin said if we had others’ expression of interest, e.g., rankings, a similar evaluation could be conducted. The FTF should review this information and provide feedback on it.

Dan then presented a [third evaluation](/media/6664662/tagging-versus-1ary-and-2ary-charter-objectives-FTF_4-questions-rawding-28march2013.ppt) for the group to consider that evaluated tagging relative to both the primary and secondary objectives from the FTF charter **.** This evaluation did not include genetic markers, but Pete is working on those.

Doug Marsh pointed out the 600K PIT-tagged fall Chinook are no longer being tagged in the Snake Basin in 2012. George explained there are about 900K CWTs applied to Willamette Basin spring Chinook, which are included in the below BON line. Pete said not all tag types will require regional coordination, e.g., acoustic and radio tags.

The database recommendations will need to include a need for a regional microsatellite (SNPs) database for genetic markers, one of which is currently being maintained jointly by CRITFC and IDFG; NOAA also has one.

We also need to consider need for the coordination and/or efficiency of tag detection infrastructure.

**Outline and Discussion of Potential Recommendations (Kevin Kytola)**

Tony suggested this group’s recommendations need to be realistic, implementable and reasonable.

Kevin explained he received three sets of recommendations from others, and will let each party explain them before getting responses or questions from members. Kevin also handed out a work sheet for folks to fill out to help with the recommendation process; also need to consider breaking out both short-term (within the next year) or long-term recommendations (1 to 3 years).

Preliminary Recommendations were offered by:

1. Randy Fisher from the perspective of PSMFC, WA, OR, and ID.
2. Therese Hampton from the perspective of the BPA Customers.
3. Marianne McClure from the perspective of CRITFC.
4. Tony Grover from the perspective of NPCC.

As a result of the group discussions, a single set of draft recommendations has been compiled for further review and discussion. Because these draft recommendations are still preliminary and subject to much more discussion on April 11, they will not be posted on the FTF webpage at this time.

Tony said he would send the group three other questions about use of tagging for selective harvest, otolith marks and how tagging would be conducted in a very low water year.

**Define Modeling Scenarios for IEAB Evaluations (Kevin Kytola)**

The goal of this agenda item is to determine whether the group’s recommendations could be informed by IEAB economic evaluations. Bill Jaeger said he revised some of the graphs showing CWT vs genetics in harvest – those revised graphs will be posted and sent out to full FTF. A full discussion of this topic was not accomplished at the meeting.

**Recap and Plan Next Meetings on April 11 and 25, 2013**

**Action:** The group agreed to hold another meeting at PSMFC on April 11 at 8 am to 3:30 pm. Meeting will cover follow-up discussion on the recommendations we discussed today, and the content of the decision memo. Tony agreed to send out the latest draft memo to FTF early next week. Kevin asked FTF members to hold their feedback for the next meeting. Then the goal of the April 25th meeting will be to refine the recommendations further.

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