

Columbia Basin Federal Caucus
Recovery Initiative Working Group

Meeting Summary

February 7, 2018 – NOAA Fisheries

Team Participants:

Rosemary Furfey (NOAA)	Kimberly Conley (USFS)	Greg Smith (BPA)
Diane Driscoll (NOAA)	Rob Huff (BLM)	Scott Willey (USBR)
Marvin Shuttters (USACE)	Michelle Helms (BPA)	Vince Kozakiewicz (USBR)
Steve Waste (USGS)	Keith Hatch (BIA)	Kate Terrell (USFWS)

Other Participants:

Nancy Schifferdecker (FC)
Lesa Stark (USBR)
John Palmer (EPA)

Invited but not in attendance: Tom Cooney (NOAA), Pat Moran (USGS), and Greg Fuhrer (USGS / FC Chair).

Welcome and Introductions: (Furfey)

Rosemary welcomed the team and noted that each member brings a unique background, skills, and knowledge to this project. Each member introduced themselves and outlined their experience and current work that relates to recovery in the Mid-C.

Rosemary provided an overview of the events leading up to the formation of this Federal Caucus recovery-focused work effort. In August of 2017, Caucus members began formulating a list of issues relating to their proposed work plan for FY2018, in which salmon recovery emerged as the frontrunner. At the October 2, 2017 annual meeting of Federal Caucus Regional Executives, this focus was overwhelmingly endorsed as the key task for FY2018. A subsequent series of discussions by a small group of Federal Caucus members identified Mid-C Steelhead as the strongest candidate for a year-long examination of how federal agencies can work together to improve viability of a species by addressing remaining recovery needs (i.e., How can we “move the dial?”). Further information on the “Background” of this project can be found in the Work Plan (Attachment 1).

- Executives have asked that a Communications strategy play a large role in this effort (see further discussion below).
- The Federal Caucus will update Executives at a mid-year check-in event in May 2018.

Review Federal Caucus FY2018 Work Plan and Identify Next Steps to Implement: (Furfey)

The Federal Caucus reviewed the draft Work Plan in detail; it was approved by the Caucus in January 2018. At that time, the Caucus agreed to assemble a “standing team.” It was noted that the Plan offers “sideboards;” however, the proposed tasks are considered “in development” (i.e., the team may consider alternate means for addressing issues, etc.). The team participants reviewed the Federal Caucus Work Plan and discussed questions from the team.

- There was discussion regarding current ESA biological viability standards versus the greater, broad-sense recovery abundance needed for tribal use. It was noted that this work effort is based on the framework set forth in NMFS’ 5-year Status Review.
- Recent collaborative work efforts (including those related to the Yakima Integrated Plan) were noted as successful examples of how multiple parties have come together to make small contributions to achieve significant results.
- It was noted that one of the primary goals of the project is the sharing of information between federal agencies and continued identification of areas where Federal Agencies play a “key” role in the various watersheds and how those roles can be developed and leveraged into partnerships to get changes on the ground. There is plenty of data, but there is still a need to set up an approach that serves to connect the dots on that data, as well as break down “turf” constraints.
- It was noted that the Mid-C effort may potentially provide a template for similar Federal Caucus effort for other listed species in the Columbia Basin.
- Throughout the meeting, there was discussion regarding how the group might best package its recommendations. The goal is not a “laundry list” of recommended actions. Rather, it is about highlighting how far we’ve come and indicating how we can effectively leverage resources by identifying key partnerships or looking at developing ones where they are absent, and long-term strategies that require a Federal partner within each MPG.
- It was noted that through the identification of shared objectives for Mid-C, there may be a nexus with the Northwest Power and Conservation Council’s next F&W amendment process (commencing spring 2018). That is, the objectives could help inform how implementation is proceeding and identify the potential remaining challenges and program/project-level opportunities.

Background Information:

Several background documents were distributed prior to the meeting (see list below).

An overview of a previous (2009-2011) Federal Caucus work effort and final report was provided. Both Marvin Shuttles and Kate Terrell were part of that team. They described the previous group's work in the field with a variety of sub-basin entities, including watershed groups, state and county agencies, and NGOs.

- It was noted that most participants in the current Mid-C Steering Committee (Attachment 3) were involved in that earlier Federal Caucus work.

2009 Recovery Plan and Review of Current Framework: (Driscoll)

Please see PowerPoint distributed with the meeting materials and presented by Diane Driscoll, NMFS Recovery Coordinator for Mid-Columbia Steelhead: "Getting to Viability for Middle Columbia River Steelhead Distinct Population Segment."

- Of significance is the fact that there is more than one way to achieve viability within each major population group (MPG) through various combinations of "highly viable," "viable," and "maintained" classifications.
- Supplemental information was provided using a Mid-C Steelhead summary recently produced by Ray Beamesderfer for the NOAA Columbia Basin Partnership (Attachment 2) and a Mid-C 2015 Status Briefing Paper (Berwick & Driscoll 2017).
- A concern was shared over the exclusion of re-introduced fish above Pelton Round Butte (on the Crooked River). It was noted that the Crooked River population was identified as extirpated in the Recovery Plan. Since then, steelhead re-introduction efforts have been underway for several years and are covered under the existing ESA 10 (j) process.

Communications Strategy: (Helms)

The group held a short, preliminary discussion regarding how to integrate the Federal Caucus Communications Team (FCCT) into this effort. Regional Executives have given strong direction to Caucus members that the federal family needs to highlight successful regional efforts better and more frequently than in the past. Michelle Helms (FCCT Chair) will work with her colleagues to further discuss the goals and potential audiences related to the Mid-C work. At the outset, her group will conduct an inventory of what each agency is currently publishing about Recovery.

Next Steps and Next Meeting(s):

- The next meeting will be a thorough review of NMFS' most recent 5-year Status Review led by Tom Cooney, NOAA's Northwest Fisheries Science Center.
- In late March or early April the team will meet with members from the Mid-C Steering Committee for a day-long workshop in The Dalles.
- Keith Hatch will check in with tribes regarding their trustee concerns.
- Federal Caucus members will be briefed at their February 20 meeting.

Additional Materials Attached:

1. Final work plan for Federal Caucus recovery task 23 January 2018
2. CBP Goals Mid Col R Steelhead 20171212
3. Mid-C Steering Committee Roster

Additional Materials Included by Reference:

- Feb 7 2018 Fed Caucus (Driscoll PowerPoint)
- Final 2011 Mid C Focus Team Report to Federal Caucus
- MCR Sthd 5-year Status Review Briefing Paper from DD 25 Jan 2018
- Link to NMFS' 2016 Mid-C Five-year Status Review:
http://www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov/publications/status_reviews/salmon_steelhead/2016/2016_middle-columbia.pdf
- Executive Summary for 2009 Mid-C Steelhead ESA Recovery Plan:
http://www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov/publications/recovery_planning/salmon_steelhead/domains/interior_columbia/middle_columbia/mid-c-exsum.pdf

ATTACHMENT 1

**Work Plan for Federal Caucus FY 2018 Project
to
Support Recovery of Salmon and Steelhead in the Columbia River Basin
January 2018**

Purpose and Goal

The purpose of this project is to identify past and future planned federal actions to support recovery of endangered species act (ESA) listed salmon and steelhead in the Columbia Basin. This project will assess whether those actions and programs are adequate to support delisting, and if not, this project will identify which federal actions and programs can be leveraged to address continuing limiting factors and threats for ESA listed species. This project will enable the Federal Caucus to understand how federal agencies can best support continued species' biological viability improvements, as well as addressing a species' threats criteria identified in ESA recovery plans. The National Marine Fisheries Service makes its ESA species status review and delisting decisions based on an analysis of both the biological viability criteria and threats criteria.

This one-year project will seek to address the following questions:

- Based on the 2016 National Marine Fisheries Service 5-year Status Review, what are the most important threats and limiting factors that need to be addressed to improve species viability, and which of these threats and limiting factors can federal agencies help to address?
- What has been accomplished by federal agencies that has contributed to improved viability and current status of the species (e.g., BOR's Yakima Basin Integrated Plan)?
- What are the remaining and future recovery needs, and how can federal agency actions improve viability and address these needs?

Recognizing that this can be a lot of work to do all the Columbia Basin ESA-listed species, we identified and applied the following criteria to focus our work on a species and geographic area to meet our one-year timeframe:

- Is there a strong near-term potential for ESA-listed delisting based on species viability metrics (e.g., abundance, productivity, spatial structure, and genetic variability)?
- Is there a current well-organized and active engagement by local state, tribal, and federal partners in on-going recovery activities?
- Is there a strong likelihood that Federal Caucus agency engagement can make a difference and promote recovery by addressing one or more species limiting factors?
- Are existing federal agency activities and programs currently being implemented?
- Is there a strong potential for several communication stories that can be written about ESA recovery and focused federal actions?

Based on these criteria, we have selected the ESA-listed Middle Columbia River steelhead distinct population segment (DPS) as the focus species and geographic area for this Federal

Caucus project. This review can serve as a template to potentially expand this FY 2018 Federal Caucus initiative to support recovery and delisting of other ESA-listed salmon and steelhead species in the Columbia River Basin.

This work plan will be carried out by a Federal Caucus Recovery Focus Team made up of one staff member from federal agencies working in the Middle Columbia River geographic area. The Federal Caucus will identify a staff person to represent their agency on this team for FY 2018.

Background

During the Federal Caucus' 2017 annual off-site meeting, the topic of how to promote recovery of ESA-listed salmon and steelhead in the Columbia Basin was identified as a proposed focus theme for the Federal Caucus' FY 2018 work plan. The idea of recovery as a focus area was driven by the circumstance that several recovery related activities have recently been completed, or are near completion in 2018. This includes the recent completion of the final recovery plans for salmon and steelhead species, the recent completion of NMFS' 5-year status reviews, the conclusions of the 2008 BiOp and Accords, and many other related efforts contributed to the idea that many recovery pieces are now in place and it is time to take stock of our progress and look at next steps.

During the off-site meeting, Caucus members brainstormed several ideas for how to investigate this topic: (1) identify species recovery needs, (2) identify technical needs, and (3) identify issues that the Federal Caucus can address. This can be done through technical briefings with local recovery leads in order to identify remaining limiting factors, and a menu of actions and policy issues to collectively support recovery. It was agreed that the Caucus should explore if there are actionable items where the Federal Caucus agencies can bring Federal Caucus resources to bear on key issues and recovery tasks to support ESA recovery. The federal executives endorsed this FY 2018 recovery theme at their October 2, 2017 annual meeting in Portland.

In 2000, the Federal Caucus developed an "All H" recovery strategy paper. Subsequently, in 2009 - 2011, the Federal Caucus conducted a study on Middle Columbia River steelhead to (1) evaluate if federal actions are adequate to achieve delisting, and (2) identify recommended federal actions for each Middle Columbia River steelhead major population group. It also evaluated research, monitoring, and evaluation (RM&E) efforts in the Middle-Columbia subbasins to determine if RM&E is adequate to identify when recovery goals are met. This proposed work plan should review and evaluate the potential to build on the results of these previous Federal Caucus studies to identify where focused federal agency action can make significant progress toward the species reaching delisting.

Proposed Federal Caucus FY 2018 ESA Recovery Work Plan: The following tasks are proposed for consideration by the Federal Caucus Recovery Focus Team as they develop their FY 2018 work plan for this project.

1. Review proposal with Federal Caucus, revise proposal as needed, and confirm work plan assignment and agreement to commit staff for a Federal Caucus standing team – Federal Caucus meeting: December 2017.

2. Identify staff and form a Federal Caucus standing team to implement this project, provide Middle Columbia River steelhead background information to team, confirm work plan schedule, and begin work – January 2018.
3. Communicate with National Marine Fisheries Service and Middle Columbia River Steelhead Steering Committee to identify how to work together, information needed, and strategy for implementing this project. – January - February 2018
4. Meet with NMFS and Northwest Fisheries Science Center (NWFSC) staff to be briefed on 2016 ESA 5-year status review for Middle Columbia River steelhead and 2015 Northwest Fisheries Science Center 5-year status report. – February 2018
5. Conduct one-day workshop with National Marine Fisheries Service staff from Ellensburg, Washington, the Middle Columbia River Steelhead Steering Committee, and invited persons. Identify current species status, limiting factors, threats, recovery needs, and focus areas for recovery projects. Evaluate the viability scenarios for each major population group and assess what is needed to get the appropriate populations to the target viability categories. Assess the threats in the context of the five listing factors. Identify what federal agency work has been completed and is currently occurring; and identify what federal actions can most contribute to species recovery for each major population group in the steelhead DPS. – March/April 2018.
6. Conduct one-day workshop with federal and state agency experts to identify a range of potential conservation programs and tools that can be implemented to support ESA recovery; identify potential ways federal agencies can use these tools for Middle Columbia River steelhead to promote recovery (e.g., conservation banks, safe harbor agreements). – June 2018
7. Engage the Federal Caucus communication team to identify and develop recovery stories; and work with local partners to write and distribute stories. – On-going throughout 2018.
8. Write team report: summarize findings, identify recommendations and next steps for Federal Caucus action to promote ESA recovery. – July – August 2018
9. Share draft report and present findings to Federal Caucus; edit and revise final report – September 2018
10. Share report to Federal Executives – October 2018

Products

A report to the Federal Caucus with recommendations for how federal agencies can support ESA recovery and delisting of Middle Columbia River steelhead. Including:

Recovery Initiative Working Group

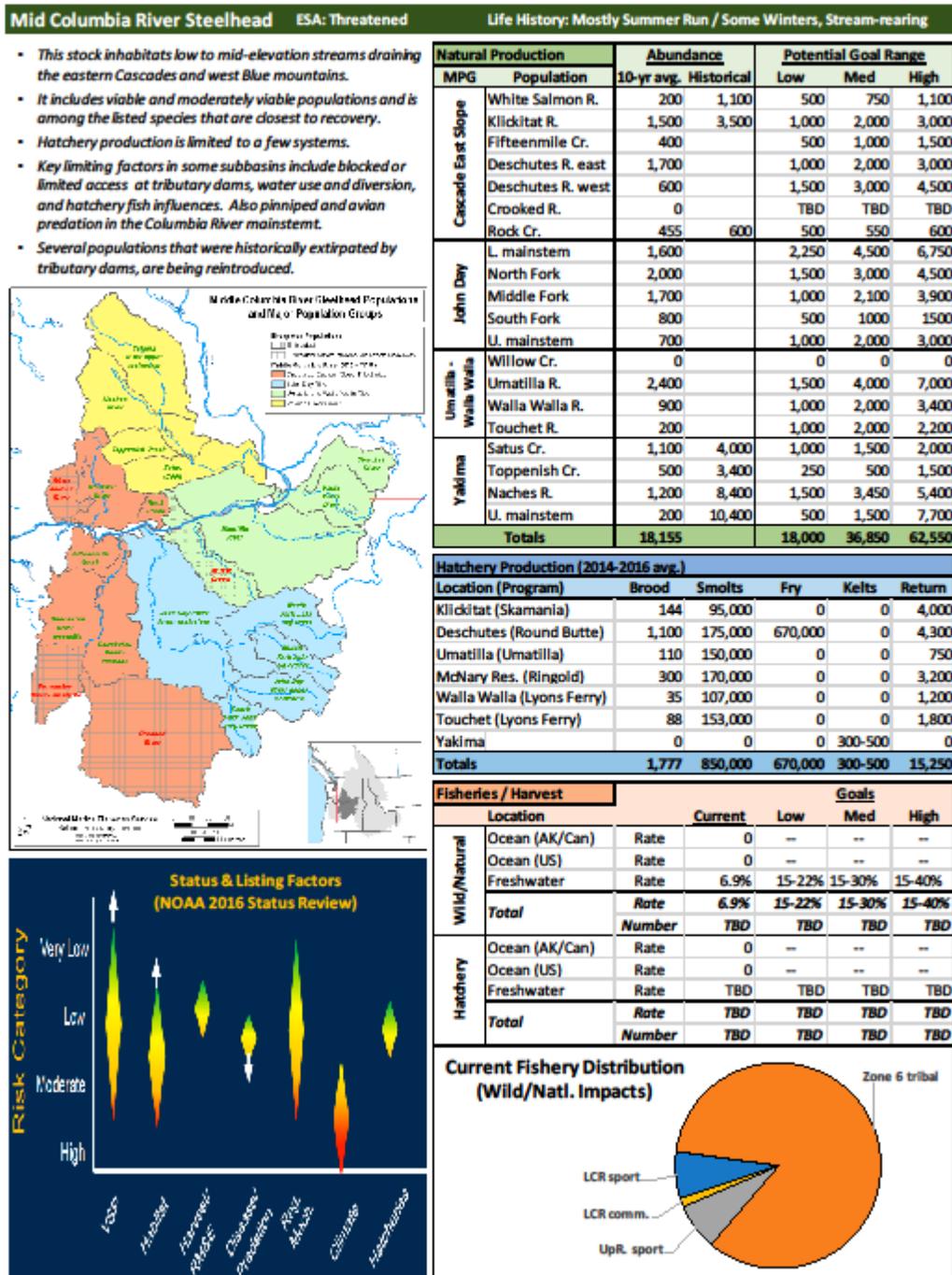
- Using the 2016 NMFS Middle Columbia River steelhead 5-year status review as a reference, together with other information, identify past and current federal programs that are particularly important for recovery;
- Potential future actions that can be taken by federal agencies for each major population group in the DPS;
- A description of a “tool box” of conservation programs that federal agencies could use to promote recovery;
- Recommendations to the Federal Caucus on next steps; and
- 2-3 communication stories about Federal Caucus agency recovery work for Middle Columbia River steelhead: existing programs and potential future actions.

What will success look like?

- A Federal Caucus team successfully implements a one-year project by working with the National Marine Fisheries Service, Middle Columbia River Steelhead Steering Committee, and local state, tribal and federal agency staff to identify the most important remaining limiting factors and where federal agency programs and actions could address these factors to improve steelhead DPS viability toward delisting.

ATTACHMENT 2

Draft 12/12/17



NOAA Columbia Basin Partnership

??

?

ATTACHMENT 3

MID-C STEERING COMMITTEE ROSTER

First Name	Last Name	E-mail Address
Jake	Anderson	jacoba@klickitatcounty.org
Adrienne	Averett	Adrienne.W.Averett@state.or.us
Dale	Bambrick	dale.bambrick@noaa.gov
Nora	Berwick	Nora.Berwick@noaa.gov
Joe	Bumgarner	joseph.bumgarner@dfw.wa.gov
Alex	Conley	aconley@ybfwrp.org
Tom	Cooney	tom.cooney@noaa.gov
Jeremy	Cram	Jeremy.Cram@dfw.wa.gov
Diane	Driscoll	diane.driscoll@noaa.gov
Bill	Duke	William.B.Duke@state.or.us
Urban	Eberhart	urban@krdistrict.org
Scott	Federal	scott.carlon@noaa.gov
John	Foltz	john@snakeriverboard.org
Chris	Frederiksen	chrisf@yakama.com
Rosemary	Furfey	rosemary.furfey@noaa.gov
Chris	Gannon	chris@crwc.info
Matt	Gardner	matthew.gardner@dfw.wa.gov
Jennifer	Graham	jennifer.graham@ctwsbnr.org
Brad	Houslet	brad.houslet@ctwsbnr.org
Ryan	Houston	rhouston@restorethedeschutes.org
Gary	James	GaryJames@ctuir.org
Steve	Martin	steve.martin@gsro.wa.gov
Dave	McClure	DaveM@co.klickitat.wa.us
Bruce	McIntosh	Bruce.A.McIntosh@state.or.us
Jim	Ruzycki	James.R.Ruzycki@state.or.us
Kevin	Scribner	scribfish@gmail.com
Bill	Sharp	sharp@yakama.com
Tom	Stahl	Thomas.Stahl@state.or.us
Mike	Tehan	mike.tehan@noaa.gov
Jeremy	Trump	jeremy.trump@dfw.wa.gov
Rich	Turner	Rich.Turner@noaa.gov
Randy	Tweten	Randy.Tweten@noaa.gov
Mark	Wachtel	mark.wachtel@dfw.wa.gov
Brian	Wolcott	brian.wolcott@wwbwc.org
Joe	Zendt	jzendt@ykfp.org