

Columbia River Basin Lamprey Technical Workgroup

Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife
Authority

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Lamprey Technical Workgroup Retr
Meeting Minutes
Dec 1-2, 2004



Present: Sam Lohr, Mary Moser, Jen Graham, Molly Hallock, Jen Stone, Derek Fryer (standing in for David Clugston), Dave Ward, Mike Clement, Russel Moursund, Christopher Claire, Doug Hatch, Chuck Peven, Bao Lê, Jeanette Howard, Tom Iverson, Debbie Docherty, Matt Mesa. Facilitator Donna Silverburg.

Introductions: Donna introduced herself as the facilitator of the meeting and allowed each participant to introduce themselves. Jen Stone reviewed the history of the Technical Workgroup, beginning with the original lamprey proposal submitted by the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, continuing through the status review, the original workgroup meetings/products, and ending with the new workgroup reformed under the Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Authority and their meetings/products. Jen Stone read the original request from the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the updated version that came from the sub-group created from the Lamprey Summit, and a recent request from the Columbia Basin Inter-Tribal Fish Commission. These items can be found at the end of this document. Jen also reminded the group of their “statement of purpose”, which states that the Workgroup will identify and prioritize critical uncertainties regarding lamprey conservation.

Questions: Mary Moser asked how the information generated from this meeting will be used by the USFWS, making sure that they are coordinating with us and we are not redundant. Sam Lohr stated that the USFWS is not currently attempting to prioritize the list of critical needs and uncertainties and will most likely use what this Workgroup generates for guidance in their official status review. Jen Stone reminded the group that though the official request came from the USFWS, a prioritized list of critical needs and uncertainties is needed by many entities.

Development of ground rules or “inspirational goals”: Donna queried the Workgroup on traits of functional workgroups. The list included: respecting thoughts and opinions, clearly defined objectives and purpose, staying on track, active participation, active listening/hearing, willingness to achieve goal, social time amongst the group, leave agency agendas behind (work for the group’s identity), maintain focus on the technical aspects/leave policy behind, (we are here to determine what should be done, the managers policy makers will determine what can be done), enthusiasm for the work, define acronyms, and honor those that are absent.

Goal of Session: The Workgroup identified the goal for this retreat as being a prioritized list of critical needs and uncertainties with a description of how the list was generated and a recommendation of how it should be used. For each of the needs, develop a key strategy or two of how they might be accomplished. Generate Request for Proposals (if time allows). Timing of implementation might need to be incorporated into the list, one way or another. The Workgroup also wished to define the “next steps”.

Break out session: What are the criteria that should be used to achieve the goal?

Group 1: Score each critical need in regard to biological benefit and knowledge gap, keeping implementation time in mind. This group defined biological benefit as: prevent risk of extinction, or prevent additional decline.

Group 2: Agreed with Group 1, but wanted to incorporate multi-species coordination. This group also stressed that “knowing” an answer to a question---which will lead to being able to “do” something is just as important as being able to do something flat-out. Their biological benefit was scored as follows: 1. need to do this or things are going to continue to decline **or** knowledge for management action critically needed”, 2. if you do it, something good will happen, and 3. don’t know one way or the other, think it would be good”. Within each we should include a timeline, implementable in the short-term **or** could take a long time and might rely on other factors.

Group 3: We need to ask the question: Does knowing/doing X provide a significant benefit to the population? We need to determine what the “population” is and determine significance of each action on each “population”. We also need to consider timing of when things would start, as well as timing of when things would be complete. Spatial scale is of concern.

Group 4: Need to determine what we are working with, as far as a populations go. Then we can determine how to proceed.

Issue of stock structure: From an ecosystem function—lamprey are important everywhere. From a population structure, we are only concerned about the population of lamprey. Need to know this information from a cost/benefit point of view when considering what projects are important. Biggest bang for the buck.

Biological Benefit was further defined as:

- Stop decline
- Provide benefit
- Maybe benefit
- Unknown or no benefit

Knowledge Gap was further defined as information that is needed for USFWS to make determination or information that is needed for a conservation action to take place.

- Not much known, but info critically needed,
- Highly important

- Important (not critical)
- Nice to know

However, it was later decided that we should be describing the magnitude of the knowledge gap and not the importance of the knowledge, once it is obtained (that is biological benefit. The Gap is ranked from nothing known-everything known.

Caveats: Status=performing data collection and monitoring to determine population abundance and distribution are critical to determining biological benefit, so they should rate high in biological benefit graph. We should apply these criteria to anadromous and resident species separately. At some point we need to consider the relationships to other projects.

How is this list going to be used: A document to get the agencies together and coordinate lamprey research. To give a technical recommendation to managers, policy makers, and others about the information and actions needed to conserve Columbia river basin lamprey in a prioritized manner.

What are we trying to achieve:

Five Years: In five years we would like a better understanding of baseline status, distribution, genetic structure and why they are what they are. We need enough sampling/monitoring to answer the above question. We need better historical data and standardized sampling methods. All this should be combined with a cohesive adaptive management plan—feedback loop. Strategic thinking/planning versus tactical thinking/planning—finding a balance between the two. Better understand the role of the species in the ecosystem—to be used for outreach and education materials. Projects initiated on all of our highest priority items. Develop approaches to assess effectiveness of actions and strategies.

Ten Years: In ten years we would like to be able to assess the effectiveness of the management plan that was developed in the first five years. Immediate responses/long term responses (what does that mean to the population). More clarity on genetic structure. Identify what recovery is—set targets for populations. Identify bottlenecks to the populations—what life stages. Begin implementing restoration activities.

Twenty Years: Determine if we can approach the targets for recovery, identified at 10 years. Assess progress. Determine which choices were right/wrong, evaluate approach.

Day 2:

Discussion on individual critical needs and uncertainties

To list or not to list “developing sampling methods” as a critical uncertainty: Discussion on whether to include this as a separate bullet or if it is implied under all of the bullets---

and appears in the text describing the list. Could be a strategy under a few of the critical needs. Might not belong in the list, it is just a step to getting at a critical need. Should be included in the detailed write-up or strategy section. Otherwise this list might become really large. From a funding perspective—might want to include the methods in the strategy section because funding agencies are more interested in funding critical needs---not method development.

Historic databases: Under status maybe we should add “determining historic distribution”. Need to continue to record lamprey data at bpa/corps related projects that are focusing on other species.

Restoration Activities: Discussion---Trouble with a high rank is that we don’t know anything that we need to know to determine if restoration is needed/effective. The trouble with a low rank is that we know that habitat is bad and could be improved and is a very long-term fix. We should start fixing it now. Just including “habitat” restoration would make people feel more comfortable—rather than supplementation and transplanted. How does this fit in to the restoration that is currently being done for salmonids (how it benefits/hurts). Might want to assign this issue to someone.

Other needs identified: Standardized sampling methods, improve/develop methods for many uncertainties. Education and outreach should be part of every contract awarded—demonstrate how you are bringing these data to the public (defining “who is the public”).

Ranking:

Biological Benefit: How will gaining this information benefit the species. 5=highly benefit, 1=low or no benefit (no harm though).

Knowledge: We are assessing what information is currently known about each topic. 5=nothing known, 1=everything known.

Generating the spreadsheet: The Workgroup separated anadromous and resident species because they have differing risks. Assigned rankings for knowledge and biological benefits. Added them together to come up with an Index, and ranked by indices. In the case of a tie, the biological benefit score was used to break the tie. We looked at the list and decided that the critical needs did not rank out as would be expected. Our second attempt was to sort by biological benefit, rank ties by looking at the knowledge gap ranking, and then discuss as a group any inconsistencies. Highest ranked items were determined to be “imminent” “highly important”, “important”, and “needed”.

Passage and resident lamprey: In stream passage is the only threat since they are not anadromous. We decided to move passage under the limiting factors since it isn’t that big of an issue.

Where to go from here: Divide uncertainties among Workgroup members. Come up with strategies based on the bullets under the headers.

This statement will appear in the final document: We strongly recommend that every lamprey project contains an educational and outreach requirement. For example: presentations at local watershed meetings, schools, managers, professional meetings, etc. (Jen G. might have language).

Example of a fleshed-out critical uncertainty:

Anadromous Lamprey Status:

Ranking: Imminent

Justification: Needs to be added

Strategy:

- Conduct systematic basin-wide surveys using standardized protocols to assess adult and juvenile abundance and distribution.
- Review historic databases to better understand historic distributions and abundance.
- Define, improve, and continue historic distribution and abundance indices (e.g., dam counts, tribal harvest records, smolt trap collections, etc)
- Develop methods to differentiate among species at all life stages (field-based)
- Coordinate with existing and future projects not targeting lamprey specifically
- Develop and coordinate internal educational

Assignments:

	Anadromous	Resident
Biology/ecology	Chris C.	Chris C.
Passage	Mary M.	n/a
Pop Delin	Doug H.	Jen S.
Limiting	Matt M.	Molly H.
Restor	Jen G.	Sam L.
Pop Dy	Jeanette	Jeanette
Status	Dave W.	Dave W.

--Chuck will describe the rating methodology that was used.

--We will ask everyone else who left before the meeting was over if they want to participate---and they will be directed to speak with whomever was listed as the lead.

--Page max limit = 1.

--In the text under each—should talk about step-wise timing considerations, if any exist. But not focus on time to implementation or time to benefit.

--Final product is a short report, which will be compiled by Jen Stone and Tom Iverson. Will be sent to the Workgroup for approval, then will be approved CBFWA members

(through AFC and MMG). Response directly to the USFWS and CRITFC, posted on the CBFWA website, posted on the LTWG website.

Targets: 1 pagers due to Jen by January 7th (Mary January 14th)
 DRAFT report to TWG on January 18th
 Meet on January 24th (at Clackamas, OR)
 Final edits by January 28
 DRAFT to CBFWA by January 31, 2005.
 FINAL to USFWS and CRITFC by February 28th

Adjourn

Original Request Documentation:

1. From Vicki Finn to Tom Iverson/Jen Stone on 8/25/04:

“...As the USFWS prepares for this Summit, one item that would be very helpful to us is a prioritized list of the information most needed to assist in lamprey conservation. In addition, it would be very helpful to have a prioritized list of the greatest threats to the continued existence of lamprey. I'm told that the former and possibly the later are tasks that the Lamprey Technical Workgroup might be qualified to accomplish. Accordingly, I would like to formally request that the Lamprey Technical Workgroup prioritize, from a technical perspective, what information is most needed to assist or inform in lamprey conservation. In addition any assistance in helping prioritize the most significant threats to the continued existence of lamprey would be useful to us. While we are most interested in Pacific lamprey for the Summit, we would appreciate your efforts on river and western brook lamprey as well...”

From the Lamprey Summit sub-group:

“...Executive-level policy leaders had devoted significant time to preparing for and participating in the Lamprey Summit hosted by the CRITFC. Some panelists asked how the policy level interest and momentum generated by this strong showing could be maintained in order to move forward with actions for the benefit of lamprey. Several panelists stated that it was difficult to justify a separate policy level forum or mechanism directed solely at lamprey and that there was not sufficient time or resources to support a whole new forum of this nature. They noted the existence of several other potential forums, each of which included some but not all of the necessary participants or were otherwise an imperfect vehicle for moving the lamprey agenda forward. Panelists expressed interest in a technical work group to clearly describe the state of the knowledge about lamprey, identify gaps in knowledge and prioritize needed research....”

From CRITFC, dated November 29, 2004 from Olney Patt, Jr:

“...The tribes are looking to the Technical Work Group to provide recommendations on lamprey conservation to policy makers. Our understanding is that the Technical Work Group is meeting on December 1 and 2. The tribes hope that the Technical Work Group will be able to provide a recommended list of prioritized projects, which includes a brief description of the project and how it fits in a regional conservation plan, budgets, and timelines. The Technical Work Group should also identify data gaps and technical uncertainties. The tribes see, among other things, a need for basic abundance, distribution and population structure information....)