



Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife  
**Fish Restoration & Enhancement Program Board**  
 Meeting Minutes



**Date:** September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2024

**Location:** Virtual Teams Meeting

**Fish Restoration & Enhancement Program**

**September 20, 2023**

Board Member	Staff/Guests
Dave Grosjacques – Representing Recreational Fisheries	Marty Olson
Tom VanderPlaat – Representing Recreational Fisheries	Sara Hart
Fred Cholick – Representing Recreational Fisheries	Scott Patterson
Brett Montague – Representing Commercial Troll Fisheries	Shaun Clements
Kay Brown – Representing the Public	Debbie Colbert
Susan Chambers - Representing the Fish Processing Industry	Representative Boomer Wright
Troy Laws – Representing Gillnet Fisheries	Mike Gauvin

**Call to Order & Introductions**

Called to order at 8:37am.

All board members did a quick introduction.

**D. Grosjacques, Board Chair** – Would like to encourage the Board to take pride in what this Board has done and what we can do in the future. Teamwork should be supported. Making knowledgeable decisions and stick to your gut and your conscious.

Representative Boomer Wright is present. He is the state Representative for District 9 on the south coast. He is an avid hatchery and STEP supporter and a member of Oregon Anglers Association.

**Agenda Approval**

**M. Olson** – Debbie Colbert may have to come in this morning to chat instead of this afternoon like the agenda claims.

Motion: K. Brown motions to approve the agenda. F. Cholick seconded the motion. Motion passes unanimously.

**September 2023 Meeting Minutes Review and Approval**

**D. Grosjacques** – Appreciates the thoroughness of the minutes. **K. Brown** – Has a few minor corrections that she will share with Sara

Motion: F. Cholick motions to approve the previous meetings minutes with the minor corrections from K. Brown. Tom seconded the motion. Passes unanimously.

- **ACTION ITEM**: Sara Hart to get with K. Brown for minor corrections to March's minutes.

### **Board Member Updates**

**K. Brown** – Has been on the board for 8 years, appointed in 2016. Expected to be able to travel around the state to see projects and because of 2020 that didn't get to happen as much as she had hoped. Would like to highlight trout are the most fished species in the state, and they don't always get the recognition that they deserve. The Board should consider trout more when looking at project proposals. Consider the long-term impacts of funding – many projects that come to us are planning for future expenses and we need to make sure that these projects aren't coming back year after year and keep asking for money. Thank you to the other members of the Board for being willing to compromise and understand and discuss things.

**T. VanderPlaat** – Is serving on a hatchery assessment working group as the lead representative for NW Steelheaders which are giving guidance and opinion as stakeholders on the hatchery program. Has been a part of the STEP program as a volunteer for the Eggs to Fry classroom program that is kicking off soon. NW Steelheaders got a grant for 4 more chillers to give to classrooms. He also represents the Coastal Conservation Assoc. (CCA) and makes them aware of what the department and R&E are up to.

**F. Cholick** – Agrees with Kay on her views on focusing on trout projects. The east side of the state is having a dry summer and a high fire season. Low water has been tough, luckily the snows last winter helped keep reservoirs full. This summer was a very hot one and water temperatures were high and hard on fish. Chub removal reached 12,000 pounds out of East Lake, this will be the last year of funding for this project. Fish body scores are still bad in those lakes due to chub competition. Steelhead run on the Deschutes River are doing great, but the Chinook run is not. Has been working with STEP a lot and the Eggs to Fry program. This is a very important program, and we need to try to infuse the passion for our fish resources into our youth. They have been struggling to get the volunteers to run those programs, especially to work with youth.

**T. Laws** – Big storms caused some damage to a boat launch in the area and R&E emergency fund helped to fund the repairs. All the anglers and workers are grateful for the repairs and improvements. Fish prices are down, which is very disappointing. Summer salmon was better, but fall has been hard. Gill netting has had some success on the Columbia and the coast, it has been busy. Tangle net fishery this year allowed for catch and release if needed or live box recovery. Beach seining on coast has been an experimental fishery. Will have to pop off the meeting to check gill nets and will be back after fish are delivered. SAFE areas are set aside for gill netters to target fish for the fishery and has been very successful.

**B. Montague** – Fishing out of Newport, a lot of fish caught early on this spring/summer and then it slowed down later in the summer. The fishery opened without a lot of heads up because California decided to do a full closure, so the Oregon fishermen were allowed to take those fish, and this has been the best season since 2014. Prices were the highest he has seen.

**D. Grosjacques** – The Rogue River area has bounced back a little bit as far as fish numbers go. The North Umpqua tagging study of 200 spring Chinook was a success. Diamond Lake trout fishing was pretty good this year. Winchester Dam issue last year caused a lawsuit; no information has been given on what is happening with that situation. The dam gives private lake access to only a few private landowners, however the fish ladder there is used to count the fish going upstream and gives population estimates. Rock Creek hatchery burned in 2020 and was heavily damaged. He has been trying to push ODFW for what they are going to do with the property and rebuilding. They are evaluating the situation for long term likelihood of it being successful. People are pushing on both sides to both get rid of the hatchery, but many want to keep it.

**S. Chambers** – absent

Discussion:

**F. Cholick** – Any option to move Rock Creek Hatchery to a different location on in the Umpqua basin?

**D. Grosjacques** – Insurance and FEMA money should be able to cover some expenses on recovering the hatchery. Moving locations wouldn't allow them to use the insurance money.

**F. Cholick** – Notes that in Douglas County, if there is no hatchery then there will be no fish. We rely on hatcheries heavily.

### **Debbie Colbert Presentation**

Tomorrow is 4 months as Director. It has been a great first few months. She has gone out around the state to meet people all over and talk to people from different perspectives. Things she would like to highlight and focus on:

- Keep working toward helping fish and wildlife adapt to landscape changes. For example: dam removals, cold water refuges, lower water, higher temperatures. What can we do today to help species in the future?
- Educating folks about what is happening in our state and the importance of what we do. She worries that people are getting too disconnected, and people do not pay attention to what is happening around our state and take it for granted. There will be a fee increase incoming for anglers, but she cannot see that being a continued solution in the future. We need to come up with creative ways to fund the agency. We have 13 listed species in Oregon, everyone benefits when we sustain those species, but anglers are paying for all of that. Unlikely to receive money from the general fund. Need to find new dedicated funding and new ideas.
- Get people connecting with the outdoors, whether they are hunters/anglers or just hiking, boating, etc. ODFW is going to step out and get more visible about hatchery benefits and communicating to communities around the state.
- There are a lot of state employees out in the field that are having a really bad time doing their work. We need to work really hard on a training program for employees to recognize unsafe situations and how to engage safely with the public.

**D. Grosjacques** – Recently had a conversation with Shaun Clements about hatcheries and hatchery budgets. The loss of Rock Creek Hatchery would be catastrophic for the area. Water is warming and expenses are going up, something needs to happen.

**T. VanderPlaat** – Notes that ODFW staff have been so good and helpful in recent years. He is serving on hatchery assessment working group. Volunteer time spent teaching kids, etc, that is thousands of hours of free labor. Volunteers are one of the greatest resources that the department has. These programs that deal with volunteers are the face of the agency. Please pay attention to that and know that we are the boots on the ground talking to stakeholders. The Boards ability to present to the Commission was taken away a few years ago and he would like to see that come back. Need opportunities to get our voices heard. The STEP program needs help and needs more recognition for the difference it makes. Applauds Debbie's efforts to get out on the ground and see the issues firsthand.

**D. Colbert** – We will have to do some planned reductions, it must happen, and it is a tricky balancing act. STEP will not be reduced; it is vital to the agency and our mission and it must be embraced. The recent State Prison fishing event was a huge success and made such an impact for those people involved. The Commission has a huge amount of groups that want to meet, she would like to see them actually meet with these groups in the field instead of just reading the reports during a meeting.

**F. Cholick** – Would like to reiterate Tom's message about being involved with STEP. Jen Luke is only STEP biologist in Eastern and Central Oregon. We need a second STEP biologist in that area. **D. Grosjacques** – We have been pushing for that for a long time. **F. Cholick** – Youth are the future; we need to continue to work with them so they understand the importance of fish resources in Oregon.

**Rep Boomer Wright** – Agrees with sentiments about the STEP program and the education of the states youth. The Beaver Slough smolt die off was a huge tragedy. He is glad to hear Debbie supports the hatchery system. There are a lot of outside issues that are impacting fisheries and fish populations. He has a short amount of time to speak at the end of a legislative session and would like to use that time to speak more about state fisheries.

**D. Colbert** – We need to get to the bottom of the fish die off and take responsibility for it. We are working on it.

**D. Grosjacques** – It was common in the past for ODFW to not listen to their stakeholders, but that has changed and we are very happy about it.

**B. Montague** – He is very invested in the future of commercial fisheries in Oregon. Fleets are dwindling and it is concerning. We need to work better with California and Washington to improve the fisheries. Supporting hatcheries is good but we may also need to look at other solutions.

**D. Colbert** – Commercial fisheries issues, especially when you are working with inter-jurisdictional issues are a big topic but an important one.

## **Budget Update, Emergency Grants, Project Modifications, & Project Progress – M. Olson**

### Emergency Funds

Nehalem Hatchery Incubation Pump failed. Needed \$1,501.46 to cover those costs, because it was below \$5,000 it was approved by M. Olson.

There is \$85,000 remaining in the account. We still have a winter and a spring to get for more emergency grants to come in. Likely we will use some of that money.

**D. Grosjacques** – Can we spend that money on something else? **M. Olson** – Yes, maybe, but that probably isn't a good idea this year. Any leftover money does roll over into the next biennium, we are not going to lose that money.

### Carry Over Projects

Four carryover projects from previous biennium. We do not normally do this and do not want to make it a habit, but because of covid we made an exception. Usually, we make projects be wrapped up by the end of the biennium. Tracking these budgets is very hard and it makes things difficult for staff and crews on the ground.

ODFW Hatchery Bundle 21/23 – Nehalem pond repairs are finished. Returned \$35,000.

Fishing Facility Bundle 21/23 – Trout Farm cancelled. Holiday/7<sup>th</sup> St are both finished. Empire Lake cancelled. Yellowjacket Lake had some delays due to fire, currently still working to build docks, have not had access to look at damages due to the fire. **M. Gavin**– Oregon Marine Board helped to fund this project, and we are always looking for other funding sources to alleviate R&E funds. This bundle will return \$90,000.

ODFW Fish Facility Bundle 19/21 – Junction City Pond we are waiting on kiosk signs to be manufactured. Metolius Pond is finished.

**D. Grosjacques** – Bryce has been present and working on all these projects. Bryce allows us to skip the ODFW engineering department which saves us a lot of time and money. **M. Gavin**– Bryce is also very good at doing work on the ground and finding us good deals and get some things donated.

Construction Manager – Bryce's administrative package was rolled over to help pay for rollover projects expenses (travel, supplies, etc.) **D. Grosjacques** – Bryce also has some of his own equipment so that we do not have to rent.

**M. Olson** – A lot of these sites are in remote areas where it is difficult to find rental equipment, having our own equipment definitely saves a lot of money.

### Budget Update

Projected funds for the 23/25 biennium were just over \$5.9 million.

Updated projection came in June 2024 of just under \$4.4 million, which is why we did not solicit for projects in Cycles 3 and 4. Because of the estimated amount of return fund, we believe this will put us back into the black for the biennium ending balance. Normally we would like to have an ending balance of about \$250,000 to \$500,000.

## Return Funds

Already returned: \$35,000 from the 21/23 Hatchery Bundle, \$2,277 from Poison Creek Aerator project, \$4,477 from St. Paul Security project.

Estimated return: \$90,000 from 21/23 Fishing Facility Bundle, \$45,000 from R&E Admin bundle, \$15,000 from the Grant Management System budget, \$10,000 from the R&E Publicity budget, \$5,500 from the 21/23 Construction Manager budget. The Emergency Funds Account it hard to guess but we have \$85,000 in there right now, if we estimate that about \$20,000 will be returned.

About \$227,000 total returning funds.

## Projected Funds at the start of the 23/25 biennium

Projected funds for new projects: \$4.972 million.

Cycle 1: Allocated \$4.107 million, or 83%.

\$2.220 million to 'R' projects (54%)

\$1.890 million to 'E' projects (46%)

Cycle 2: \$353,363 to 'E' projects

Total awarded: \$4.46 million ('R' 49%, 'E' 50%) – this is a good split between 'R' & 'E'.

**F. Cholick**– Does 83% of money spent in Cycle 1 seem high? **D. Grosjacques** – Yes, that does seem high, would like to see that go down a bit. **M. Olson** – We have some examples of how things could hash out if we spend less in Cycle 1. **D. Grosjacques** – Some of these projects need the full two years to complete and they should apply at the Cycle 1 meeting.

Updated projection: Only \$4.366 million

R&E already allocated \$4.502 million (after COLA adjustment) which means we over allocated by \$136,000.

Managing a projected budget is very difficult.

**M. Gauvin** – With a fee increase incoming, there is no increase on the money that R&E receives. It is a flat \$4 per regular license, no matter the cost of the license. We will keep advocating for an increase in money allocated to R&E.

## Moving Forward

Things to think about:

Does the Board want to put a cap on Cycle 1 awards?

Does the Board want to save some 'R' money for later cycles?

Does the Board want to save some 'R' money other 'R' projects other than ODFW projects?

There is potential for other outside projects.

## Hatchery Resiliency Update – Scott Patterson, Fish Propagation Manager, ODFW

### 23-25 Project and Hatchery Resiliency Updates

Big Creek Pipeline – cost of \$1.2 million. Project finished.

Elk River Raceways project – cost of \$650,000 – this is going out to bid. Work should start in May, work may continue after June and the end of the biennium. If so we will end the current project and then put the remainder of the costs into the next biennium bundle so we do not have any more rollover projects.

Klamath Falls Hatchery upgrade – Project has started and hoping to finish by June.

Rock Creek Hatchery – there is money to rebuild but still in discussion with how to go forward.

Looking forward – Charting a sustainable future for Oregon's hatchery system.

Warmer waters and less water are in our future. How are we going to handle this, how are the fish going to handle this?

Reviewing 14 state owned and 2 federally owned hatcheries.

A lot of our hatcheries are old but with R&E money we have been able to keep these hatcheries functioning. There are a lot of new techniques for raising fish under these conditions, but it takes time and money to upgrade the hatcheries. Need to prioritize which hatcheries will get upgrade first. Trout accounted for 43% of economic impact. Anadromous species only 28%. However, most money is spent on salmon and steelhead. Trout hatcheries are easier and cheaper to operate. Scott has spent a lot of time looking at which hatcheries are likely to see the biggest impact from climate change. There are hatcheries that have underdeveloped space that could be improved upon. There is lots of potential for additional capacity at these hatcheries.

Discussion -

**T. VanderPlaat** – He is a part of that small working group looking at this issue. Have you been asked to share some of this information with that group? **S. Patterson** – They want the public team to come up with their own ideas. That process is important. But yes, he has ideas on what should be done.

**F. Cholick** – Really like your approach at increasing capacity at existing hatcheries. Does the department have funds for staff to cover that increased capacity? **S. Patterson** – No funds are not there currently. The funds would follow the fish, not the facility, when fish are moved around. Right now, the hatcheries are not flush with money and just trying to maintain the current status quo.

### Adjourn for Lunch

### Allocating Funds throughout the Cycles Discussion

Things to consider:

Planning a specific split of allocated money between cycles.

Examples – Cycle 1 only allocating 65%, 70% or 80% of the total projection.

Cycle 2 allocating 20%, 15% or 5 %.

Leaving a reserve fund of 7%.

Anticipated R&E Admin will be about \$1.3 million, Hatchery Bundle about \$1.8 million = \$3.1 million

This alone likely bumps us into an 80% allocation for Cycle 1.

R&E Administration Bundle includes Program Admin, Grant Management System, Publicity, Emergency Account, STAC Mini-Grant Program, STEP Education, STEP Fish Food, and R&E Construction Project Manager.

**T. VanderPlaat** – Some of these administration bundle things don't seem to fit the definition of administration. Also, the \$1.8 million for the Hatchery Bundle seems like a lot of money. We trust Scott, but we want to be able to understand where these numbers are coming from. We need to learn how these projects are directly benefiting the angler. These are a few of his concerns and he really does not want to see funds in the red again like they were this biennium.

**F. Cholick** – If there is a Cycle 1 project that won't take the full 2 years, can we delay it until Cycle 2? **M. Olson** – Yes, the Board can vote to table an application. **F. Cholick** – Is this Administration list truly Admin related? Some of these are programmatic (STEP fish food, STEP mini grants). In regards to the Publicity funds, often when companies get in money trouble marketing funds are cut, but this money could be spent to important things. **M. Olson** – The intent is to spend that money and in the past biennium's that has happened. With a budget shortage this biennium we decided to hang on to it.

**T. Laws** – Do we ever get in a position where we award less than the total amount that we planned on spending? Like if projects are not up to par. **M. Olson** – Sometimes we get projects that come forward that do not fit into the goal of R&E or are not deserving. Just because a project makes it all the way to the Board review process does not mean that it is worthy of funding in the Boards eyes.

**F. Cholick** – Please re-work the R&E Administration list to only list Admin things.

- **ACTION ITEM:** The project proposal information on website needs to be updated.

M. Olson walked the group through a spreadsheet model of what different Cycle allocations would look like. Option: If we give the Hatchery Bundle only 30% up front in Cycle 1 instead of 50%. They can then come back later and ask for more later in the biennium.

**T. VanderPlaat** – Change name to R&E Admin and Operations. Less concerned about the R&E split, as long as the money is being spent on benefits for the angler. He is concerned with how unstable the projections can be. How can we trust to spend this money? This limits our ability for the program to benefit the angler if we are constantly worrying about the projection.

**M. Olson** – Moving forward we should create a sub-committee to discuss these approaches. That sub-committee can come back to the Board with how they think we should allocate money moving forward. Do not need to vote on anything and confine anything into permanent rules.

**K. Brown** – In her experience, having as much flexibility as possible and not creating hard and fast rules is good.

**D. Grosjacques** – Would suggest putting together a sub-committee of two board members with M. Olson.

Suggests F. Cholick and K. Brown for sub-committee.

F. Cholick and K. Brown agree to form sub-committee.

Would like to see Scott Patterson attend these sub-committee meetings.

- **ACTION ITEM:** Sub-committee members, F. Cholick and K. Brown, along with M. Olson, will find a time to meet before the end of the 2024 calendar year.

## **Project Review and Voting Process**

### **Project Submittal**

This happens through the online Grant Management System. R&E Coordinator (M. Olson) reviews and makes recommendations to applicants on improvements. Internal Review Team (IRT) meets, reviews projects, and scores (those comments and scores go into the application for Board to read). Application is returned to the applicant, and they have 2 weeks to respond to IRT questions and comments. Applications are sent to the R&E Board 2 weeks prior to meeting. R&E Board votes and makes recommendations to the Commission. Recommended projects go to the Commission approval. Grant agreement is signed, and applicant can start spending approved money.

### **Coordinator Review**

Automated emails received when a new project is submitted. The Coordinator can make recommendations to help bolster an application but will not make decisions on whether someone can apply or not, unless the project is in-eligible. Coordinator and Program Assistant bundle application and schedule an IRT meeting. We stay in contact with applicants throughout the process. Do not make decisions on project approval.

### **IRT**

Includes: Scott Patterson – Fish Propagation, Robert Bradley – North Coast District Biologist, Michael Gray – Coos/Coquille District Biologist, Ryan McCormick – Engineering, Dave Banks – SE District Biologist, Mike Gauvin – Recreational Fisheries Program Manager, Greg Apke – S&P Program Manager, Julie Firman – Conservation/Recovery/Monitoring, Ben Ramirez – Klamath District Biologist, and Marty Olson – R&E Coordinator

### **Example Applications**

M. Olson showed two different example projects to demonstrate the format of an application.

Applications show how much they are asking from R&E and also how much other funding they are bringing to the project. Shows where the applicant's organization is located and other important information. Has questions to review about how the project benefits Oregon anglers. There is a budgets pages that list out how and where they are going to spend the money.

**D. Grosjacques** – Administrative cost should be limited but we can approve some admin costs.

**S. Patterson** – Federal funds usually dictate less than 10% admin costs, this is a good rule of thumb.

The IRT scores and questions with answers from applicants are listed out in the application. Additional files will be

attached at the end.

**D. Grosjacques** – If there are too many attachments, we may not need them all when they get sent in the board packet.

One of the example applications has an IRT score that was low. The scope of this particular project was not large enough or appropriate use of R&E funds.

### RE Board

It is OK for the board to talk to one another about projects, as long as there is not a meeting of four or more board members gathered (quorum). Should come to the meeting fully prepared to talk about each project. All projects are discussed individually.

The applicant may be available during the meeting to answer questions. We no longer do individual presentations at the meeting because it took too long.

Board approves or denies projects. Can also choose to modify, table, or approve with conditions. We can go around the table and have each board member give comment if they choose. You are not required to give comment.

Recommended projects go to ODFW Commission for approval.

### Voting Process

Score cards will be handed out to each person to give each project a score of 1-5. 5 being the highest, 1 the lowest. Not ranking, so more than one project can get a score of 5.

Cards will come back to Marty and Sara to compile and rank and be voted in order of highest score to lowest.

Does not mean that the lower scored projects will not get funded above a higher score, could mean that we only have enough for a cheaper but lower scored project.

Can table projects to a later Cycle if needed.

**F. Cholick** – Can we get score cards with the board packets? Or should be wait until we get to discuss them. **D.**

**Grosjacques** – We like to hold off on scoring until after we have a discussion so we get other Board members opinions.

- **ACTION ITEM:** Sara and Marty will work on a score card design with instructions on how to use the scoring guide.

### Administration Discussion

#### *Vote for Chair:*

A new chair is voted on every year to be chairperson for the following year. Only chair for 2 meetings, there are no term limits on how long you can be chair.

Nominations: Dave Grosjacques

F. Cholick makes a motion for Dave Grosjacques to remain the Board Chairperson for the 2025 meetings. Brett seconded the motion. Passed unanimously.

#### *Vote for Vice Chair:*

The duties of the Vice Chairperson is to help with meeting agendas and takes over if the the Chairperson cannot run the meeting.

Nominations: Tom VanderPlaat

Discussion: **T. VanderPlaat**– Would like to make the point that the optics of having two recreational fisheries representatives may give the public the wrong idea. Should we give the commercial fisheries representative a chance? **B. Montague** – It is more likely that commercial representatives will not be able to make a meeting because of the uncertainty of commercial fisheries industry. We can't always predict when seasons will be open and if we need to be out. **K. Brown** – Recreational fisheries contributes about 90% of the funding for R&E so it makes sense for them to be more involved.

F. Cholick makes the motion for Tom VanderPlaat to be the Vice-Chair for the 2025 meetings. Kay seconded the motion. Passed unanimously.

*Board Operating Guidelines:*

**D. Grosjacques** – Should put together a sub-committee to talk through updating the Board Operating Guidelines. This can be done by teleconference.

**K. Brown** – Has already gone through and has a couple edits she would like to include. Would like to be on the subcommittee.

Subcommittee: D. Grosjacques, K. Brown, M. Olson

*Next Meeting:*

**D. Grosjacques** – Would like to go to Roseburg since the last 2 times they voted to go there, things came up and we had to do virtual meetings instead. **M. Olson** – Are there any R&E projects in the area that we could visit?

**D. Grosjacques** – Umpqua fisherman have a acclimation pond we could visit. **M. Olson** – Greg or Evan could give a presentation on the Diamond Lake project.

F. Cholick made a motion to meet in Roseburg for the Cycle 1 meeting. T. Laws seconded the motion. Motion passes. K. Brown abstained.

**D. Grosjacques** – Has already reached out to local ODFW staff about the meeting. He already has hotel location ideas for the Hampton Inn just off the freeway.

Pending dates: March 13-14<sup>th</sup>, 2024. Backup days of March 20<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup>.

**Kay Brown Recognition**

**D. Grosjacques** – Kay has always asked the good questions and was always engaged and helpful in decision making.

**M. Olson** – Special thank you from him and Mike Gauvin. Most people in their career with ODFW don't look back after retirement, but you came back and volunteered. We appreciate all the time and dedication you have given the department and to R&E.

He read aloud letter from Mike Gauvin.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:16pm.