



State of Washington
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

Mailing Address: Post Office Box 43200 · Olympia, WA 98504-3200 · (360) 902-2200, TTY (800) 833-6388
Main Office Location: Natural Resources Building · 1111 Washington Street SE · Olympia, WA 98504-3200

June 27th, 2017

TO: House of Representatives Transportation Committee especially ESHB 2524 sponsors; Representatives Judy Clibborn, 41st District; Ed Orcutt, 20th District; Jake Fey, 27th District; and Joan McBride, 48th District

FROM: Thomas P Jameson, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Habitat Program, Fish Passage and Screening Division Manager, Chairman Fish Barrier Removal Board

SUBJECT: Fish Barrier Removal Board – Progress Report

The purpose of the Fish Barrier Removal Board is to aid the restoration of healthy and harvestable levels of salmon and steelhead statewide through the coordinated and strategic removal of barriers to fish passage (RCW 77.95.160). The Engrossed Substitute House Bill 2524 of 2016, concerning Fish Barrier Removal Board (FBRB), directed the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) to coordinate with cities and counties to inventory and undertake predesign and scoping activities associated with fish passage barrier corrections on city streets and county roads and then report on the board's activities and accomplishments. The bill also directed the department to work with the Department of Ecology and provide a combined report on the development of a framework for correcting fish passage barriers on city streets as compensatory mitigation for the environmental impacts of transportation projects, that reported is attached.

The FBRB developed two fish passage barrier removal pathways: a Coordinated Pathway and a Watershed Pathway. The intent of the Coordinated Pathway is to leverage the large gains made by the investments of WSDOT, the forest industry, and local governments with funding to repair barriers in close proximity to other barrier repairs. The intent of the second pathway (Watershed Pathway) is to prioritize barrier repairs in whole stream reaches and sub-basins that will have the largest benefit to salmon at a population scale. As directed, the FBRB coordinated not only with cities and counties but also with the state's salmon recovery regions and lead entities to develop listings of projects on both pathways. Predesign and scoping of those projects was accomplished leading to, in October of 2016, the Recreation and Conservation Office submitting a 2017-2019 capital budget request for \$51.4 M on behalf of the FBRB. This request was to fund the design (Phase 1), engineering and construction (Phase 2) of 79 fish passage barriers throughout the state using a grant program and existing salmon recovery networks in close coordination with local governments. After consideration the Governor's office decided to put forward the top 13 projects (8 County, 2 City, 2 State, 1 Private) from the FBRB's request. These 13 projects would open 42.8 miles of habitat at a cost of \$19.7M dollars. The projects represent the top two projects off of the coordinated pathway, the top project in each watershed and the number two project in 3 of the 8 priority watersheds. The legislature is still considering this funding request. The FBRB remains optimistic that this level of funding will be realized in the final state budget.

In late December 2016, the FBRB mourned the passing of fellow board member and executive coordinator of the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office, Mr. Brian Abbott. Brian passed away on his 48th birthday, with his family by his side, in Seattle at the University of Washington Medical Center following an unsuccessful heart transplant operation. Brian was a strong supporter of the board and of its mission. Legislation to rename the board after Brian is currently under your consideration.

The board has remained very active while its level of funding remains under consideration. To ensure that key decision-makers and influencers engage and invest in fish passage barrier removals, the board delivered formal presentations to the following groups: House Capital Budget Committee, House Transportation Budget Committee, Legislative Staff, Washington Association of Counties Convention, Salmon Recovery Regions, Lead Entities and to the attendees of the Salmon Recovery Conference.

In direct coordination with RCO, the board also developed a grant manual that reflects the requirements of the Revised Code of Washington, chapter 77.95.180, policies of the FBRB and RCO. The grant manual will guide barrier removal project sponsors through the application process and all phases of the construction process. The board has also established an account on RCO's Project Information System (PRISM). PRISM is an online computer system, open to the public, to apply for grants, review and manage information on funded grants, and produce reports about funded projects.

At your discretion, the board is looking forward to building upon existing salmon recovery efforts with its holistic statewide approach.

Sincerely,

Thomas P. Jameson
Fish Passage and Screening Division Manager
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
(360) 902-2612

Enclosures:

Encl. 1 – Culverts as Mitigation Legislative Report