

MAFAC CBP Task Force
CBP Phase 2 Report Ideas
Proposed Draft Recommendations for Funding/Public Outreach/Socio-political Buy-In

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Recommendation 1- Opportunities to address funding sources

The region should expand funding sources to support salmon recovery. Current sources are not sufficient to support actions necessary to achieve CBP goals.

The region should develop a principled, comprehensive and equitable funding mechanism to ensure that the entire region contributes necessary funding for salmon and steelhead recovery measures.

Rationale:

Achieving the CBP aspirational goals for abundant salmon and steelhead will require significant investment and resources. More funding will be needed than is current dedicated to salmon recovery efforts. Presently, the majority of funding - about \$250 million annually – comes from customers and ratepayers of the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) as mitigation for the construction and operation of the 14 dams that make up the federal Columbia River System. Utilities with hydropower facilities, such as Grant, Chelan and Douglas Public Utility District, and the Idaho Power Company, provide for mitigation funds established through their operating license agreements from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. Other funding sources include congressionally-appropriated funds to the Pacific Salmon Recovery Fund, appropriations from Washington State for salmon recovery, and lottery dollars dedicated to the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board.

The myriad of funding arrangement and agreements contribute to a complex, confusing and inequitable approach to funding salmon recovery. For example, some rural residents pay a significant greater proposition of their utility bill for fish and wildlife mitigation than urban customers.

In addition to the development of hydrosystem facilities, other factors are having a negative impact on salmon abundance. Local land use decisions approving development in floodplains, for example, counteract conservation and restoration actions. Toxic pollutants from many sources have an increasing impact on salmon survival. The region - and salmon – would benefit from a fresh look at current funding mechanisms.

Possible Actions:

- Create a “Salmon Tax” to establish a more equitable funding source from all residents of the Columbia River Basin. This could take many different forms. One example would be a tax on each kwh sold by a utility in the region, dedicated to salmon and steelhead recovery funding.
- Establish a mechanism requiring mitigation for development of salmon habitat. This type of mechanism would allow for any negative externality to be offset up front.

- Develop various incentive programs that rewards residents to spend money or purchase goods to support salmon and steelhead populations. One example of such a program is the federal Duck Stamp and Oregon's salmon license plates.

Recommendation 2- Public Education and Outreach

The region must engage in public education and outreach to inform citizens about the importance of ecosystem health, salmon and steelhead abundance, and the need to incorporate those qualities into decision-making. This in turn will result in socio-political buy-in.

Rationale:

The Task Force agreed that one impediment to salmon and steelhead recovery is the lack of public awareness and support. The public generally views salmon and steelhead recovery as "NOAA's problem," not a regional issue, and they do not believe they have a role to play. Salmon recovery requires not only broad support but action at many levels and in many places.

Possible Actions:

- Public school curriculum should include broad ecosystem concepts ("everything is connected") and "hands on" learning experiences (field trips, guest speakers, etc.).
- CBP Task Force members should initiate an outreach effort to connect with communities across the Columbia Basin to share their vision and recommendations.
- Share information on what Columbia Basin residents can do on a daily basis to participate in the successful restoration of salmon and steelhead.