

Forest Practices Board
Water Typing Rule Committee
August 3, 2021
Meeting conducted via Zoom

Committee Members Present:

Bob Guenther, Committee Chair and General Public Member
David Herrera, General Public Member
Jeff Davis, Director's designee, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Tom Nelson, General Public Member

Staff

Marc Engel and Patricia Anderson, DNR
Phil Ferester, ATG

Welcome and Introductions

Bob Guenther, Committee chair, called the meeting to order at 1 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Tom Nelson moved the Committee to approve the April 28, 2021 meeting minutes.

SECONDED: Jeff Davis

Board Discussion:

None.

ACTION: Motion passed unanimously.

Update on Status of the Anadromous Fish Floor Work

Gus Seixas, Skagit River System Cooperative, provided an update on the Anadromous Fish Floor (AFF) project team's work. The AFF is defined as measurable physical stream characteristics downstream from which anadromous fish habitat is presumed. He said the goal of this project has been to provide analyses and interpretations that will support that definition. He said the team evaluated existing fish distribution data, performed a QA/QC process and then hired Terrainworks to construct synthetic stream networks that would be used to examine different AFF alternatives. Part of that work included a sensitivity analysis and a spatial analysis. He said the team is now in the phase of analyzing those results.

He walked the Committee through the different criteria contained within each of the AFF alternative analyzed by the team. The alternatives vary by stream gradient, description of tributary junctions and the use of Statewide Washington Integrated Fish Distribution (SWIFD) as a model for predicting an anadromy core. He shared some examples of watershed maps showing known anadromous fish data, synthetic streams developed by the contractor and Type F/N points from water typing modification forms used in the analysis. The maps help indicate how each AFF alternative compares to (or over-shoot or under-shoot) known fish data.

Seixas shared how from the analysis, the team can summarize the various lengths of AFF for each alternative and compare how the AFF alternatives match known F/N break points and other fish data. He said this is a good way to assess the performance of each AFF alternative, but noted that all of the AFF alternatives have a small level of error in terms of the overall AFF length.

He said the results also show the maximum downstream gradient from each AFF points. As an example, about 60% of the anadromous points have a maximum downstream gradient of 5% and about 90% have a maximum downstream gradient of about 12% or less. He said the team will be synthesizing these results in the coming weeks in order to prepare a report. To view the full presentation, see the meeting recording at: <https://www.dnr.wa.gov/about/boards-and-councils/forest-practices-board/water-typing-rule-committee>.

Committee member Nelson said he thought the funding for the contract with Terrainworks had ran out and asked if this was resolved.

Marc Engel, DNR, responded that funding for the contract ended June 30, which was the end of the last fiscal year. Additional money was not procured to enter into another contract or extend the existing contract.

Committee member Nelson said he is concerned that Terrainworks is working outside a contract. He suggested the Committee let the Board know about the issue of work being done by the contractor without additional funds.

Seixas said that Terrainworks has agreed to provide one final run and update the data sets. The project team will have everything they need to summarize the results and address their questions of interest.

Committee member Nelson asked why the group looked at the maximum downstream sustained gradient instead of what is upstream from that point.

Seixas said one of the questions of interests was to answer what the maximum downstream sustained gradient that anadromous fish are traversing to reach the end of known anadromy. That knowledge would inform how to define the floor. Knowing upstream gradients could also inform potential barrier definitions.

Committee member Davis added that this information helps inform the highest level of competence where anadromous species are reaching in order to build confidence that assumption.

Committee member Nelson suggested the Committee ask the Board for more money to complete this work.

Public Comment on Anadromous Fish Floor Work

Jamie Glasgow, Wild Fish Conservancy, said one of the reasons the AFF project team focused on downstream conditions from fish data points is that they represent, with very few exceptions,

locations where known anadromy has been observed or is presumed to be present, but it rarely represents the upper extent of anadromy. He said it is important to understand what gradients fish overcame to reach an upstream location.

Darin Cramer, Washington Forest Protection Association, said he is also concerned with having a contractor perform work without contract. He reminded the Committee that a lot of time was spent cooperatively developing a scope of work for Terrainworks, which they met, but what is being executed now is ad hoc and without a contract. He encouraged the Committee to get that corrected. He said it is time for the Committee to provide clear policy direction to the AFF project team on what it is the Committee is trying to achieve. He said clarifying the policy objective and the definition for the AFF needs to occur and urged the Committee work to resolve this.

Committee Discussion for Staff Preparation of Committee Update to the Board

Committee member Nelson suggested the report to the Board mention the need fund the additional work by Terrainworks.

Seixas clarified that the current work by Terrainwork is to correct some of the fish distribution points that were produced under the original contract. He said the AFF project team agreed not to ask for additional funding since the work was to simply correct some of the data points.

Committee member Herrera felt that correcting some work under the original contract is part of the contract.

Glasgow clarified that Terrainworks has minimal adjustments to make and said they are comfortable moving forward with the last bit of work. He said the time needed to get implement another contract would further delay any AFF recommendation. He added that the work might conclude this week.

It was agreed that staff would prepare an update for the Board's August 2021 meeting to capture the following:

- The AFF project team's timeline to report to the Committee in October
- The need for the Committee to meet regularly to receive updates from the AFF project team and workgroup

Meeting adjourned at 2 p.m.