

Water Typing System Rule Committee Meeting
December 14, 2021, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Meeting conducted via ZoomWebinar

Committee Members Present:

Bob Guenther, Committee Chair and General Public Member
Cody Desautel, 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 Marc Ratcliff, DNR
Phil Ferester, ATG

Welcome and Introductions

Bob Guenther, Committee chair, called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Dave Herrera moved to approve the meeting minutes for September 18, October 18-19 and November 17, 2021.

SECONDED: Tom Nelson

ACTION: Motion passed unanimously.

Anadromous Fish Floor (AFF) Spatial Analysis Overview

Ash Roorbach, Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission (NWIFC), introduced the names of the individuals who contributed to the anadromous fish floor (AFF) contract, the spatial analysis, and the development of recommendations. He thanked those that had provided time to this project.

Jamie Glasgow, conservation caucus, provided an overview of the fish data used in the analysis. The data used in the existing anadromous fish data does not necessarily signify the upper most point of anadromy in all cases. He shared some map examples from the synthetic networks developed by Terrainworks used for comparing the AFF alternatives. The maps show how each AFF alternative performed with existing fish points and with existing Type F/N break points.

Gus Seixas, Skagit River System Cooperative (SRSC), presented slides from the [AFF spatial analysis report](#). The report contains graphs demonstrating how the AFF alternatives perform to various fish data sets. The goal was to see how the modeled AFF alternatives compared to:

- existing anadromous and resident fish data;
- the Statewide Integrated Fish Distribution (SWIFD) data;
- existing Type F/N breaks; and
- un-surveyed stream segments.

He said they also looked at the maximum downstream sustained gradient below existing fish data and Type F/N breaks.

Glasgow clarified that documented and presumed anadromy data subsets came from SWIFD. Eighty-five percent of the data in SWIFD is either documented or observed fish presence. He said presumed data includes stream segments where a biologist documented visual stream habitat characteristics, but during the visit, no fish were actually seen.

AFF Policy Recommendations

Marc Engel, DNR, said the AFF Policy Group stayed true to the AFF charter which was to provide policy recommendations. He said the group agreed by consensus to maintain alternative D and alternative A4 for consideration. He said the group also recommends that additional analysis be performed to include an alternative A4 with a sustained gradient of 5% and 7%.

Jim Peters, NWIFC, said the Commission has additional funds to help in this effort and is looking into making the additional analysis happen. He said the recommendation would be to amend the contract and have Terrainworks perform additional analysis of alternative A4 for sustained 5% and 7% gradients. He also said the existing principal investigators would develop the scope of work.

Roorbach said the work for additional analysis of alternative A4 would be performed similar to how Terrainworks did the first alternative A4 analysis. They would also work to continue the collaborative effort involving the existing AFF members.

Engel said the AFF policy members believe the additional analysis would help inform the overshoot of alternative A4 of concurred Type F/N break points and undershoot concerns based on points of known anadromy. The Policy members recommend keeping Terrainworks under contract to analyze alternative A4 at 7% and 5%. He believes the analysis could be done fairly quickly with the policy members bringing a revised recommendation to the Committee at the January 2022 Committee meeting.

Steve Barnowe-Meyer, small forest landowner caucus, said in addition to the additional analysis for alternative A4, the contract would also include the development of maps showing how the alternatives perform.

Committee member Nelson said he would like to see basin maps similar to the ones initially developed since it is beneficial for showing comparisons. He hoped that the additional work can be done by the February 2022 Board meeting. He also said he would like to see a peer review completed on the final AFF report once the additional analysis is done.

Barnowe-Meyer said both the technical group and the principal investigators provided similar recommendations regarding options for field studies. However, he said full consensus was not achieved by the policy group for a peer review of the AFF report, but consensus was achieved for some sort of field validation work and the need for a potential validation study.

Committee Chair Guenther said he supports the recommendation to continue the collaboration effort for this next round.

Committee member Herrera asked what the policy group meant by the recommendation “to not further consider alternatives A, C (5%), C (7%), C (10%), E (5%), E (7%), E (10%), and A3” to establish the AFF.

Engel said the AFF policy members felt that some of the AFF alternatives do not have merit moving forward, but felt that the focus should be on alternatives D and A4 (10%) with the additional analysis for A4 (7%) and A4 (5%).

Committee member Nelson asked why the AFF policy group did not gain concurrence for a peer review.

Alec Brown said a potential delay in timing was part of his decision not to support a peer review. He said he questioned what a peer review might achieve since the AFF process wasn't a Cooperative Monitoring, Evaluation, and Research Committee product or a specific science project.

Barnowe-Meyer said some of the AFF policy members acknowledged that even though the AFF was not operating as an adaptive management project, a peer review could be beneficial.

Peters said that the tribes questioned the potential for a peer review to add additional time that could potentially delay the AFF moving forward.

General Public Comment

Jamie Glasgow, Conservation Caucus, shared his recent understanding on the overshoot issue, but did not have a chance to discuss with other members. The overshoot issue is the distance which the various AFF alternatives extend beyond what is being called the concurred Type F/N points. He said while these distances are surprisingly large, they are still relatively small. He said most of the Type F/N points used in the analysis came from landowner data and incorporated into the analysis by Terrainworks. However, he said not all of the landowner-provided points were actually DNR-concurred points. Technical members did some QA/QC on the landowner Type F/N points and found that some points were on extremely low stream gradients. He suggested this showed discrepancy of the landowner data and is perhaps why some of the overshoot is so large. He said if additional work is coming from Terrainworks that is an opportunity to clarify how the landowners generated these points in these watersheds.

Jim Peters, NWIFC, said their ultimate goal is to protect their treaty rights and public resources for future generations. He said they know there is a bigger issue of climate change occurring, and hopes this will be a small step towards some of that work. He encouraged the Committee to accept the additional work that has been requested and said he will be working hard at the Commission to make that happen.

Gus Seixas, SRSC, said he was surprised to hear that the principal investigators would take the lead in developing the scope of work with Terrainworks and didn't think he could commit to that at this time. He said Terrainworks knows exactly what is needed to look at the different gradient thresholds and could easily produce maps in the same format as in the technical report.

Darin Cramer, Washington Forest Protection Association, requested the Committee be clear on what the AFF objective is and to provide performance targets to solve it. He strongly encouraged the Committee to have these discussions so that there is a higher likelihood of consensus and not a wide range of alternatives to consider.

Committee Discussion

Committee member Desautel questioned at what point is the data good enough, and asked if there is some target being achieved by analyzing a 5%, 7% and 10% for alternative A4.

Engel said the request for additional analysis was a consensus product developed by the AFF policy members. The Board approved the alternatives for the AFF technical analysis, however to Darin Cramer's point, there are still some questions as to what the objective is for an AFF. The reason for additional analysis of alternative A4 is to look at lower gradients and attempt to narrow the difference between the overshoots of the Type F/N concurred points and the undershoots of known anadromous fish points.

MOTION: Tom Nelson moved the Water Typing Committee accept the anadromous fish floor (AFF) policy members' recommendation for additional analysis of:

- Alternative D and A4 (10%); and,
- Alternative A4 (7%) and Alternative A4 (5%).

I further move the Committee allow additional time for the AFF Workgroup to work with the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission to have Terrainworks perform appropriate spatial analyses (as defined in a Scope of Work developed with the principal investigators) and have maps of the sample watersheds produced showing all components of all AFF alternatives analyzed for the purpose of informing the Board Committee and Board.

SECONDED: Cody Desautel

ACTION: Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 12 p.m.