
CHARTER – ANADROMOUS FISH FLOOR WORKGROUP

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Introduction

The Forest Practices Board (Board) is currently considering including an anadromous fish floor in its permanent water typing system. The anadromous fish floor is defined as measurable physical stream characteristics downstream from which anadromous fish habitat is presumed ~~or likely~~. This charter guides a multi-stakeholder Anadromous Fish Floor Workgroup (workgroup) that will gather and analyze data from a sample of western Washington watersheds to inform recommendations on criteria for an anadromous fish floor.

Background

In February 2018, the Board decided to consider an anadromous fish floor as part of the water typing rule (https://www.dnr.wa.gov/publications/bc_fb_mtgminutes_20180213_14.pdf?9ovij). Due to stakeholder concerns, in May 2019 the Board passed a motion for a Board Committee to “work with stakeholders to resolve any outstanding issues regarding the anadromous fish floor.” The Board Committee subsequently approved a charter reiterating the new water typing rule goal of shifting from a system based on fish presence to one that relies on fish habitat (WAC 222-16-010) as the guiding principle for delineating the break between Type F and N waters. The Board Committee’s charter further tasks the committee to “gather and analyze data for inclusion in any recommendations on an anadromous fish floor.”

Problem Statement

The Board Committee recognizes that additional data and analysis on physical stream metrics and the distribution patterns of anadromous and other fish species will inform the development of anadromous fish floor recommendation(s).

The Board Committee requests stakeholders gather and analyze data to help evaluate appropriate physical criteria that can define an anadromous fish floor. The workgroup will gather and analyze data on physical stream characteristics and anadromous fish habitat distributions, and to the extent possible make consensus recommendations on the anadromous fish floor.

Anadromous Fish Floor Development

Purpose

The purpose of the workgroup is to engage in a collaborative and productive multi-stakeholder process to assist the Board in making a decision on the anadromous fish floor. The workgroup will evaluate measurable physical stream characteristics downstream from which anadromous fish habitat is presumed ~~or likely~~. Workgroup tasks may include:

1. Assemble and analyze existing data from a sample of watersheds to evaluate suitability of metrics to inform the development of the anadromous fish floor. The analyses will include assessment of the performance of the metric(s).
2. Recommend potential future field studies, as needed, to address technical uncertainties.

Workgroup Roles and Responsibilities

Water Typing Board Committee:

- Provide guidance and oversight to the workgroup
- ~~Approve the Anadromous Fish Floor Workgroup Charter~~
- Facilitate discussions with the entire Board and facilitate delivery of a final anadromous fish floor recommendations or minority/majority report

Project Manager:

- Organize meetings, set meeting agendas, take notes, and maintain open and timely communication between all members of the workgroup and Board Committee.

Principal Investigators:

- Perform technical analyses and lead in drafting technical report with QA/QC to assure data quality.
- Develop methods for analyzing and describing the relationship between physical stream characteristics and anadromous fish habitat.
- Communicate and collaborate as necessary with technical workgroup members to complete the analyses in the given timeframe.
- Communicate to the workgroup what specific technical questions will be answered in the analyses and what information will result from the analyses.

Caucus Members: (Membership is open to all adaptive management stakeholder participants)

- Provide input, guidance and feedback to Principal Investigators and assist them as requested (and time allows) to complete tasks
- Assist in the drafting of technical report and recommendations based on data and analyses generated by Principal Investigators.

Work Products and Deliverables

~~The workgroup will produce two documents. The first is a technical report that describes how physical stream characteristics relate to anadromous fish habitat distributions in a sample of western Washington watersheds.~~

~~To estimate the timelines required to produce this report the workgroup needs direction from the Board Committee on the scope and type and range of technical questions the report will address. Specifically, direction is needed on the extent to which t~~The workgroup's efforts will:

1. Focus on all current Board motions that define anadromous fish floor alternatives (Tribal proposal, landowner proposal)
2. Further refine the definition of anadromous fish habitat end points (e.g. stream width/gradient, swale, undefined channels, etc.) within draft rule language.

~~Also, any guidance the Board Committee can provide to the workgroup on specific types of information that would support the committee in its discussions and development of anadromous fish floor recommendations would be helpful.~~

The workgroup will produce two documents. The first is a technical report that describes how physical stream characteristics relate to anadromous fish habitat distributions in a sample of western Washington watersheds.

The second document is a report with metric/metric combinations and associated performances for determining the anadromous fish floor. The document will include conceptual frameworks on how the anadromous fish floor can be identified and applied in the field in a repeatable manner. If consensus is not reached, the report will identify the differing conclusions and perspectives based on the results of the analyses.

Timeline (~~Guidance needed from Board Committee – see above~~)

Timelines required to produce this report will be developed as part of a work plan. The workgroup will develop a final timeline work plan with the following goals:

1. Finalize questions of interest ~~and scope of study (i.e., what will be investigated)~~
2. Define project tasks and specific roles of responsibility
3. Summarize literature related to stream characteristics and anadromous fish habitat distributions
4. Select appropriate watersheds for analyses
5. Complete analyses
6. Complete final recommendation(s) to the Board Committee/Board

The workgroup will strive to meet twice a month, with at least one of those meetings being an in-person meeting.

Budget Considerations

The workgroup will determine what tasks will require in-kind support from participants as well as any other budget requirements. Financial requests need to be addressed by the Board Committee.