

Water Typing System Board Committee Status Report

August 14, 2019

Committee Chair – Bob Guenther



Water Typing Board Committee Motion

June 4th Board meeting

- 1st priority – understand the spatial analysis and work to address if stream width can be precisely estimated for the CBA and SEPA analyses;
- Determine how the rule making should be applied in eastern Washington;
- Determine if and when the PHB validation study and if it should be combined with the default physicals criteria study;
- Determine if rule language, Board resolution, or other non-rule options would suitably encourage moving toward a lidar-based water typing rule;
- Board Committee will work with stakeholders to resolve outstanding issues regarding the anadromous fish floor (AFF).



Committee Status to Date

The Committee has met 4 times:

July 2 - Established ground rules and approved a Committee charter

July 9 - Received presentations from DNR and Industrial landowners to clarify the width-based PHB in Option C; and landowner presentation on how FHAM is applied using the PHBs

July 17 - Received AFF presentations from western WA Tribes and the Industrial landowners on their AFF proposals and potential approaches to gather data supporting an AFF, including a proposal for forming a mixed Board, policy and technical group working in support of the Committee

July 30 - Committee discussed potential next steps for addressing PHB and AFF options



Summary of July 30 Committee Discussions for PHB Options (1 of 4)

The Committee discussed tributary junctions and if they should act as width-based PHBs in Option C, including:

- If the draft rule language needs to be amended for PHB Option C;
- Should tributary junctions be used as a width-based PHB;
- Science panel recommendations regarding using tributary junctions as a PHB;
- Additional analysis of the risks of not finding fish using tributaries as PHBs;
- If the Board should consider dropping width-based PHBs from all of the options.



Summary of Committee Discussions for PHB Options (2 of 4)

Committee discussed the width-based PHB:

- Should it be modified to include width plus something, such as change in gradient or obstacle, to be a better indicator of end of fish habitat
- The need for all PHBs to be implementable and repeatable in the field.

Committee discussed the need for the PHB analysis to meet the intent of the rule and that the analysis should include:

- Recommended options the Board could consider such as combining PHBs or to remove a width-based PHBs, and the needs to analyze the three options equally;
- The need for consistency based on DNR and Industrial landowner methods on:
 - How gradient is measured; and
 - How width-based PHBs are located in PHB Option C.



Summary of Committee Discussions for PHB Options (3 of 4)

Committee discussed different interpretations of the science panel's PHB report, specifically:

- If test # 15 in the PHB report – the landowner option – includes tributary junctions as PHBs and if test # 15 was found to be highly accurate in the report;
- The report found no data showing width alone stops fish movement;
- The literature does not support using a 2-foot width threshold in the absence of other criteria such as gradient; and
- The report found width alone accurately reflects the boundary of fish distribution.



Summary of Committee Discussions for PHB Options (4 of 4)

Committee discussed potential recommendations to the Board:

- (1) Looking at ways of improving the accuracy of the width-based PHBs;
- (2) Determining best analysis method:
 - Analyze PHB Option C using tributaries as width-based PHBs; or
 - Analyze PHB Option C using draft rule description of width-based PHBs;
- (3) Review the goals and objectives of the water typing system rule to clarify the issues and ensure all of the options accomplish the goals of the rule; and
- (4) The need to determine what accuracy is as it relates to the water typing system.



Summary of Committee Discussions for the Anadromous Fish Floor (1 of 2)

The Committee heard stakeholder testimony that the landowner AFF proposal is based on known fish distribution, mapped data, and a PHB option which uses the obstacle and gradient PHB criteria and ignores the width PHB criteria to be applied to tributary junctions.

Committee members noted that it appears that the tribes and landowners used a different method to measure their gradient threshold and in order to have a comparison that needs to be recognized.

The Committee agreed that the AFF technical group should continue reporting to the Committee and to continue working to develop the elements necessary for the analysis to determine an AFF.



Summary of Committee Discussions for the Anadromous Fish Floor (2 of 2)

The Committee requested:

- (1) The AFF workgroup develop a charter to be approved by the Committee; and
- (2) The workgroup develop a consistent process to determine the AFF gradient, and a timeline for completion of recommendations to bring to the Committee.

The workgroup will present a charter to the Committee at the next Committee meeting. A discussion related to the timing of analyses and deliverables is needed in order to finalize the charter.



Questions?

