



# COLUMBIA BASIN FISH AND WILDLIFE AUTHORITY

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Coordinating and promoting effective protection and restoration of fish, wildlife, and their habitat in the Columbia River Basin.

The Authority is comprised of the following tribes and fish and wildlife agencies:

Burns Paiute Tribe

Coeur d'Alene Tribe

Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation

Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation

Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation

Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation

Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation

Idaho Department of Fish and Game

Kootenai Tribe of Idaho

Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks

National Marine Fisheries Service

Nez Perce Tribe

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of Fort Hall

Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of Duck Valley

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

## Coordinating Agencies

Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission

Upper Columbia United Tribes

Compact of the Upper Snake River Tribes

DATE: January 7, 2010  
TO: Wildlife Advisory Committee (WAC)  
FROM: Ken MacDonald, CBFWA  
SUBJECT: December 16, 2009 WAC Wildlife Monitoring Framework Meeting Final Action Notes

## Wildlife Advisory Committee Meeting December 16, 2009 Northwest Power and Conservation Council Office Portland, Oregon

The support material for the meeting is posted at: [http://www.cbfwa.org/committee\\_wac.cfm](http://www.cbfwa.org/committee_wac.cfm)

### Final Action Notes

**Attendees:** Doug Calvin (CTWSRO); Aren Eddingsaas (SBT); Carol Perugini (SPT); Gregg Servheen (IDFG); Tom O'Neil (NHI), Kyle Heinrick (BPT); Tracy Hames (YN); Rex Crawford, Joe Rocchio (WANHP); John Pierce, Nate Pamplin (WDFW), Jim Noyes, Michael Pope (ODFW); Scott Soultz (KTOI); David Byrnes (BPA); Ken MacDonald CBFWA); Nancy Leonard, Peter Paquet, Karl Weist (NPCC),

**By Phone:** Chase Davis (UCUT), Angela Sondena (NPT), Richard Whitney (CCT); Carl Scheeler (CTUIR); Paul Ashley (CBFWA)

**Time Allocation:**

Objective 1. Committee Participation	100%
Objective 2. Technical Review	0%
Objective 3. Presentation	0%

**ITEM 1: Introductions and Approve Agenda and November 18, 2009 Draft Action Notes**

**ACTIONS:** Agenda was approved with one additional item. WDFW requested time at the end of the meeting to get WAC feedback, as requested by BPA, regarding use of WDFW mitigation funds to participate in development of a monitoring strategy and a restoration techniques handbook. The request was approved as new Item 8, scheduling the next WAC meeting was moved to Item 9.

In order to devote the maximum amount of time possible to the wildlife framework discussions approval of the November Notes was tabled until the next WAC meeting

**ITEM 2: Council RME Review and Monitoring Framework Expectations – Nancy Leonard and Peter Paquet NPCC**

**Discussion:** Nancy Leonard discussed the Council's timeline for the RM&E Categorical Review. The review process is expected to begin the end of March or early April. The review will primarily focus on RM&E projects that are basin-wide in nature. Wildlife projects were reviewed in the recent wildlife categorical review. Any additional review of wildlife and the resident fish RM&E projects that are more limited in geographic scope will probably occur in more focused geographic reviews at a later date.

The Council staff is currently working on a broad monitoring framework that started during the recent anadromous fish strategy process. Within this broad framework, it is expected there will be a wildlife, anadromous and resident fish sub-framework or strategy. The framework will ultimately be reviewed by the

ISRP. The Council hopes to have a draft framework based upon the Fish and Wildlife Program (completed to the extent possible) ready for review by March.

Ken MacDonald briefly explained that in the recent anadromous process a framework was not explicitly in place. However, the monitoring needs and management questions to be addressed existed in the form of ESA needs, the BiOp needs, and other information. The anadromous process articulated monitoring strategies, identified current projects either consistent with the strategy or could be changed to meet the strategy (within a budget cap), any outstanding GAPS in monitoring and their priority as well as a prioritized list of actions that could become projects to fill the GAPS. We are following a similar process for the wildlife portion of the Program monitoring strategy.

Chase Davis asked what the Council has charged the WAC to do, what the Council wants from the WAC?

Peter Paquet and Nancy responded Council staff is working on the framework and currently only have the anadromous work as a template. Staff is interested in the managers' thoughts. Peter stated that what he has seen of the DRAFT wildlife framework to date is consistent with previous ISRP recommendations.

Scott Soultz noted that we need to consider the UCUT pilot and all other potential monitoring approaches to proactively provide the Council with as good a product as possible to benefit the Council's Program and meet the managers' needs.

**ACTION:** No Action – Information and context for the following discussions

**ITEM 3: Meeting Objectives and Background – Doug Calvin and Scott Soultz**

Discussion: Scott Soultz led the discussion by reminding the group that the WAC started thinking about monitoring back while the CBFWA Program Amendment recommendations were being developed. The following bullets were put together to summarize the language in the final, consensus recommendations that all the CBFWA members agreed were needed for Wildlife monitoring for the Fish and Wildlife Program. As listed in the meeting agenda the CBFWA Consensus Agreement For Wildlife Monitoring include:

- Transition from HEP (for monitoring) to ecologically-based paradigm
- Based upon ecological objectives described in management and subbasin plans
- Track trends in ecological function
- Provide data to assess the effectiveness of management (adaptive management)
- Establish and use of reference sites
- Where appropriate, complement and maintain consistency with State/Tribal Conservation Strategies
- Project data summaries should link to region-wide databases
- Compatible protocols should be developed and used

These points were brought forward to remind the group that the WAC had previously recommended them to the Members of CBFWA and they had been incorporated into the consensus recommendation. The above points should be kept in mind as the framework discussions proceed.

There was some discussion regarding whether to include language for monitoring species response to Program and management actions. Scott asked Peter Paquet how the Council looked at the species response issue.

Peter responded that both the Program and Act refer to species and habitat, not just

habitat.

Along that line, Carl asked how the nature of species response to Program implementation figures into providing BPA credit.

Peter responded that it may not be an issue for the monitoring framework (credit), possibly something the Crediting Forum could discuss. Species response is in the Program and if the WAC thought monitoring the response of species was important it should be in the framework. The level of species monitoring appropriate for BPA to fund and how to monitor species response is another question.

Ken MacDonald noted that in the Program under Section C Biological Objectives, page 12 there is a bullet under Wildlife Losses that states:

- “Monitor and evaluate habitat and species responses to mitigation actions”

At the time of the Amendment recommendations the Fish and Wildlife managers also felt some level of species monitoring was appropriate as stated in the recommendations for wildlife reporting (Section 2.3.6)

- “How are wildlife species and habitats responding to FCRPS mitigation actions?”

There was a question as to how to approach validation monitoring since the Council did not seem to want to include validation monitoring in the framework and especially not to cross over from effectiveness monitoring into validation monitoring in regards to the species response issue.

Peter responded that the Council is not suggesting validation monitoring may not be important but validation monitoring is more of an individual project issue. A project proposal that included validation monitoring or was specifically a validation monitoring project would be an individual project consideration.

Paul Ashley asked how to reconcile HEP species with current species of concern. The original loss assessments may have included species that are no longer a management priority.

Peter suggested that linking species of interest within a wildlife project should possibly be linked to the subbasin plans and/or State conservation strategies. This may be another potential topic for the crediting forum.

Aren noted where monitoring for species response was important to measure attainment of management objectives and appropriate it should be included in monitoring programs.

Tracy Hames summed up the conversation that the Program is about the animals. Monitoring species response is important to assess whether activities are resulting in a positive species response. If not, one may need to re-evaluate actions, management objectives or the management plan.

Aren raised a concern over the bullet;

- “Compatible protocols should be developed and used”

Not everyone uses the same protocols nor may be able to use the same protocols everywhere. Many in the group felt the use of consistent and compatible protocols was central to the framework. It was also discussed that compatible protocols did not mean everyone uses exactly the same methods but compatible methods to support a consistent analysis and reporting be used so results may be comparable across jurisdictional boundaries. After discussion, the compatible protocol language was left in the framework.

**ACTION:** Add monitoring for species response in the framework based upon the CBFWA consensus recommendation language in recommendation 2.3.6. Also need to discuss in the framework what is meant by compatible protocols noting that

compatible does not necessarily mean the same protocols. Briefly discuss what is meant by “are the habitat management treatments effective” noting that effectiveness may refer to an individual action or effectiveness of implementing a project management plan (also see discussion for Item 4).

**ITEM 4: Development of Management Questions for Monitoring Framework**

**Discussion:** The identification of programmatic management questions along with the broad monitoring objectives are important define the boundaries and to guide development of the framework. The following draft management questions were included as a starting point for the discussion, building off the objectives and input received during the review of previous drafts.

- What are the baseline ecological conditions of the site?
- Are the wildlife projects at or trending towards the desired ecological condition?
- Are the wildlife habitat management treatments effective?
- How many habitat units does each wildlife mitigation project provide?
- Identification of ecological context (what role the site plays in a larger landscape matrix)
- Are habitat conditions contributing to State Conservation Strategies and/or broader Tribal goals/objectives
- What is the status of focal species and habitat relationships as described in project management plans
- Monitoring must contribute to assessments and reporting at multiple scales from the project to the Basin.

(Reviewing the notes the last bullet above probably should be moved into the objectives or strategy portion of the framework)

Primary comments while reviewing the management questions included:

- Some of the questions were related and possibly could be reformatted into sub bullets for better understanding
- Issues of scale need to be discussed and ability to roll-up information
- Bullet 3 needs explanation on the meaning of effective, there is effectiveness of implementing the management plan to meet the management objectives and effectiveness of a specific action (build a fence) at meeting a desired response (restore riparian shrub component in the treated area)
- Add the species response question

**ACTION:** Ken MacDonald will attempt to address the comments in the next draft of the framework.

**ITEM 5: Ecological Integrity Assessment Overview WDFW and WDNR**

**Discussion:** During the last WAC meeting a number of members requested more information regarding the Ecological Integrity Assessment (EIA) process that WDFW is planning to implement in Washington state and is one of the efforts (UMEP and HEP surveys, NHI are others) being considered as information to use to build the wildlife monitoring framework around. John Pierce (WDFW) and Joe Rocchio Washington Natural Heritage Program (WANHP) led the discussion and gave two PowerPoint presentations. The presentations generated much discussion. The following is an attempt to summarize the discussions. The actual presentations are posted on the WAC website under today’s meeting. WDFW response below include the responses of the WDFW and WANHP representatives) to questions raised by the group.

WAC - How can the plant community types used in the EIA framework be linked

to the existing HEP data sets? Another program, UMWP uses the habitat types based upon the loss assessments and identifies desired conditions based upon reference site conditions. Can the existing data be grouped into the plant communities as the monitoring program moves forward in the future?

WDFW response - The EIA effort is an evolution towards a future approach and much of the current information should be able to be “cross-walked” into the EIA ecological systems.

WAC – Is the EIA framework best applied at the subbasin and provincial scale versus the project.

WDFW response - The EIA approach can be applied at any scale.

WAC - asked about attempting to fit current data into the process. It appeared that the best fit for consistency could be attained at the ecological system level but given the multitude of habitat associations (782 in Washington alone) could make consistency at the habitat association scale problematic.

WDFW stated how to get the existing programs and data to fit within the EIA framework may be a challenge but again UMEP and HEP survey information appears compatible.

WAC – Much of the information for the EIA may be contained in subbasin plans, therefore there could be overlap or redundancy.

WDFW – The intent is to have a framework robust enough to build off existing data but need to recognize that WDFW is looking for a tool to help them outside the subbasin plan areas, with entities outside the CBFWA partners, and link with national efforts. The EIA information is based on the ecological systems developed through NatureServe and therefore there is wall-to-wall coverage across the country.

WAC – Does the EIA use reference sites and what percent of the data is derived from remote sensing versus field data?

WDFW – The EIA framework does incorporate reference sites. Much of the initial data used for the EIA tables comes from literature reviews but is and can be replaced as additional information is collected

WAC – How is the data to be made accessible?

WDFW – A national database is being developed by NatureServe and others.

WAC – It would be helpful to run a “model validation” exercise to see how the approach works.

**ACTION:** Ken MacDonald is to get the PowerPoint presentations and copies of documents that were available for review.

Chase Davis will explore with the UCUT members the potential to use the UMEP work as an example to see how current programs may fit within the EIA model as an example so others can better understand the process and see how their existing data or future efforts may fit.

**ITEM 6: Potential Role of HEP/HSI in an Ecological Assessment – Paul Ashley CBFWA**

Discussion: Paul was asked to discuss how the HEP program and habitat suitability indices may be used in the evolution to a. ecologically-based monitoring framework including

- Uses of HEP data in an ecological statistical analysis
- Examples of ecological-based surveys(e.g. USFWS VEMA)

The discussion began with Paul being asked if the HEP transect data could be used to fill data gaps at the landscape scale. Paul answered yes. HEP surveys have been

collected on wildlife projects for 10 years with standardized protocols. Statistical analysis has been completed to determine the sample size needed to derive a statistically valid HIS. Although the HEP surveys are conducted at the project scale there are thousands of data sets that can be used. With maybe 10% more effort, additional information, especially for herbaceous plants and to help characterize the extent specific noxious weeds are found on a project area could be collected. Right now only percent invasive species is collected. With a list of noxious species of concern for an area the surveys could be improved, again at little additional effort.

Several WAC members stated that HEP surveys could (some felt should) be a key component of the wildlife monitoring program as it is a historical and existing program with a consistent approach. The HEP surveys can be used, with some minor adaptations, to provide information needed for project management and to inform the Ecological Integrity Assessment Tables. The Nez Perce use the HEP survey information and adds project specific information with little additional effort for monitoring their lands. Their monitoring program was well received by the ISRP during the wildlife categorical review. The Nez Perce feel the HEP survey methodology is valid; the problem is with the derived HSI.

Paul was asked to explain what he knew about VEMA. Paul responded that VEMA is a joint approach between the USFWS and EPA; NHI has been involved, to streamline data collection and track habitat performance at a site through an access database. It may be another tool to help standardize data collection plus pictures can be incorporated which may be helpful for classifications. It was also noted that there are new remote sensing tools being developed and CHAP may be a useful tool to consider in the monitoring deliberations.

At the end of the HEP discussion some participants (not all) expressed that the EIA approach may be a consistent way to describe ecological condition and both HEP and the UMEP process seem to fit within the EIA framework. However most participants are still looking at all the information and there is not a group endorsement of any one approach at this time.

**ACTION:** No Action - Information and Discussion

**ITEM 7: Review Draft Framework**

Discussion: Ken MacDonald led the group through a discussion of the draft framework. The following discusses by section the results and changes recommended by the group.

#### INTRODUCTION

Include in the Introduction the following discussion points:

- First Bullet - include language from the Program that refers to species response. Discuss the linkages between projects subbasin plans and the basin scale including the relationship with state conservation strategies.
- Second bullet - HEP discussion should include the distinction between HEP as a crediting/accounting tool verses the use and/or potential use of HEP survey data in monitoring, and acknowledge the amount and distribution of the HEP information currently available
- Add a bullet on the role of data management and data accessibility
- Under validation monitoring, describe how validation is not expected for project but how validation monitoring may fit within the framework.

#### WILDLIFE MONITORING STRATEGY

The starting point for the strategy were the Objectives outlined in Item 3 with two additional bullets:

- Monitoring must contribute to assessments and reporting at multiple scales

from the project to the Basin

- Must be cost effective, utilizing existing funding and programs to the extent possible

Comments to the strategy included:

1. First Bullet, “Transition from HEP...” add discussion recognizing the value of the HEP survey data including the consistency of the surveys and recognize there may be ability to slightly modify the HEP surveys to collect some additional data at minimal cost
2. Bullet 3, “Track trends in ecological function, describe what is meant by ecological function and include discussion how “species response” is related to ecological function
3. Bullet 4 “Provide data to assess the effectiveness of management (adaptive management)” Add discussion regarding adaptive management role in changing management actions to meet objectives and how in some cases management objectives and thus a management plan may need to be changed.
4. Bullet 8, “Compatible protocols should be developed and used” As discussed under Item 3 compatible protocols does not necessarily mean everyone needs to use the same protocol everywhere.

#### PROGRAMMATIC WILDLIFE MONITORING QUESTIONS

Ken MacDonald began the discussion emphasizing that the questions were developed to be programmatic in nature, helping frame the overall management questions that inform implementation of the Program’s wildlife lands to guide development of the Wildlife Framework. Individual projects will include more specific questions implementing actions under the more programmatic ones.

General comments from Item 4 were to look at the organization of the questions including;

- Some of the questions were related and possibly could be reformatted into sub bullets for better understanding
- Issues of scale need to be discussed and ability to roll-up information
- Bullet 3 needs explanation on the meaning of effective. There is effectiveness of implementing the management plan to meet the management objectives and effectiveness of a specific action (build a fence) at meeting a desired response (restore riparian shrub component in the treated area)
- Add the species response question (see CBFWA amendment recommendation 2.3.6)

Additional specific comments included:

1. Bullet 2 “Are the wildlife projects at or trending towards the desired ecological condition” Add that desired condition is base on the management plan which is based upon subbasin plan or State conservation strategy. Also note restoration of lands should be tied to identified limiting factors
2. Bullet 4, “How many habitat units does each wildlife mitigation project provide? After some discussion, it was decided to drop this bullet so as not to confuse the use of HEP as a crediting tool with HEP surveys as a way to collect information needed for monitoring and management.

#### CONSISTENT REPORTING (Multiple Scales)

There was considerable discussion on the topic. Particularly at what scale should the framework discuss reporting. Should consistent reporting using something like the EIA approach for the wildlife program be “bottom-up” with consistency at the project scale to the subbasin and province or should reporting take a more top-down approach focusing on the subbasin and province scales. There was no closure on the issue and will be a topic for further discussions as the framework develops.

The wildlife framework discussion for the day ended at this point. The NEXT STEPS section was not discussed due to time constraints.

**ACTION:** Ken MacDonald is to incorporate the suggested changes into the next draft of the framework for review in January

**ITEM 8: WDFW Request for Input regarding use of Their Current Mitigation Agreement Funds**

**Discussion:** Nate Pamplin explained that WDFW currently has an interim agreement with BPA for their wildlife mitigation program. The agreement includes funding for acquisition, O&M and RM&E. WDFW and BPA have been discussing use of the funds in 2010. WDFW has proposed using a portion of the funds to participate in the Basin-wide Wildlife RM&E Framework. WDFW would also like to develop a restoration manual, based upon the collective experience of the State’s Wildlife Project managers in order to capture that experience before the experienced personnel retire. The Natural Resources Conservation Service has committed to help with the manual. BPA asked WDFW to discuss the proposed work with the WAC to see if the group thought it was valuable for WDFW to continue with the proposed work.

**ACTION:** The WAC gave support to WDFW to continue work in the two areas.

**ITEM 9: Next WAC Meeting**

**ACTION:** Ken MacDonald will coordinate scheduling another meeting in January to review a revised draft of the framework based upon today’s discussions and continue deliberations of the framework