



COLUMBIA BASIN FISH AND WILDLIFE AUTHORITY

851 SW Sixth Avenue, Suite 300 | Pacific First Building | Portland, OR 97204-1339
Phone: 503-229-0191 | Fax: 503-229-0443 | Website: www.cbfwa.org

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

Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation

Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation

Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation

Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation

Fort McDermitt Paiute and Shoshone Tribe

Idaho Department of Fish and Game

Kootenai Tribe of Idaho

Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks

National Marine Fisheries Service

Nez Perce Tribe

Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of Fort Hall

Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of Duck Valley

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Coordinating Agencies

Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission

Compact of the Upper Snake River Tribes

Upper Columbia United Tribes

DATE: October 10, 2011
TO: Wildlife Advisory Committee (WAC)
FROM: Scott Soultis, Chair
SUBJECT: September 30, 2011 WAC Meeting Final Action Notes

Wildlife Advisory Committee Meeting
September 30, 2011
8:30am to 1:00pm
Red Lion Hotel, Kalispell, Mt

The support material for the meeting is posted at:
http://www.cbfwa.org/committee_wac.cfm

Final Action Notes

Attendees: Scott Soultis (Chair) and Norm Merz (KTI); Kyle Heinrick (Vice-Chair, BPT); Dwight Bergeron and Alan Wood (MFWP); Kathy Cousins (IDFG); Dale Becker (CSKT); David Byrnes (BPA); Tom O'Neill (NHI); and Tom Iverson, Paul Ashley, John Andrews (CBFWA).

By Phone: Tracy Hames (briefly, YN); Paul Dahmer (WDFW); and Nancy Leonard (NPCC).

September 29 Site Visit Attendees: Alan Wood, Gail Bissell, Chris Hammond, Dwight Bergeron and Joel Tohtz (MFWP); Scott Soultis and Norm Merz (KTI); Kyle Heinrick (BPT); Dale Becker (CSKT); David Byrnes (BPA); Tom O'Neill (NHI); Ross Baty and Dan Roberson (DNRC); Robert Rasmussen (TPL); and Tom Iverson, Paul Ashley, John Andrews (CBFWA).

ITEM 1: Introductions and Approve Agenda

Discussion: Scott thanked MFWP for graciously hosting the site visit yesterday. It was an excellent tour and everyone was very impressed with the progress the State of Montana has made for wildlife conservation.

Tom Iverson mentioned that the Council has released a draft Fiscal Year 2011 Annual Report to Congress for public review and comment (<http://www.nwcouncil.org/library/report.asp?docid=415>). There is a description of the Wildlife Crediting Forum efforts on page 17 that may be of interest to the WAC members for review and comment.

Due to transportation scheduling, there was a request to move Agenda Item 5 up to become the new Agenda Item 3.

ACTION: The agenda was approved as written with one modification, to move Agenda Item 5 ahead of existing Agenda Item 3.

ITEM 2: Review and Approve as Final August Draft Action Notes

ACTION: The WAC approved the August 25, 2011 Action Notes as final with no modifications.

ITEM 3: Wildlife Monitoring Implementation Strategy

Discussion: Tom I reviewed the first draft of the Wildlife Monitoring Implementation Strategy (dated September 19, 2011). The goal is to have a first draft that can be used to provide context for wildlife projects being reviewed under the Data Management Category Review. Much of the introductory text is taken directly from the 2009 Fish and Wildlife Program and the draft MERR Plan. This information sets the context for exactly what information we are looking for and why. Need to express the iterative nature of this report. The WAC needs to recommend a few HLIs that can be reported, then build from those as a framework is established and the reporting is realized. The important message for decision makers is that for landscape scale high level indicators, a basin-wide project will be required. The monitoring for each BPA funded project does not add up for reporting HLIs; except as implementation indicators reported through PISCES (although some concern was expressed about the accuracy of data being fed into PISCES – it was suggested that a future WAC agenda item could be validation of the wildlife work elements within PISCES).

Two similar national efforts are underway and were brought to the WAC's attention. The National Fish Habitat Action Plan has instigated the development of a National River Fish Habitat Condition Assessment hierarchical spatial framework and database described in the September issue of Fisheries Magazine (www.fisheries.org). Also, Carl Scheeler is on the steering committee of the Great Northern Landscape Conservation Cooperative which is attempting a landscape assessment at a scale larger than the Columbia River Basin (<http://nrmsc.usgs.gov/gnlcc/res>).

Tom O provided a slide show of examples of how the HLIs may be presented in future reports. The IBIS project hosted maps for the Subbasin Planning process and houses several databases related to habitat types. Tom presented current and historic range maps for Western Pond Turtle. It appears that a common hydrologic layer is being adopted among land and water managers and future presentations will require matching historic information with the common geographic unit (hydrologic unit code). Reporting HLIs at the Basin scale will also require citizen science and national databases such as the Breeding Bird Atlas and the Audubon Christmas Bird Counts. Also, we will want to map hydrology over time to monitor riparian habitat changes due to natural dynamics of large river systems. It is very important to determine the story that is needed to be told in order to guide what gets presented and at what scale. Tom suggested that we need to also coordinate the data and information being generated for environmental impact studies across the Basin. There is a lot of information being collated for permitting purposes that could be coordinated to improve efficiencies and inform Basin-scale reporting.

Scott also suggested looking at the 1997 Assessment of Ecosystem Components in the Interior Columbia Basin, portions of the Klamath and Great Basin. The report identifies ecosystem reporting units, rangeland health, fire regimes, and other long term data.

Scott reviewed the draft framework table and discussed what information is available for focal habitats at the province and subbasin scale. Scott requested that the WAC members review Appendix B and ensure that the focal habitats are current within their subbasins of interest. This table will provide the basis for setting priorities for reporting HLIs across the Basin. Scott also performed a summary of types of data available for various HLIs and presented his findings that could be included in the WMIS. Scott reiterated that NHI currently has a lot of information to support reporting HLIs at the Basin scale. Reporting HLIs will require a small committee to work with Tom in order to make the effort useful to the managers as well as regional decision makers. Finally, Scott recommended that we provide feedback to the Council on their list of HLIs to ensure that the table is consistent with the framework being adopted by the WMIS (e.g., scale of HLIs).

Scott suggested that all the wildlife projects be included in Appendix A in order to demonstrate the synergy between the various projects. Each of the agencies and tribes should ensure that their projects are included in this list. David also suggested tracking completed actions that no longer appear in PISCES.

The WMIS needs to better express that the data that is collected under current projects does not just fit into a system that feeds information for Congress or Council members. Summarization and reporting of HLIs requires a third party, science-based project. The current wildlife projects do not have adequate funding to support monitoring, analyzing, and reporting information that is identified in the WMIS. The wildlife managers do not have a StreamNet and the NHI project serves that role for wildlife information.

ACTION: The WAC members should review the Appendices of the draft WMIS and **provide to Tom:** 1) BPA funded wildlife project information for their agency/tribe, 2) confirm list of focal habitats identified in Appendix B for the subbasin scale, and 3) review Appendix C and provide comments on the work plan necessary to support the first iteration of wildlife HLI reporting. Also review the core document and send in comments and edits by October 14, 2011.

ITEM 4: BPA Land Management Plan Template

Tracy called in briefly to report that he has not been able to provide a summary of comments on the Management Plan Template to BPA and will not be able to participate in today's meeting. David provided a brief update on BPA's activities in regards to the template. The current schedule is to incorporate the manager's input in October. BPA is now developing a comprehensive land management handbook; the land management plan will be a chapter in that document. The handbook will be distributed some time

before December for review and feedback.

ITEM 5: Montana Wildlife Settlement Presentation

Discussion: Alan Wood, MFWP provided an overview of the [Montana Wildlife Mitigation Settlement presentation](#) also available on WAC website. The presentation addresses background, types of projects, accomplishments to date, and future priorities. MFWP received \$12.5 million in 1988 to settle all construction and inundation obligations for Libby and Hungry Horse dams. Since then, MFWP has protected 230,484 acres through fee acquisition, land exchange, conservation agreements, and enhancements. The success of the program has been due to strong partnerships with funding and conservation organizations. BPA dollars account for approximately 27% (\$29.9M) of the total \$111.3 million expended through the Montana Program. The settlement was a calculated risk, but has been a success. Future direction will focus on long term O&M and continued partnership opportunities.

ITEM 6: Review of Wildlife Coordination Functions Description

Discussion: Tom I reviewed the Wildlife Coordination definition provided for today's meeting. IDFG, MWFP, and CSKT have informed the CBFWA members that they will withdraw from CBFWA as of March 31, 2012. This will have a 30% budget reduction impact on the CBFWA central staff. It is likely that coordination of regional forums such as the WAC may no longer be funded through CBFWA. With the implementation of the Council's Regional Coordination Category Review, the agencies and tribes have an opportunity to define their coordination needs to participate in development and implementation of the Fish and Wildlife Program.

The WAC supported the language as presented in the draft document. Comments will be provided by October 4, 2011 in order to support the MAG discussion on October 5.

ACTION: The WAC members will provide comments by October 4, 2011 to their MAG representatives in order to support the MAG discussion on October 5.

ITEM 7: Next WAC Meeting

The next WAC meeting will be a conference call on Thursday November 3, 2011 from 9 am until 2 pm. Agenda items will include: 1) Review and Approve the draft Wildlife Monitoring Implementation Strategy, 2) Discuss regional coordination for wildlife for FY2012 and beyond, and 3) Review the initial draft of a BPA Land Management Handbook.

A meeting announcement and support material will be sent out two weeks prior to the meeting.