



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

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: February 21, 2012
TO: Wildlife Advisory Committee (WAC)
FROM: Kyle Heinrick, Chair
SUBJECT: February 14, 2012 WAC Conference Call Final Action Notes

Wildlife Advisory Committee Conference Call
February 14, 2012

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

Final Action Notes

Attendees: Kyle Heinrick (Chair, BPT); Rick Golden (BPA); Nancy Leonard and Laura Robinson (NPCC); and Tom Iverson, Paul Ashley, and John Andrews (CBFWF).

By Phone: David Blodgett (YN); Mike Schroeder (WDFW); Adrien Elseroad (CTUIR); and Tom O'Neil (NHI).

ITEM 1: Introductions and Approve Agenda

Discussion: Tom recommended adding an agenda item to discuss election of a vice-chair during the FY2012 Work Plan discussion under Agenda Item 3. It was also suggested that Agenda Item 5 be moved to become a new Agenda Item 3 in order to allow Rick to present the PISCES information and leave early.

ACTION: The agenda was approved as written with one modification, move Item 5 up in the agenda to become a new Agenda Item 3.

ITEM 2: Review and Approve as Final January 19, 2012 Draft Action Notes

ACTION: The WAC approved the January 19, 2012 Action Notes as final with no modifications.

ITEM 3: BPA Presentation on PISCES Work Element Revision Process

Discussion: Tom provided background on how this agenda item came to the Wildlife Work Group. During a meeting last year, a member of the group was complaining about the difficulty in applying the current work elements to their wildlife projects. The group agreed to add a review of BPA work elements to the Wildlife Work Group's 2012 work plan. In January, BPA requested comments for modifying work elements for FY 2013, but provided a very short time line with comments due by the end of January. Since this didn't fit within our timeline, we agreed to work with BPA to develop a plan for providing input for the next fiscal year.

Rick agreed to attend today's meeting to outline the BPA work element

review process to better inform how the wildlife work group could be most helpful in providing input to their process. Rick handed out a summary of BPA's work element review process (his handout is posted on the committee's webpage for today's meeting under Agenda Item 5 and can be obtained from Rick at rlgolden@bpa.gov).

BPA performs an annual review of PISCES work elements. Sometimes the structure of the individual work elements doesn't match very well with the way work elements are implemented in the field. The annual review process is a way to address these disconnects.

The process unofficially begins in the Spring with the release of new and modified work elements for the next Fiscal Year contracting period. There is now a comment box in TAURUS that allows project sponsors to submit comments as soon as the latest version of the work elements is released. The official annual review process begins in the Fall with the creation of work groups internal to BPA that begin addressing the comments provided throughout the year.

Rick walked through the process for submitting comments during the year. It was also suggested that Work Element owners should be included in the Wildlife Work Group's conversation. The group discussed a schedule for providing a coordinated review of work elements. It was agreed that this should be a major agenda item for the work plan, but that focused effort on this task could wait until the Fall.

ACTION: Foundation staff will provide an analysis of the work elements that are relevant to wildlife projects at the September Wildlife Work Group meeting. Comments will be developed and collated for the November meeting, with joint recommendations provided to BPA by the end of the calendar year.

ITEM 4: Review and Approve FY2012 Work Plan for Wildlife Focus Workgroup

Tom introduced this agenda item by emphasizing the need for good planning in order to optimize Foundation staff time to support the various technical committees. The goal is to rebuild the Foundation to support a third coordinator, but for now Tom and Neil are the only two coordinators to support up to 7 technical work groups.

One goal of the Wildlife Work Group for this year is to have 2 site visits. The major products that need to be addressed include: 1) continue development of the WMIS – focused primarily on developing prototype reporting mechanisms, 2) review and comment on BPA's Land Management Handbook, 3) review and comment on PISCES work element definitions, and 4) plan for the 2014 Fish and Wildlife Program amendment process.

Paul suggested that during a site visit, the work group should participate in performing a HEP or CHAP survey. Everyone agreed that we could add this to the site visit in June/July. Since we don't have a site visit location planned yet, Paul will review his survey schedule for this year and determine when and where a site visit could be most beneficial and support participation in a HEP survey. If any manager wants to showcase one of

their properties, contact Tom and let him know that you would be willing to host a site visit in June or July.

The Wildlife Focus Workgroup does not currently have a vice-chair. The group is seeking nominations for vice-chair, which can now be non-CBFWA members. The vice-chair will serve as chair for the following year.

ACTION: The workgroup approved the following:

DRAFT 2012 Wildlife Focus Workgroup Work Plan

1) Conference Call Mon 5/7/12

- CBFWA Restructuring Update
- Update on NPCC/BPA discussions on Wildlife Data Management and Coordination project reviews
- Check-in on WMIS prototype development guidance
- Plan June/July site visit

2) TBD - Site Visit/Work session June/July

- Review 1st iteration of BPA Land Acquisition Handbook
- Update on status of WMIS and development of prototypes
- Site visit to BPA mitigation property
- Workgroup participation in HEP survey during site visit

3) Pocatello Site Visit/Work session September 26-28

- WMIS prototype review, WMIS update recommendations
- 2014 Program Amendment planning
- PISCES WE analysis and preparation
- Site visit to Legacy Springs

4) Portland Work Session Thu 11/15/12

- HEP Team Report
- WMIS next iteration
- PISCES WE comments and recommendations
- 2014 Program Amendment planning

5) Conference Call Tue 2/12/13

- 2013 Wildlife Work Group planning
- 2014 Program Amendment planning

ITEM 5: Review Preliminary ISRP Comments on Data Management and Program Coordination

Discussion: Tom provided a background and summary of the ISRP preliminary review of the data management and Program coordination projects. The wildlife committee spent the last two years developing the WMIS to be used as context for the reviews of wildlife data management and coordination projects. The concept was to provide a holistic framework to support projects that provide infrastructure to support the wildlife portion of the Fish and Wildlife Program (See January 19, 2012 action notes). The ISRP provided no feedback on the WMIS or the wildlife framework that was provided during the project presentations.

The ISRP reviews are not likely going to shape the final Council and BPA funding decisions for data management or Program coordination. No responses were requested for either the Northwest Habitat Institute (NHI) data management project or the Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Foundation (Foundation) coordination project. Tom provided a PowerPoint presentation summarizing the preliminary ISRP review.

In their report, the ISRP identified specific Council and BPA review objectives for the subcategories of projects in the Resident Fish, Data Management, and Regional Coordination review process. However, the ISRP did not necessarily address those objectives in their review. Several standards were established through prior ISRP reviews and the 2009 Amendment to the Fish and Wildlife Program that were largely ignored during the ISRP's preliminary review.

The ISRP programmatic review of data management projects was very brief and did not provide detail. They expressed concern about redundancy among data management projects, gaps in data management, and concerns about distributed versus centralized databases. For the NHI proposal, this was translated into concern about creating a centralized data base for terrestrial wildlife and habitat data, including GIS layers, suggesting that a distributed network may be more appropriate. Unfortunately, this is a common statement about large datasets that ignores the pre-requisite that participants within a functioning distributed network still must follow the same data exchange rules and standards, which we do not currently have for GIS data bases across the Columbia River Basin. Distributed and centralized databases are not mutually exclusive. Also, the ISRP wanted NHI to provide specific details on what other data sets should be acquired to support HLI reporting for wildlife. The ISRP concerns will be addressed by NHI during contracting, and will be addressed within the WMIS in its next iteration.

The ISRP programmatic review of regional coordination (Program coordination) resulted in a surprising conclusion: "each proponent should focus on at least one regional coordination question and develop a research design to identify outcomes and lessons learned." The ISRP neglected to recognize previous ISRP recommendations, 2009 F&W Program language, and other existing standards and guidelines for Program coordination and

determined that regional coordination should become a research focused effort.

All regional coordination proposals were given the same grade and the same general comments; however, the specific comments within the individual review of the Foundation proposal compliments the proponent for identifying the same outcomes that “all” regional coordination proposals are criticized for lacking in the general comment. For examples see the PowerPoint presentation provided by Tom for today’s meeting.

It is clear that the future of Program coordination will be determined through the Council staff and BPA development of project funding recommendations and will not necessarily be determined by the ISRP review. The wildlife managers may want to provide comments to Council and BPA staff to influence their final funding recommendations.

The next steps for the review process include: 1) response to ISRP by March 7, 2) ISRP final report on April 3, 3) ISRP presentation to Council on April 10-11 in Skamania, Washington, 4) Council staff recommendations to Council in May, and 5) Council decision in June. The April/May timeframe is the wildlife manager’s best opportunity to interact with Council and BPA staff to influence their input on the funding recommendations for data management and Program coordination.

Kyle suggested that a coordinated letter be sent from the wildlife managers pointing out the conflicts in the ISRP review of the NHI and Foundation proposals, and that those projects were developed to address known needs and deficiencies.

Individual comments from agencies and tribes will assist the Council in making their final recommendations. Comments should be submitted to Lynn Palensky at Council prior to March 3.

ITEM 6: Review Comments and Edit Wildlife Monitoring Implementation Strategy (WMIS)

Discussion: Following the release of the initial draft WMIS in November 2011, several WDFW staff members were able to provide a detailed review. They sent in comments to Tom I, but have not discussed their comments with the group. For the most part, WDFW supports the initial draft but recognizes there are improvements that could be made. Nancy requested comments from agencies and tribes that did not participate in the initial draft of the document; she expects to receive their input at a later date. Additional comments will continue to be incorporated in future drafts.

The basis of most of the WDFW comments are focused on an ecological construct rather than focusing on population specific metrics. Because the MERR Plan was developed initially for anadromous fish and the initial template for the monitoring strategies were constructed for anadromous fish, the framework for this monitoring strategy is somewhat population based. In fact, development of the WMIS may greatly assist the Council in developing HLIs for ecosystem health.

An important point that has to be better articulated under the reporting framework (page 26) is the connection between habitat and vegetation types, population focal species and habitat units. These three dimensions of HLIs should be directly connected – focal species should be related to HU evaluations and those species should be specific users of reported habitat types. For example, data collected to perform HEP surveys should directly relate to population and vegetation types needed for higher level reporting even though the specific analyses to support calculation of HUs will not necessarily support those other indicators. While there are three types of reporting, a single monitoring effort may support any (or all) three of these indicator types.

Tom walked through the WDFW mark-up version of the WMIS and discussed the significant comments in detail. The comments will be incorporated into the next version of the WMIS, in addition to comments received from other agencies and tribes and the ISRP comments in the review process. The next full iteration of the WMIS will likely not be completed until the end of the year.

The work group discussed developing prototypes for reporting at the landscape scale. Tom O volunteered to produce prototype reports for the Willamette Valley focal habitats based on the framework provided in Table 1 of the report. The prototypes should be ready by the September meeting; however, there will be an opportunity to check-in with Tom and the work group in May and June/July to ensure that the guidance is adequate and expectations are kept in check.

At the Willamette Valley scale, what can we say about the focal habitats?
See framework Table 1 for parameters to report.

ACTION: Tom O will develop a draft report on HLIs for focal habitats in the Willamette Valley. He will provide a brief check-in report in May. Functional prototypes will be completed by September.

ITEM 7: Next WAC Conference Call

The next WAC conference call will be on Monday May 7, 2012 from 1:30 to 4:30 pm at the CBFWA offices in Portland, Oregon. Agenda items will include: 1) Update on CBFWA restructuring and impacts to CBFWF staff, 2) Update on NPCC data management and regional coordination project review process, 3) Update on development of WMIS prototypes, and 4) Plan site visit for June/July. It is anticipated that the agenda will be modified as the meeting date draws near.

A meeting announcement and support material will be sent out one week prior to the conference call.