

**Bi-State HCP Coordinating Committee Meeting**  
**October 16, 2003 (Milton-Freewater Community Center), 9:30am – 11:30am**

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**Present:** Ben Floyd (EES), Teresa Yeager (WW River Irrigation District), Cathy LaRoque (WW County), Elena Escalante (WW County), Chad Fisher (WDOE), Dave Mastin (WW Watershed Alliance), John Marsh (Parametrix), John Zerba, Judith Johnson, Roland Schirman, Ron Brown, Stuart Durfee (Gardena Farms Dist. #13), Michelle Eames (USFW), Tim DeRuwe (Hudson Bay Irrigation District), Tony Justus (OWRD), Victoria Leuba (WDOE/USFWS), Yancey Reser, J.R. Cook (Umatilla County), John Stephenson (USFWS).

**Handouts:** Agenda, Bi-State HCP Coordinating Committee Meeting August 21, 2003 meeting notes, Summary of Threat Factors By Designated River Reaches in the Walla Walla River Core Area, Table 10 – Estimates of the Current Adult Spawning Population Compared to Recovery Targets and Current Population Trends, Maps of the Core Areas and Bull Trout Local Populations in the Recovery Unit and Stream Reaches and Bull Trout Local Populations in the Walla Walla River, CRFPO Bull Trout Studies.

**Housekeeping Items:**

- ✓ Judith Johnson was added to the agenda under the “Brief Information Updates”
- ✓ Question: In regards to the August 21, 2003 meeting notes, it states that Dave Mastin will write a letter for the group requesting transportation mitigation funds to apply in the basin – what is the latest information on this? Answer: Dave stated that the WDOT suggested to him that he wait and see if the letter is necessary and if it is necessary, he will formulate the letter for signature by the HCP Chairs.

**USFWS – Bull Trout Recovery Plan Update:**

John Stephenson of USFWS passed out handouts for the recovery plan and noted that in response to local and regional comments on the draft plan, the regional office in Portland has a team of scientists that are considering larger scale changes to the recovery plan for Bull Trout. On the map handout, local populations show where spawning areas occur, with Umatilla and Walla Walla spawning populations occurring in the same types of geographic area. Review and comments on the draft plan were accepted earlier this year, and the review period for the final plan should begin in early 2004.

From the draft plan to the final plan, one potential change is to reduce the number of recovery units and call them management units, with consolidated criteria applying across a larger geographic area (to consider the genetic link between John Day, Umatilla, and Walla Walla river basins). Also from the draft review process, the Recovery Team has decided to split Touchet into its own core area. Currently there are three core areas within our recovery unit: Umatilla, Walla Walla, and Touchet River drainages. The map core areas and the Bull Trout local populations in the recovery unit are based on intact spawning area, high sight fidelity, intact population, etc. The Walla Walla River map further separates the Walla Walla River into stream reaches. John noted that the intent of the second handout (Table 10) is to tie specific threats to tasks in order to identify primary issues to be addressed for recovery. John noted that data in the second column titled “Recovered Population” could tighten-up from the draft to final plan, and he will be discussing this further with the Recovery Team. In the draft, the population was combined with Walla Walla and Touchet.

An issue to consider is whether a recovery plan will calculate populations based on actual adult counts, or on estimated spawning adults (calculated based on Redd counts). A comment was made that although the draft calculated a spawning adult population derived from Redd counts, a calculation based on all adults could be a more accurate approach for identifying local impacts verses out-of-basin impacts. And although local planning groups have been calling for a calculation based on adults, John said it is easier to estimate populations in terms of spawning adults and the Recovery Team will use spawning adults for population estimates.

John noted that the connectivity between populations is generally poor and there are a couple of key areas needing improvement: Reach II and Reach VI. The connectivity for the Touchet River Core Area was more simple. John commented that there is a need for more habitat downstream but he is not certain to the extent it needs to be continued upstream. There is also less emphasis placed on conditions between the upper Walla Walla River and

upper Touchet River, since these are different core areas. Because we have so few local populations, it's important to maintain connectivity to offer the best chance for recovery if one or more local population suffered a catastrophic event (i.e. Upper watershed forest fire).

Question: Are there still passage problems at Nursery Bridge even with the new facility?

Answer: It is still a recovery barrier.

Question: How do you account for flood impacts on Mill Creek?

Answer: Floods are a threat, the connectivity needs to be maintained.

Question: Do you have any specific enhancement objectives for Mill Creek?

John stated that the Recovery Team would need to look at enhancement objectives for Mill Creek as he does not know what they are. It was suggested that he look at regular flood event data.

Question: Are Upper Meacham Creek and South Fork Touchet Touchet not meeting the recovery population targets?

Answer: Only one of the recovery points were used for these areas. Each local population should have at least 100 but 500-1000 is more ideal.

Question: What type of numbers are we looking for the species to be de-listed?

Answer: John stated that across the region there are 22 recovery units, all with different criteria for each of core areas. It is not necessary to meet every recovery criteria however for a species to be de-listed. John does not have a specific number (count) that would de-list the species, but some places in Idaho and Montana are close to reaching the necessary recovery population and eligible for de-listing.

Question: Is connectivity needed year-round?

Answer: Not sure. We need more info on Yellowhawk Creek for example but would need it from spring to early summer (up through July).

Comment: This table makes it appear that connectivity is a year-round problem. Water flow is okay until June.

Question: Are there still barriers along Yellowhawk Creek?

Answer: No, they have been removed.

Michelle Eames (USFWS) passed out Don Anglin's (USFWS) update on ongoing Bull Trout Studies.

### **Update on TMDL development:**

Don Butcher was not able to attend this meeting and the Oregon TMDL model will be discussed at a future HCP meeting. Don and Bob Bower from the Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council (WWBWC) worked on the temperature model and on October 20, 2003, the WWBWC will be presenting the model at the Watershed Council meeting in Milton-Freewater. More information on the October 20 WWBWC meeting can be found at their website. Brian Wolcott stated that the model shows how changes in flow affect temperature.

### **Paladin- Data Management System Presentation:**

#### *Overview:*

Paladin's data management EkoSystem is designed to meet the needs of people out in the field and manage scientific and project related information. It is a source to feed associated analysis systems (such as Ecosystem Diagnosis and Treatment, known as EDT); however, it is not a data analysis tool and is not intended to replace the EDT model – it is report/export engine. Some of the features are:

- Web browser based (works best with Explorer)
- Tracks project information and makes reports:
  - Measured and quantified

- Uses self-defining data table
- A graphic tool assists in financial tracking
- It has the capability to track objectives
- A progress and status indicator shows where you are in meeting goals and objectives.

Question: What are the standards or protocol for data in the system?

Answer: Paladin's approach to data management does store the type of protocol that was used when data was collected (i.e. USGS, DOE, etc) and there is the ability to qualify/differentiate data based on by which protocol it was collected under.

Other key characteristics of the EkoSystem approach includes:

- Ability to accept data from a variety of sources and information such as morphology, legacy information, barriers and limiting factors (query data)
- It can store multiple readings – you can ask for the data separately or combined
- Interactive system transfers
- Ability to publish data.

The data management system will have multiple layers of security and separate filters that control what a person can do and what a person can see. The interconnectivity ability will allow for other agencies to share data.

Comment: There was a concern that the EkoSystem's GPS handheld tool may replace other systems currently in use now and learning to use it may take some time. Paladin reaffirmed that the handheld graphic tool was an optional component and we can determine which components we will find most valuable.

Paladin previously developed a data management system for Asotin County and several lessons were learned that will be beneficial for the Walla Walla watershed data management system:

- centralized management
- span funding sources
- common reporting engine
- tie projects and science together
- minimize clerical tasks
- Importance of managed security (same level of control as Department of Defense)
- protocol independence
- structured meta-data (XML – allows a system to communicate with another system)
- self-describing information
- user-defined structure

Question: So you can electronically send data?

Answer: Yes.

Once the contract is finalized, Paladin will be requesting data from different agencies. Paladin suggests that the high priority data be input first – i.e. take an incremental approach.

Question: How is quality control determined?

Answer: Each agency would indicate the quality of the data when it is loaded into the system. One option would be to have someone else review the data and rate the quality of it. It is possible to have multiple quality indicators for data as well.

Once the contract with Paladin is finalized work will begin next month. Walla Walla County's point-person on this project is Cathy Udenberg in the County's GIS department. The first steps in this process is to discuss this process with the Bi-State Technical Working Group (TWG) meeting at their November 12<sup>th</sup> meeting and identify sources of data, with those who have data and those who are interested in the potential outputs of this data management system.

### **Other Agenda Items:**

- The HCP Draft Species report is being finalized to incorporate comments received by reviewers including USFWS. Next steps include initiating the NEPA process, with a one-hour presentation and explanation of NEPA requirements to occur on November 5<sup>th</sup>. This meeting isn't an official NEPA scoping meeting, but rather a comment period for pre-scoping NEPA since we will be working concurrently to conduct NEPA and develop the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the HCP. This NEPA meeting will be from 6pm to 7pm to coincide with the Subbasin Planning meeting occurring at the same location (WA Dept of Transportation Conference Room, 1210 G Street, Walla Walla) beginning at 7pm.
- Ben Floyd (EES) informed the group that there was an EDT Citizen Workshop on November 5 (7:00-9:00pm) that will discuss a vision for the Subbasin Plan. An introduction to EDT modeling will also be an agenda item for this meeting.
- Victoria Leuba (DOE) noted that the Mill Creek Working Group meeting scheduled for October 22 was postponed to occur sometime in November, with a specific date to be determined. This group is looking at the whole Mill Creek system, including the three braids plus Titus Creek, and considering passage issues and how to improve the system.
- Judith Johnson informed the group that an alternate website is being developed for watershed planning in the Walla Walla watershed ([www.wallawallawatershed.org](http://www.wallawallawatershed.org)). Judy requested that members of the HCP Coordinating Committee provide her with current activities and events they are involved in. She will be providing this information to the Walla Walla Union Bulletin, to develop news stories on the local efforts. In addition, Judy is seeking HCPCC members to join the revived HCP Outreach Subcommittee – contact Judy for more information.
- For Washington Watershed Planning, Ben stated that the Implementation Area Workshops were now completed and the next step is to begin writing the watershed plan. EES will be proposing to the Steering Committee that the focus for the next several months be on the HCP and the Subbasin Plan. The intent would be to move the watershed plan deadline to June 2004 in lieu of more immediate deadlines. Victoria commented that the drop-dead date for watershed planning could be extended as far as November 2005.
- The Watershed Planning Unit Instream Flow Meeting will be on October 27 and Mike Barber (WSU) will be sharing studies completed this year.
- The draft plan for the CIDMP is nearing completion and on November 13 EES will meet with Gardena Farms to present the draft plan.
- Cathy LaRoque reviewed upcoming Subbasin Planning meetings. The Subbasin Planning Citizen Workshop focusing on Vision development and an introduction to EDT will be held on November 5<sup>th</sup> at 6:00pm in Walla Walla. The EDT Technical Workshop will be on November 5<sup>th</sup> (8:00am – 5:00pm) and continued on November 6<sup>th</sup> (8:00am-12:00pm), both in Walla Walla. The Habitat Subcommittee will review the terrestrial assessment at 1pm on November 10<sup>th</sup> in Dayton. On November 19<sup>th</sup>, the EDT Citizen Workshop will be held in Walla Walla.

The meeting adjourned at 11:30am. The next HCP CC meeting is scheduled for January 15 at the WA Dept. of Transportation in Walla Walla.