

Meeting Notes

9 July 2008

Location: Chelan PUD Auditorium, 327 N. Wenatchee Ave.

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1. Review and adopt the agenda

Casey opened the meeting at 9:05 a.m. He asked for revisions to the agenda. There were none.

2. Updates

- UCSRB and Implementation Team: Julie and Derek provided several updates from the UCSRB and Implementation Team including: New allocation negotiations for SRFB funding, the development of an Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Forum, annual reports of implementation, and a “report card” that includes reporting information from all-H sectors. Chuck suggested that it would be important for the report card metrics to be consistent with what NMFS needs to evaluate status and effectiveness towards recovery objectives.
- RIST: Michelle McClure gave a brief background on the purpose of the Recovery Implementation Science Team (RIST). It is comprised of 13 members. They are currently reviewing regional monitoring and evaluation plans. In the Lower Columbia, the group is also reviewing harvest and hatchery programs for consistency with recovery.

Chuck asked how the group is dealing with the transition from plan development to implementation, where plans do not currently exist. Michelle said that in those areas where plans are not complete, the Technical Recovery Teams are still in existence and will serve the same functions as TRT’s did previously for the areas with recovery plans.

- MaDMC: Keely provided an update on the Committee’s activities. The Wenatchee monitoring implementation plan (Appendix A of the Upper Columbia Monitoring Strategy) was distributed to the Committee via email this week as a reminder that it needs to be reviewed.

Keely reported on the Watershed Action Team’s review of the Upper Columbia data gaps matrix. There were several comments that came in and that the Committee will be reviewing these comments soon and update and revise the data gap assessment.

With regard to the middle Methow Reach Assessment (BOR), the group discussed its ability to participate. Derek advocated for early and often RTT participation in the reach assessment process. He said that his simplistic vision for these products is to have as much participation as possible so that the products are widely accepted and very useful. Having the RTT involved in the science, methodology, project criteria

development and project selection is a critical step in making these products as useful as possible. The group agreed that it would be beneficial to participate in the reach assessments early in the process. Several RTT members are planning to attend the July 14 Methow Monitoring Coordination meeting as part of the middle Methow Reach Assessment.

- RTT Workplan: Casey presented the revised 2008 RTT workplan. He noted that both the MaDMC tasks and full Regional Technical Team tasks are combined into this workplan. He commented that he has received additional requests to complete the barrier prioritization workgroup effort. The group was not in support of releasing the draft framework at this time. Due to workload related to project review, the workgroup would not be able to get the draft finalized and back in front of the full RTT until the September meeting.

Casey said that he wanted to pick a day in August for the project review. The schedule currently has August 19-20 on hold for project reviews, but only one day is needed based on the number of pre-proposals. The group agreed that August 19 is the preferred date. They also agreed that the regularly scheduled meeting date (August 13th) would need to be spent individually reviewing proposals. No meeting will be held on August 13th.

Casey also identified the post implementation project tour workplan topic. He wanted to identify a date for the RTT to tour previously implemented projects. He also suggested that the respective citizens' committee members be invited to participate in visiting the project sites, as they have asked specifically for such a tour. The group asked for a list of those projects that were funded, perhaps dating back 5 years or more, in order to identify appropriate project sites that the group would like to visit. They want to see projects that failed or were less successful than predicted, not just successful ones. Casey said that if the list of funded projects were presented to the RTT in September, the group could identify sites to visit in October. The group agreed that two days would be necessary, and chose October 8-9. Derek will work with the Lead Entity Coordinators and the Tributary Committees to develop a list of funded projects over time. Once the lists are developed, Casey will go back through old RTT notes and provide the RTT comments so the group can compare the review with the results.

3. Methow "Core Team" participation

Derek said that this agenda item was covered under the MaDMC update above. The group agreed that RTT participation in the middle Methow Reach Assessment would be a good idea. Several RTT members will participate in the July 14 monitoring coordination meeting. No one volunteered to be a designee to the process, due to workload considerations. Casey agreed to circulate meeting notifications and try to garner RTT participation at the future meetings.

4. Shiraz manuscripts review

Casey presented to the RTT a workgroup memorandum to NOAA Fisheries after reviewing the Shiraz methodology and two manuscripts for Wenatchee Spring Chinook. The group took some time to read through the review comments and then Casey highlighted several of the major points included in the memorandum.

Several RTT members have since provided additional comment on the draft memorandum. Additionally, members provided specific comments in the meeting to further refine the draft.

The group discussed the appropriate entities to copy on the memorandum. Some members suggested that both the UCSRB and Rob Walton at NOAA Fisheries would be appropriate. Casey suggested holding off on official notifications until we see how the NWFSC responds and incorporates RTT suggestions and comments. Casey agreed that a couple of phone calls might be more appropriate at this time. The group also suggested adding to the memorandum a request to see a revised version of the manuscript. Casey will incorporate the comments from the meeting and the edits provided on the hard copy and send the memo to the authors at the NWFSC.

5. Reflect and further comments on project tours

Casey outlined that the purpose of this agenda topic is to provide some further guidance and additional comments about the projects, based on observations and discussions at the project tours. During the tours, people are still learning things on the fly and reacting and asking questions. The project sponsor may not be able to take enough notes or remember all the points that were made. The following notes in no way capture all the comments and discussions on the project tours; however, we hope this additional effort is worthwhile in the overall process.

Entiat River Assessment RM 6.8-16 and RM 26-34 (CCD)

The project tour provided clarity on how this project fits in with the other assessments. It was apparent that these reaches were not the highest priority in the Entiat, and that the Bureau of Reclamation may complete a future reach assessment if it is determined to be a priority. The RTT discussed the differences between the lower reach and the upper reach in terms of their current conditions, restoration potential, and restoration options. The group agreed that an assessment would likely be needed to help facilitate project development in these areas. More information on the timeline and urgency of this project, and how it fits into the DIP, ISEMP, and linkage to potential future restoration activities in the Entiat would be helpful for determining the potential benefits.

Conservation Opportunities on Icicle Creek (CDLT)

The RTT suggests the proposal will need to be clear about the biological benefits of this site, linkages to restoration opportunities, cost share opportunities, how it will alleviate risk from development, and provide protection beyond current regulatory mechanisms. The proposal should also provide specificity on the size and location of the parcels that will be protected because the quantity of land discussed at the site visit was different than what was presented at the pre proposal workshop.

Goodfellow-Chotzen Floodplain Reconnection Project (CCNRD)

The site visit confirmed the conclusions of the RTT's earlier project review (February 2008) conducted in February. The recommendation at that time was to minimize engineering at this site, and to take a less invasive approach to remove the manmade berm and revegetate where needed. The RTT does not believe that the excavated backwater areas are appropriate or that the LWD placement is necessary, as recruitment will likely occur naturally. Continued monitoring of this site through photo points (or other Level 1 effectiveness monitoring techniques) might provide helpful information regarding how natural processes are reclaiming the area.

Kahler Complexity, Nason Creek (CCNRD):

The site visit brought up concerns that there could be unanticipated effects to a functional area, and to downstream areas. Wood was accumulating in the project area and will likely continue to do so. The RTT discussed other sidechannel opportunities that would better address the primary limiting factors for Nason Creek. The specific objectives for the structures and the long-term vision for the site were not made clear, which made the proposal appear inappropriate or premature.

Rayrock Springs, Nason Creek (CCNRD)

The actions proposed do not address the primary limiting factors in Nason Creek or the causal mechanisms of degradation at this site. The LiDAR seemed to indicate some offchannel opportunity in the floodplain at this site. RTT members suggest investigating sidechannel reconnection at low flows, which would decrease the volume of water in the current channel pinned against the highway. The specific objectives and actions were not made clear. The proposed actions may not be appropriate for this site, dependent upon further investigations.

Cashmere Ponds Off-Channel Habitat Project (CCNRD)

The RTT raised questions regarding the necessity of the barbs in the main channel and expressed concern about additional artificial confinement in this area from that portion of the project. The project may be just as effective by reconnecting the pond with the main river on the upstream end by removing the berm, and possibly modifying the outlet to alleviate the stranding problem. There was uncertainty regarding the added benefits and risk of failure and degradation of the riparian zone from excavating the 1600-foot sidechannel. The island in the pond did not seem necessary and may have more negative effects than positive. The RTT suggests a simpler approach to this site.

North Road Culvert Replacement (CCNRD)

The RTT suggests the project sponsor identify the portion of the budget that contributes to the fish habitat and access part of the project. The group pointed out that there are no bull trout in Chumstick Creek and it is not considered a potential core area for bull trout. The RTT also recommends that the project will most likely need to include some revegetation.

Twisp River Riparian Protection (Methow Conservancy)

The RTT will need to evaluate each property independently and recommends that the final proposals keep all the information on these easements separated (the pre proposal did a pretty good job of this). It was helpful to see the attributes used by the Methow Conservancy in project prioritization, but more detail is needed on how those attributes are used to come up with a prioritization and how that influences each parcel ranking. The Spier property, though smaller, appeared to have high connectivity with the river and would be an efficient piece to protect. The Pampanin property appeared to have very limited floodplain connectivity with the river. Additional efforts should be made to minimize the upland areas in these (and all) easements / acquisitions. It will also be important to see an example of the management/stewardship plan for these properties.

Twisp River Conservation Acquisition II (MSRF)

The final proposal would benefit from including before and after pictures of the existing MSRF property to show the potential opportunity at this site for those that will review it but did not attend the tour.

Poorman Cr barrier removal (MSRF):

The need to replace the culvert and put in a compliant screen was obvious. The RTT agrees with the Tributary Committee that a bridge may be more appropriate at this site.

Moody Canyon Engineered Log Jam and Keystone Diversion (CCD):

The site visit confirmed previous thoughts that the 2 projects should be combined. The Keystone diversion should include an assessment of the screening and return flow structures. The RTT agrees with the concerns raised on the site tour regarding the effects of ice and ice dams on these structures and how that could affect the road. Planting locations and prescriptions should be better identified. Replanting on the right bank may not be effective unless the orchard road were relocated. More detail on the exact locations and configurations of the instream structures will be needed in the final proposals. Clear objectives for these structures should also be included in the final proposal.

Middle Stillwater Design Only (CCD): The timing of the project design seems inappropriate without the results of the USFWS assessment. It will be very difficult to assess the potential benefits of the project without knowing specifically what is being proposed.

6. Project Review 2008 (Casey / All)

During the RTT workplan discussion the group agreed that the proposal review day would be August 19th. Casey went over the spreadsheet that included the blank scoring sheets and pointed out that people would need to print those out and fill them out, using appendix D of the *RTT Biological Strategy* to guide them through the scoring system. John suggested that it might be more effective to have people send in their scores electronically before the meeting. The group agreed, but that would require people to get Casey their results in advance of the meeting. They agreed to send in scores by 14:00 (that's 2 pm civilian time) on August 18th. Casey will set up a spreadsheet that allows RTT members' to enter their scores electronically.

14:45 Other, wrap up, next steps; these were covered within each of the individual topics.

15:00 adjourn

Meeting attendees: Derek VanMarter, Julie Morgan, Casey Baldwin, Karl Polivka, Tracy Hillman, Chuck Peven, Kate Terrell, Cam Thomas, Pamela Nelle, Keely Murdoch, Tom Kahler, Carmen Andonaegui, John Arterburn, Joe Lange, Joe Kelly, Steve Hays, Michelle McClure, Rich Malinowski, Steve Kolk, Joe Miller, Joy Juelson, Tom Gibbons