



# 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

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: September 1, 2010  
TO: Wildlife Advisory Committee (WAC)  
FROM: Doug Calvin, Chair  
SUBJECT: August 18, 2010 WAC Meeting Final Action Notes

Wildlife Advisory Committee Meeting  
August 18, 2010  
Upper Columbia United Tribes  
Community Building Conference Room  
Spokane, 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 (Chair, CTWSRO); Scott Soultz (Vice-chair) and Norm Merz (KTOI); Angela Sondana (NPT); Paul Dahmer and Mike Schroeder (WDFW); Carl Scheeler (CTUIR); Dale Becker (CSKT); Tracy Hames (YN); Chase Davis (UCUT); David Byrnes and Don Rose (BPA); Nancy Leonard (NPCC); Tom O'Neil (NHI); and Tom Iverson (CBFWA)

**By Phone:** Aren Eddingsaas (SBT); Carol Perugini (SPT); and Matt Berger (KT)

### **ITEM 1: Introductions and Approve Agenda**

**ACTION:** Scott requested postponing Agenda Item 5 until the next WAC meeting. The group agreed. Dale requested the addition of an agenda item to discuss the process for assessing FCRPS operational impacts to wildlife. The chair suggested that a new Agenda Item 3 be inserted to provide that discussion. The agenda was approved with those two modifications.

### **ITEM 2: Review and Approve as Final June Draft Action Notes**

**ACTION:** The WAC approved the July 21-22, 2010 Action Notes as final with no modifications.

### **ITEM 3: Status of Process for Assessing Operational Impacts of the FCRPS on Wildlife**

**Discussion:** Dale provided a brief background on operational loss discussions during the Kerr Dam settlement in Montana. Approximately 300 acres were left unsettled above Kerr Dam which was deemed the responsibility of Hungry Horse Dam operations. BPA has been unwilling to mitigate for operational losses until a consistent process for assessing losses can be established consistently across the basin. The CSKT would like to begin discussions with BPA regarding settlement of these outstanding losses. The group agreed that if they have quantified losses, the tribe should move forward on discussions for mitigation with BPA.

Tom O confirmed that the recent Willamette settlement will include mitigation for operational losses.

The WAC discussed the importance of a monitoring framework for setting the context of operational impacts across the basin. Our work on the WMIS will assist in setting the context for eventually settling operational losses for the FCRPS.

**ACTION:** No action was taken on this agenda item.

### **ITEM 4: National Vegetation Class System (NVCS) Evaluation**

**Discussion:** Tom I provided a background and summary of the Pendleton meeting notes to help establish how we arrived at the NCVS as the organizing framework for the wildlife monitoring strategy. The goal of the WAC strategy is to identify a framework that would support monitoring programs within all existing BPA funded projects. The NVCS seemed to be the most robust framework to

support expression of high level indicators. The WAC now needs to discuss what HLIs are appropriate and can be reported for the Basin.

**ITEM 5: Comparison of NVCS with HEP**

Discussion: Mike S provided the following presentation:

[Cross-walking HEP Data](#)

Mike's intention was to determine if HEP data would fit within the NVCS framework. He found that the functional level of the NVCS framework was the Group level; basically equivalent to ecological systems. Data can roll up to a higher level or be parsed to a lower level, but for high level indicators the Group level appears to be right. This level is also most useful in terms of mapping.

Mike selected recent HEP survey data from several properties across the state of Washington. Mike used the Field Guide to Washington's Ecological Systems (DRAFT March 5, 2008) to identify habitat types/cover types. Mike identified 67 HEP transects that had been collected from various habitat types in recent years. Aligning the HEP habitat types with the NVCS vegetation classes, Mike was able to cross-walk the transect data with the vegetation types. Mike stated that this data could be cross-walked at the Alliance level, as well, if necessary.

The discussion focused on the usefulness of the information at the lower levels for project management; however, the importance of the monitoring strategy effort is to report at the higher levels. This system will allow us to roll up the data, but it is important to understand that we will not be discarding the more detailed data at the lower levels. The take home message from this analysis is that the NVCS will work as a framework for high level reporting of indicators.

**ITEM 6: Wildlife Management Plans and NEPA Reviews**

Discussion: Dave thanked the group for inviting BPA back to continue the discussion of developing land management plans for the projects in the Fish and Wildlife Program. BPA would like to promote developing land management plans for all appropriate projects within the Program to support the fish and wildlife managers and to support the BPA requirements associated with NEPA and other regulations. Dave sees the land management plans as a tool to provide the context for maintenance and enhancement activities, as well as monitoring efforts. Dave B introduced Don Rose, BPA's manager for environmental compliance for fish and wildlife projects.

Don's presentation is available on the CBFWA website for the August WAC meeting ([NEPA for Lands Managed for Wildlife and Fish](#)). BPA has historically used programmatic EIS's to cover activities that are funded through the Fish and Wildlife Program. However, NEPA requires site-specific information for certain actions. BPA hopes that land management plans can meet the site specific EIS requirements for land protection and acquisition projects. Don handed out an initial draft template built from existing plans for BPA projects ([Draft Fish or Wildlife Management Plan Template](#)). BPA would like to develop a standardized template for all their land acquisition projects and asked the managers to help with that effort.

Tracy expressed a desire for the agencies and tribes to provide the first draft template. The managers agreed and volunteered to bring their "Table of Contents" from any existing management plans to help support the discussion at a future WAC meeting. A WAC meeting was scheduled for October 6 and 2 hours of that meeting will be dedicated to discussing development of a common land management plan template. The WAC members should bring information from their plans and make it available. Tom I will post the [1998 guidelines](#) developed by CBFWA on the CBFWA website for today's meeting (done).

**ACTION:** The WAC members agreed to sit down with their land management staffs, review their existing management plans, and bring ideas to the October 6 meeting for this discussion.

**ITEM 7: How Do We Express Ecological Integrity as a High Level Indicator for Wildlife?**

Discussion: Tom I provided some background for expressing High Level Indicators (HLIs) at the basinwide level. Somehow we have to express HLIs in a meaningful way to determine if Program funded actions are benefiting wildlife. Rolling up acres to the Group level of the NCVS would be an easy way to demonstrate how much habitat has been protected, but the important measure is

ecological integrity of those acres. The indicator that demonstrates benefits to wildlife is ecological performance. Each of the wildlife managers has models that can calculate ecological performance. We agreed that one model would not be selected for evaluating ecological performance across the basin. The challenge for the group is to determine how to roll up information from various models to express ecological performance as a high level indicator at the Group level for all wildlife areas.

The group discussed the role of the Group level of the NCVS. There are approximately 200-300 unique Groups within the Columbia River Basin. There are 32 habitat classifications according to Wildlife Habitat Relationships in Oregon and Washington. The goal is to have approximately 10-15 categories that wildlife habitat could be rolled up into. These categories could be groups or alliances or a combination of both. The point is to have a few (<10-15) categories that HLIs could be expressed for that represent all of the habitat types mitigated for with the Program. Tom O agreed to work with Tom and Mike to develop a short list of categories that all vegetation classes within the Pacific Northwest would be able to roll up into.

Carl suggested a few principles that HLIs should measure against: connectivity, conservation, total available habitat, fire threat for shrub-steppe, etc. Can we detect change related to the range of natural variability?

The group generally agreed that we need to identify the 10, or so, categories that we will be reporting HLIs for, then start working through specific questions and indicators for each of those categories. Information will roll up differently for each of the categories due to how you measure ecological integrity for each vegetation class, and what factors influence the ecological integrity for various vegetation classes.

**ACTION:** Tom O, Tom I, and Mike S will propose a list of 10-15 categories for reporting HLIs for wildlife. At the next WAC meeting, the group will review and agree to a set of categories and begin to identify HLIs for each of the categories. This will be an iterative process and the categories and HLIs will likely change several times before we reach a final set for the WMIS.

**ITEM 8: Wildlife Crediting Forum Update**

**Discussion:** The WCF subcommittee for federal lands met and discussed how to credit BPA for actions taken on federal lands. The group reviewed the properties that have significant allotments on federal lands. The group agreed that BPA should receive credit in the proportion that BPA paid for the benefits.

The facilitator was going to send out the first draft of the findings of the forum so the managers could provide a mark-up edit prior to the next meeting. Hopefully those notes will be sent out next week. The goal was to have the managers provide a review and then have the facilitator spend a week incorporating everyone's comments.

**ITEM 9: Next WAC Meeting**

The next WAC meeting will occur at the CBFWA offices in Portland, Oregon on September 14 from 1-5 pm, to coincide with the Wildlife Crediting Forum meeting. The agenda will include: 1) discussion of a small discrete set of categories for HLIs, and 2) Scott's HSI assessment. Tracy requested that meeting announcements and draft agendas be sent out 2 weeks prior to the meeting in order to better support travel requests.

The WAC also scheduled a meeting for October 6 from 1-5 pm at CBFWA in Portland, Oregon. Time will be dedicated at that meeting to develop an initial draft land management plan template.

**MEETING  
REMINDER:**

**Wildlife Crediting Forum**  
**Council Central Offices – Large Conference Room**  
**851 S.W. Sixth Avenue, Suite 1100, Portland, Oregon 97204**  
**503-222-5161**  
*September 15, 2010 – 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.*