

REGIONAL COORDINATING GROUP MEETING NOTES

June 27, 2002, 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

NORTHWEST POWER PLANNING COUNCIL OFFICES
PORTLAND, OREGON

DRAFT

1. Greetings, Introductions and Review of the Agenda.

The first meeting of the Regional Coordinating Group, held June 27, 2002, was chaired by Northwest Power Planning Council Vice-Chair Judi Danielson. She welcomed everyone to today's meeting, held at the Northwest Power Planning Council offices in Portland, Oregon. Danielson led a round of introductions and a review of the agenda for today's meeting.

2. Overview of Regional Coordinating Group.

A. Purpose. Brian Allee began by saying that the purpose of this agenda item was to provide a brief overview of the Regional Coordinating Group, its role, function and membership; he noted that this group has been discussed within the Council since last fall. Allee said one of the Council's goals for the subbasin planning process is the avoidance of a centralized approach. People in the region don't want Portland doing all of the planning, he said, hence the creation of a three-layer structure for the subbasin planning process, which is intended to push the grass-roots planning work out into the region.

Level 1 of the process is the actual production of the subbasin plans, Allee continued. Level 2 is the statewide/provincial/tribal coordinating group. Then we have this group, which is meeting the first time today, said Allee; its basic function is to help integrate ESA planning with the Council's subbasin planning efforts. The Regional Coordinating Group is to be chaired by the Council Chair or his delegate, and is to include representatives from the tribes, the federal action agencies and the state planning groups. That is Level 3, of the process, Allee explained.

This forum is a recommendation body, Allee said – if there are regional issues that

percolate up from the ESA planning, integration or subbasin planning processes – issues that cannot be solved at Levels 1 or 2 – they will be addressed here, and we will develop recommendations for the Council. The idea is that this group will meet on an as-needed basis, Allee said; we did, however, want to have this kickoff meeting, to discuss how all of these pieces are going to fit together and to get some progress reports from the various groups who are operating under Levels 1 and 2, Allee said.

Claudeo Broncho of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes asked about potential duplication of effort between this process and the CBFWA process; also, he said, is this going to be a formal or an informal process? The Regional Coordinating Group isn't meant to be a forum like CBFWA, Allee replied; this is not a continuing forum, but will meet only on an as-needed basis. The real decentralization of subbasin planning needs to happen at the subbasin level. This meeting was meant to kick off the process, said Allee, but my understanding from the Council is that it will meet only sporadically, as issues arise that cannot be solved at Levels 1 or 2. It is not meant to be a formal process, Allee added, although we will be producing a written summary of each meeting. Danielson agreed that this is not meant to be a duplication of CBFWA; again, she said, it will be an issue-oriented group.

Dave Statler of the Nez Perce Tribe asked about Level 2 structure, noting that while the statewide groups are in place, he is unsure where the interstate/provincial coordination is to occur. That is meant to happen at the statewide/provincial/tribal level, Level 2, Allee replied. Will this group be making funding allocations within each province? another participant asked. No – that was never the Council's intent, Danielson replied.

Joe Peone observed that the question of how the available funds will be allocated has yet to be resolved; in addition, how coordination with Canada is to occur has yet to be fully fleshed out.

3. Subbasin Planning Overview.

Lynn Palensky went briefly through the background, purpose, process, anticipated work products, organizational structure, schedule and sequencing for the subbasin planning process; she noted that considerable effort has gone into developing the infrastructure and budget for the process. She described the functional levels of the subbasin planning infrastructure:

Level 1 – Subbasin

- Working on behalf of tribes, states, local governments, federal agencies and other regional stakeholders
- Tasks: develop subbasin assessment, resource inventory and management plan
- Goal: ensure broad participation
- Coordinate with Level 2

Level 2 – Provincial/Tribal

- Statewide/Provincial/Tribal Coordination Group

- Statewide/Provincial/Tribal technical support
- Working on behalf of the tribes and states
- Purpose: to provide guidance to the subbasin planning efforts
- Organize resources to assist in the planning process
- Review and package plans for submission to the Council
- Provide coordination and project management

Level 3 – Regional

- Regional Coordination Group
- Regional technical support
- Council, tribes, BPA, NMFS, USFWS

Palensky noted that each state is working on a funding allocation by subbasin at Levels 1 and 2 of this process. She added that the \$15 million master subbasin planning contract with BPA has now been signed, and is available via the Council website.

In terms of products, said Palensky, we have developed a detailed budget, a schedule, a subbasin planning guide. She went briefly through the schedule for the subbasin planning effort, noting that it is, as might be expected, very tight. The intent is to do the best we can this time around, she said, and to refine the process through time. She added that the Council will be administering all contracts, and hopes to have a very quick funding turnaround time.

Palensky said Bob Lohn has developed a letter, describing the relationship between the ESA and subbasin planning processes; that letter is also available via the Council website, as is the recently-approved Flathead River Subbasin plan. We feel that plan provides a good example of the type of work we're looking for, in terms of a subbasin plan, Palensky said.

Various meeting participants expressed concern about the due dates for their subbasin plans, particularly those due in May 2003. Danielson replied that the Council is well aware of those concerns, and is weighing various options in terms of easing those deadlines if possible.

Guy Dodson of the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes expressed another concern: that no funding has been set aside to ensure full state participation, as well as the participation of Canada. That's a valid question and discussion point, said Danielson. Just to clarify, said Statler, when subbasins cross state boundaries, there may be funds available from more than one state? That's correct, Palensky replied – the Snake subbasin crosses three states, not just two; the three states have preliminarily agreed to each contribute \$50,000 to develop that subbasin plan.

Leo Bowman, Commissioner of the Yakima River L.E., noted that the Columbia Plateau province plan is to be submitted by October 2003. The planning process is just beginning in the Yakima Basin, he said; if we're to do a thorough job, it isn't realistic to think we can even come close to completing that plan in the time-frame laid out in this schedule.

What the Council envisioned was a two-year schedule and a fixed resource amount, Allee replied; the plans are intended to be iterative, and to feed into the next phase of the provincial

review process. What you produce by October 2003 will not be the end of subbasin planning in the Yakima Basin, Allee said – we simply expect you to do the best you can, with the data available to you, in the allotted time-frame. New information and data gaps will be addressed in a future iteration of your plan, Allee said.

Doug Marker said that, with respect to the next round of project solicitations, the question of how those solicitation processes will go forward is very much in the Council's mind.

4. Status Report From Statewide/Provincial/Tribal Groups.

A. Idaho. Jim Caswell reported that Idaho is making good progress, and has formed a Level 2 steering group after considerable discussion, statewide, about how to proceed. We're integrating the statewide and provincial approaches, Caswell said, but our feeling is that we need a statewide group, particularly in making funding and subbasin lead entity decisions. The third issue is how to provide technical support, he said.

We all know there isn't enough money to go around, Caswell said; obviously, some subbasins are much more complex than others. We don't want to get to the end and find that we're out of money, he said. For that reason, said Caswell, we decided to do this at the state level, meaning that the process will stop at the state borders. The steering group will include seven tribes, plus the state of Idaho, Caswell said. The group has met four times in the past six months, coming to grips with issues such as role, membership, authorities, structure and protocols; we're producing an MOU, which will be signed next week, Caswell said. He added that one of the seven tribes has agreed to participate, in the process, but may not sign the MOU. We have tentatively agreed on a budget for every subbasin within the state and have accepted the Council's guidance on split subbasins, said Caswell.

Caswell noted that the Clearwater Basin plan is now nearly complete, and will be submitted to the Council soon. We expect, over the next two months, to get the Salmon River subbasin plan underway, he added. Once the Intermountain Province is underway, he said, we will move on to the other two provinces in the state.

Technical coordination and the allocation of those funds is another question we've been grappling with, Caswell said; we may decide to let each subbasin decide how to conduct its own technical coordination, or we could choose a more centralized approach. We haven't yet decided on which approach we're going to take, Caswell said, but we will be deciding that question at our next meeting. He added that coordination among the various state agencies in Idaho will take place through his office. We have also put out an RFP for a project manager, Caswell added.

B. Oregon. Karl Weist of the Council staff reported that the Oregon Level 2 group has been meeting informally since May 2001, and formally since December. We have an MOU that is floating between the various players in the coordination planning group, Weist said; that group includes six state agencies, the governor's office and five tribes. We're trying to get NMFS, USFWS and BPA to participate in the meetings as well, Weist said.

Like Idaho, we're trying to decide how technical support will come into play, Weist said;

a technical outreach subcommittee has been formed. We have also been talking about how to allocate our available subbasin planning funds, he said, and have evolved an extremely complex set of protocols to guide that process. We haven't decided yet how to approach the mainstem Snake and Columbia subbasins, he said; there may be economies of scale in approaching the mainstem in a coordinated fashion. Again, how the technical coordination funding will be allocated has yet to be decided.

We have selected a project management contractor, Weist said; we're in the process of getting them under contract. Other than that, we're trying to get the subbasin planning processes underway statewide -- the Deschutes River subbasin plan is nearly complete; the Umatilla, Hood and Grande Ronde subbasin plans are also well under way.

C. Washington. First up was Phil Trask of the Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board. Trask reported that his group represents a large region, containing all or parts of 12 subbasins from the White Salmon River to the mouth of the Columbia, as well as numerous listed and proposed species. Our 15-member board was appointed by the legislature, he said; we've been around since 1998, so in some ways we're pretty far along, prioritizing habitat recovery projects, doing recovery planning in all four Hs, and doing subbasin planning.

Trask described how his group coordinates with various tribes, state agencies and local stakeholders. We're attempting to line up the watershed planning, habitat project prioritization, subbasin planning and recovery planning processes and coordinate them very closely, Trask said; as you can imagine, that is a complex and daunting task. We're on track for a 24-month process, in terms of aligning those four processes, he said. For the Columbia Gorge province, one year really isn't enough time to produce a completed plan, he said; however, we should be able to develop some useful technical information and project recommendations within that period.

We are also coordinating extensively with Oregon with respect to our overlapping processes, said Trask; we're working within NMFS' ESA Executive Committee process to ensure that that coordination occurs. The ESA Executive Committee process has been extremely useful for us, in terms of developing common terminology and close coordination on work products and resource allocation, Trask said.

Trask said that, with respect to funding, we have a variety of funding sources available to us, and we're moving forward. We have developed a pool of eligible consultants based on a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process; bids are due back from the four consultants by July 11, and the intent is to let a contract in early August, even before subbasin funds are made available to us. These consultants will be assigned at least half of the tasks associated with subbasin and recovery planning.

Next, Joe Peone, Chair of the Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board, said the Board has been going through some restructuring to better meet the provincial needs. Our geographic region is the Upper Columbia ESU, Peone said. The board includes county commissioners, Yakima Tribe and the Colville Tribe, he said.

The board has asked staff under each of those board entities to develop a working draft

subbasin plan for the Okanogan as an example, Peone said; the goal is to develop subbasin plans for the entire province. Some of those subbasin plans are now underway, he said; others are still trying to figure out how to get off the ground. We've been talking about budgets and roles. The Wenatchee, Entiat and Methow have existing 25-14 processes; the Okanogan will have one soon, Peone said.

With respect to technical coordination, said Peone, much of that is being done by staff in coordination with NMFS – we want to get that part of the process off on the right foot, he said. We're still a bit confused about the EDT issue, he said, we would like to implement EDT in all of the subbasins, because that process is now complete for the Entiat and the feeling is that it was very successful. In general, we're not as far along as the Lower Columbia provinces, Peone said, but we're excited about the process, and anxious to do as good a job as possible in the time allotted to us.

Next, Steve Martin of the Snake River Salmon Recovery Planning Board in southeastern Washington described the five-county, three-ESU, five-subbasin geographic scope of his effort. The lead entity process under 24-96 began recently, and is beginning to work on recovery planning, he said. We're forming a board, which will include all of the key stakeholders in this basin, Martin said. He noted that there are currently watershed planning, recovery planning and subbasin planning efforts ongoing in the basin; we very much want to ensure that our subbasin planning and recovery planning efforts are aligned. We are somewhat concerned about the May 2003 deadline, given the fact that the people who will need to produce that subbasin plan will also need to be involved with recovery planning.

Brad Johnson noted that, as Martin said, the Snake River Salmon Recovery Planning Board will include a very broad spectrum of basin stakeholders; we're excited about receiving funding from the Salmon Recovery Board to get that board underway. We have developed a Snake River recovery strategy for submission to the SRF Board, he added; again, we're mainly waiting for our allocation of subbasin funding so that we can get that process underway. A total of \$600,000 is expected to be available for this province, he said; we have not yet decided exactly how those funds will be allocated among our four subbasins. We need to get a budget committee in place to make those decisions, he said. Essentially, we don't want to lose the momentum that has been developed here by stepping on toes, Johnson said.

Alison Squier, coordinator of the Intermountain Province Advisory Council, reported that her area includes five subbasins, three of which cross the border with Idaho. All of those subbasins are above Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee Dams, hence the fact that we do not have any salmon to recover, she said. We have been meeting monthly; at our last meeting we agreed to our terms of reference and established a board, which again, includes a broad array of state, tribal, Canada and local stakeholders. We set up an oversight committee which will have the final say in our funding allocations, Squier said. There are five 25-14 processes underway in the province right now, she said; we want to coordinate as closely as possible with those processes, to avoid damaging those relationships. We're concerned about the one-year deadline, mainly from the standpoint of those relationships, she said; we want to go cautiously there.

So we've been working on our structure, and have also set up a technical committee to

look at what assessment tools are available to help us in our planning efforts, Squier said. We also have a number of FERC relicensing processes going on in our province, she added; again, coordination is a concern, and in all likelihood, we're only going to be able to do a fleeting job of that in this iteration. Squier noted that IDFG has been closely involved in their process to date; that relationship is going well.

We're in the process of developing RFPs for project managers, Squier said; to date, we're pretty happy with the funding allocations we've seen.

Next up was Leo Bowman, who noted that his group has the luxury of having every drop of water that flows from the Yakima and its tributaries down to its confluence with the Columbia within our province. We formed our lead entity last September, said Bowman, including a technical committee, a citizen's committee and a board. All except the citizen's committee operate on a consensus basis, Bowman said; he then detailed the membership of each of these groups. We were created to do projects, Bowman said; before we start making project decisions, we have to do planning, although our resources are stretched pretty thin. We are attempting to fill some staff vacancies currently, he said.

Bowman noted that, in the Yakima Basin planning effort, the Yakima Nation is a full partner, not just a participant. With respect to contracts, he said, one thing we don't want to do is plan to fail. Any contracts we enter into need to have adequate funds to get the job done. We are fortunate in the Yakima in that we have a wealth of information; our 25-14 process is almost complete. We need to know why we're here and what we're going to do with our work products once we're done, to avoid any subsequent political discussions, Bowman said -- that is another reason for our emphasis on close coordination with all of the stakeholders of concern, he added. We feel we have a solid understanding of what the various entities -- the Council, the SRF Board etc. -- require of us, Bowman said.

Paul Ward of the Yakima Nation, a member of the Yakima Board, said that, at yesterday's meeting of the board, the decision was made to undertake a recovery planning effort; we now are discussing how subbasin planning will feed into recovery planning in the Yakima Basin, he said. How that integration will occur is the subject of ongoing discussion, he said, adding that the Yakima Nation will also be producing a subbasin plan for the Klickitat subbasin. Another tribal participant noted that the Klickitat is a problematic subbasin, and that the Yakima Tribe will probably be sending a letter to the Council outlining a proposed approach to that subbasin.

D. Montana. Cary Berg of the Council's Montana staff reported that there is no formal Level 2 structure in Montana at this time; we've really been acting in an ad hoc manner, working with local groups to keep the process moving forward. We are making progress, Berg said; the Flathead River subbasin plan has now been approved by the Council, and the Kootenai River subbasin plan is expected to be completed soon. Those are the two main subbasin plans for the state, Berg said; there are only five subbasins in all, including the Clark Fork and the Bitterroot.

In general, Berg said, the process is going well; we're talking about hiring a planning coordinator to take some of the load off of Council staff, who have been working very hard on

this process.

Danielson noted that, as a Council member, it is very useful to hear from those actively involved in the implementation of the subbasin planning process. A very informative presentation, she said.

5. Administration of the Subbasin Planning.

A. Contract Status. Jim Tanner briefed the group on the status of the contracting effort. This project is by far the largest the Council has ever undertaken, contractually – \$15.2 million and more than 100 contracts, Tanner said. The allocations we've been discussing will be firmed up as we produce each individual contract, he explained. There are three master contracts, corresponding with Levels 1, 2 and 3 in the subbasin planning infrastructure, said Tanner; there are no funds, as yet, in any of those contracts.

As proposals are developed, they will come to the Council, will be reviewed by Council staff, then submitted to the Council for approval, Tanner continued. Once the Council approves a proposal, it will be submitted to Bonneville, and will become, in effect, a task order once accepted by BPA, Tanner said. BPA will then authorize funds so that those who will be doing the work can begin submitting invoices to the Council.

Before Council staff reviews each proposal, Tanner continued, our hope is that the Level 2 boards will give their blessing – that will allow us to process the proposals much more quickly and efficiently. Once we receive such a proposal, he said, it should take us only a few days to review it, then submit it to the Council for approval. The Council has agreed to approve proposals twice a month, Tanner said, so that's two to three weeks right there. BPA has indicated that they should be able to approve proposals within one week. As long as there are no problems with the boilerplate contract language between the entity and the Council, that shouldn't take more than a week; in all, Tanner said, it shouldn't take more than five weeks from project submission to contract award.

Dobson asked what would happen if there were discrepancies about the total cost of a project – would this group make those decisions? Our hope is that such issues could be resolved at Level 2 within each state, Tanner replied; if that is not possible, it may be logical to ask this group to develop a recommendation. Allee added that the Council would make the ultimate decision on such issues, although the Regional Coordinating Group would frame the issue for Council consideration, and would likely develop a recommendation as to how the issue might best be resolved. He cited the schedule issue, raised by numerous participants earlier in today's meeting, as an example of the types of issues the RCG might be asked to address.

Weist asked about cases where a given subbasin plan proposal might come in at, say, \$950,000 rather than \$500,000 – could we approve such a contract for X amount less than \$950,000, with the understanding that the board in that subbasin was making a good-faith effort to obtain funding from other sources to cover the shortfall? he asked. Or would we say no, the Council should not approve a contract that does not guarantee that the project producers will be able to produce all of the work products called for in the plan? asked Weist. Council staff would

likely not recommend that the Council approve such a contract, Doug Marker replied.

Lynn Hatcher of the Yakima Nation said he sees a major problem for the Council: can the tasks be accomplished at all, given the available funding and timeline? The schedule is very tight, to say the least, as is the funding situation, Hatcher said. In response to another question, Tanner noted that there is some sequencing built into the contracting process, primarily because of the logistics of issuing and managing the large number of contracts envisioned under this process.

Kim Kratz of NMFS asked whether the contracts proposed for the subbasin plans need to identify what specific work products will be produced under the available budget. Again, staff would not recommend that the Council approve any contract that is not going to deliver the full scope of the plan, Marker replied. Hatcher noted that Eric Bloch had earlier advised plan developers simply to let the Council know how much it will cost to build the whole “bridge;” however, that’s not what we seem to be hearing here, he said.

Think of this as an opportunity to convene partnerships, suggested Elizabeth Garr of NMFS – there are other potential funding sources out there besides Bonneville, available to the local subbasin planning boards. If you need more than the Council can provide through this process, she said, get those people involved now – Pacific Salmon Recovery funds, Corps funds, Farm Bill funds etc.

Steve Waste of BPA agreed; he noted that there may be some basins that will be able to do their entire plan with the BPA allotment, but it was not BPA’s intent that their funds would cover the entire cost of subbasin planning in every basin. This is seed money, intended to get a truly collaborative effort off the ground, Waste said – we encourage you to fully explore all available sources of grant money and other funds. It would be helpful if this group could function as a central clearinghouse for information about other sources of funds, Fred Olney suggested.

6. Overview of Technical Support.

Chip McConnaha led this presentation; focused on how subbasin assessment will fit into the subbasin planning process, working from a series of overheads. Main topic areas included:

- The subbasin plan outline (introduction, subbasin assessment etc.)
- The subbasin overview (what is the context for fish and wildlife in this subbasin – generally and regionally)
- Species (what is the status of fish and wildlife in this subbasin and what biological conditions would need to be met to ensure long-term sustainability for species in this subbasin – focal species selection, population delineation and characterization, assessment of population status)
- Environmental conditions (what is the effect of the environment on fish and wildlife populations – habitat conditions, external effects, assessment of environmental/population relationships)
- Ecological relationships (What are the key interspecies and functional relationships – interspecies relationships, processes and functions)

- Factors and conditions that limit production (what factors or conditions are responsible for fish and wildlife declines in this subbasin – identification of factors/conditions, assessment of causes/relationships)
- Synthesis and interpretation (What does this assessment imply regarding the health and functioning of the subbasin ecosystem? What are the implications for management? – synthesis of findings, protection and restoration priorities, working scientific hypothesis, desired future conditions)
- Implications of scale for subbasin planning (time-frame for development, biological assessment, use of results in the Fish and Wildlife Plan, monitoring and evaluation, application to other activities)
- The hierarchy of scales -- broad/coarse scale (provincial scale or larger), mid-scale (subbasin, small watersheds), fine-scale (stream, stream reach, site).

McConnaha noted that subbasin plans are intended to operate at the fine-scale level. He added that there is also a micro-scale level.

Next, Drew Parkin, a consultant to the Council, briefly discussed the three levels of the subbasin planning infrastructure; he noted that those three levels also come into play in the development of the subbasin assessments. General guidelines are provided at the regional level, as is technical support and coordination. Level 2 -- the statewide/provincial/tribal level – is the principal level for conducting assessments, it is the place where specific guidelines will be provided, and technical support teams will function. At the subbasin level, said Parkin, assessment results will be reviewed and revised, and the assessments will be incorporated into the subbasin plans. In some cases, Parkin added, the subbasin assessments themselves may be developed at this level. The take-home message is that at all three levels, there are roles for the assessment, Parkin said.

Parkin moved on to the technical support functions that are currently being proposed. He touched on the following regional technical support elements:

- The regional technical group
- Assess out-of-subbasin effects
- Provide staff support
- Function as a liaison to NMFS/USFWS recovery activities
- Provide guidance on conducting assessments
- Provide EDT technical support
- Provide wildlife technical support
- Establish resident fish life-histories and habitat relationship “rules” for EDT analysis
- Make EDT available online
- Develop a subbasin assessment Internet site
- Make GIS data available via the website
- Provide GIS support
- Provide tabular data
- Provide library services

McConnaha then continued on with an overhead charting the elements and organization

of a subbasin assessment: the aquatic environment assessment (including population, habitat, artificial production), and the terrestrial environment assessment (including wildlife terrestrial habitat assessment).

If the Artificial Production Review is going to be the basis for bringing in the artificial production portion of the assessment into the process, what will that do to the timeline? Hatcher asked. Their schedule is synchronized with ours, Allee replied. Also, where will the human degradation component of the analysis fit into the aquatic environment assessment, and where will ocean harvest and estuary effects be addressed? another participant asked. In the aquatic habitat assessment, and in the systemwide assessment, respectively, McConnaha replied. And where will the out-of-basin effects be addressed? Trask asked. The white paper describing the scope of out-of-basin assumptions should be available within a week or so, McConnaha replied; the actual assumptions will take a bit longer.

Fred Olney asked when the major out-of-basin assumptions will be integrated into the analysis – after the first iteration of subbasin planning addresses local needs? I think there are a couple of other things that go together in the out-of-basin assessment: population demographics, and climate change – the effects of global warming on the Pacific Northwest environment – those are both longer-term assessments, Allee replied. However, things like reach and system survival, estuary effects, harvest impacts, will be addressed in the first iteration of subbasin planning, Allee said. However, large-scale management questions will likely be addressed in later iterations of the process, McConnaha said.

Elizabeth Garr noted that the out-of-basin assumptions are the current best guess about existing conditions, and are needed to allow the local analyses to be run. We won't be looking at tradeoffs across Hs and scenarios at this point, she said – we won't be ready to look at ESU-wide scenarios in the inner Columbia until at least the fall of 2003. This being the case, said Garr, the out-of-basin assumptions are intended to provide a consistent set of assumptions for use in local planning efforts. Basically, the idea is to hold certain background factors steady, so that everyone is working from a common set of assumptions, added Waste.

Peter Paquet briefly addressed the terrestrial environmental assessment portion of this process, noting that planners now have detailed information on more than 700 terrestrial species, including current and historical range, information about key ecological function and the interactions of each species with listed salmonids. Ultimately, we hope to be able to overlay this information with the EDT outputs to determine the areas in which we have the most key ecological functions and interactions with salmonid species, Paquet explained. McConnaha also addressed the topic of how to set restoration and protection priorities in a subbasin, using a “tornado diagram” of Portland's Johnson Creek as an example.

McConnaha added that he will make his presentation available via the Council website: www.nwcouncil.org/dropbox.

What about species that are doing OK? Guy Dobson asked -- the Power Plan, after all, says only that the Council must protect fish and wildlife, not just those species that are in the worst shape. There are things we could be doing to provide some protection for the species that

are doing relatively well, as well as those that are on the verge of extinction, said Dobson; it would make more sense to take a proactive, rather than a reactive, approach. We're not focusing only on the species that are in trouble, particularly in the terrestrial assessment, Paquet replied – the focus of that effort is to keep intact the key ecological functions throughout the region.

7. How to Integrate Subbasin Planning With Other Planning Processes?

Allee thanked the agency representatives present today for their time and participation; he introduced the presenters in this category.

A. NMFS and USFWS Recovery Planning. Elizabeth Garr said that, earlier today, it was observed that NMFS regional administrator Bob Lohn had sent a letter to Council Chair Larry Cassidy on the following topic: does subbasin planning get the job done for ESA? That letter was extremely informative, Garr said; it lays out NMFS' thoughts and ideas at this point, but it also raises almost as many issues as it answers. More than anything else, she said, it was intended to stimulate further discussion.

We do have a mandate to develop ESA recovery plans, said Garr; we believe the Council provided an opportunity, which we took advantage of through the offsite mitigation sections of the 2000 BiOp. We would like to encourage local subbasin planners to include their recommendations on recovery planning elements in their plans, and to submit those recommendations to the Regional Administrator. We would like, ideally, for the subbasin plans to include elements that will address ESA recovery planning needs, she said. That way, when we do get to the decision-making point, we will have a much higher degree of regional buy-in. It won't help the fish if our staffs develop a series of recovery activities and recommendations which you, on the ground, are not interested in implementing, Garr said.

Garr also touched briefly on the interrelationships between the various Technical Recovery Teams (TRTs) in the recovery planning process. The bottom line, said Garr, is that we are interested in working with subbasin planners to introduce an ESA component to their plans; subbasin planning is a great opportunity to bring together federal and non-federal land and water managers, and everyone with a stake should be at the table.

Next, Fred Olney of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service discussed the Service's recent decision that the southwestern Washington/Columbia River populations of coastal cutthroat trout do not require protection under the ESA. He distributed a news release on this issue, which noted that newly-gathered and reanalyzed data on the species' abundance, and recently enacted protections for the fish and its habitat, combine to make it unnecessary to list this population.

Moving on, Olney said the Fish and Wildlife Service has received funding for additional staff to participate in various forums related to recovery and subbasin planning; we're also adding staff to key field offices in Oregon, Washington and Idaho he said. We intend to participate where appropriate in all three levels of the subbasin planning process, he added, bringing our knowledge and experience to the process. It would be helpful if all of the lead entities, as well as meeting notifications, could be listed on the Council website, Olney suggested. He said Mark Bagdovitz has been hired as the Fish and Wildlife Service's subbasin

planning coordinator. Olney thanked the Power Planning Council and its staff for its outreach and integration efforts.

Bagdovitz provided a brief overview of the Fish and Wildlife Service's recovery plan for bull trout (the full text of which is available via the Council website).

B. Forest Planning. Lisa Croft of the US Forest Service said her agency has a profound interest in the recovery planning and subbasin planning efforts; the Forest Service is in the process of going through a plan revision, so these efforts are timely, she said; wherever we can work together, share information, avoid duplication of effort and affirm common goals, we would like to do so. Our staff is somewhat limited, said Croft, but we would like to help wherever we can.

C. State Initiatives. Sara LaBorde of WDFW said recovery planning integration is well underway in the State of Washington; the other thing that is going on is the 24-96, or watershed planning, process, she said. The Governor's office has appointed a three-member committee to look at the integration of those two efforts, she said.

D. Tribal Initiatives. Phil Roger of CRITFC said that, in 1995, the four CRITFC tribes published their salmon restoration plan, *Wah-Ka-Ni-Shi-Wa-Kish-Wit*. We knew at the time that there were a lot of pieces missing from that plan, because there was a lot of information we simply didn't have at that time, said Roger – on ocean environmental cycles, demographic effects, the interactions between habitat conditions and fish production. Much of that missing information is now available, Roger said, and the time has come to update the tribal restoration plan. Over the past 18 months, we have been working with staff at the Council and NMFS to identify those missing information items that would be beneficial to all of our efforts, he explained. We believe the situation with anadromous fish is so critical that we can't afford not to develop this information, the subbasin plans and the recovery plans, Roger said.

We will be assessing whether or not a given subbasin plan meets tribal needs using four criteria, Roger said: effectiveness, accountability for actions, equitability and whether or not the plans are efficient, in terms of using the limited available resources as effectively as possible. Subbasin planning will not, by itself, provide all of the information needed to update the tribal recovery plan, Roger said; after subbasin planning is completed, we will be pushing the region to get to the bottom of the many key out-of-basin effects. Right now, however, we are encouraged by the collaborative spirit that is being shown in the technical discussions pursuant to the subbasin planning process, he said.

We have a draft blocked area management plan, identifying resident fish issues in the Upper Columbia, said Joe Peone – flow management in Lake Roosevelt to protect resident fish, for instance, he said. We may dust that off for use in case the managers in that area are unable to agree on a subbasin plan. We're also putting a lot of effort into the Columbia Cascades/Okanogan management plan, Peone added; it is extremely important to the tribes.

Guy Dobson said that, in the Snake region, there is still a lot of resentment about the fact that, when the Hells Canyon complex was constructed, anadromous fish passage was blocked; we have suffered more than any other province, in terms of lost species and fishing

opportunities, he said, but we have been compensated the least. We are thankful for what monetary compensation Bonneville has given us, he said, but there is still a great deal of improvement that can occur in our area. We probably have more pristine habitat and environment than any other region in the U.S., he said; we will produce another plan if that is what is required, but we need more involvement from the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service. The subbasin planning and recovery planning processes could work, Dobson said, but we could use five or six more good heads around our table to ensure that we develop a truly collaborative plan.

E. Action Agencies. Steve Waste said he would attempt to provide the shared perspective of the action agencies, not just BPA. With respect to the opportunity we see before us, he said, the deeper we've gotten into the Fish and Wildlife Plan, the subbasin planning process and the ESA implementation process, the more we realize that most of the agencies understand what they're doing, but they don't have much idea about how their part fits into the whole picture. We see subbasin planning as possibly being the place where those three processes come together, Waste said. It would be nice if there were a point of intersection between these three elements, he continued, but more likely the Fish and Wildlife Plan, the subbasin planning and the recovery planning processes will be delivered in a staggered fashion. My hope is that, a year or two from now, when the TRT work products are out, the subbasin planning process is through its first iteration and we have a couple of BiOp progress reports under our belts, the road before us will become clearer, said Waste.

There are some areas of concern, said Waste, one of which is the heavy emphasis on habitat issues. We are looking to achieve a lot of the necessary survival improvement through habitat improvements, he said; while habitat is likely the most solid investment in the recovery toolbox, the payoff period for habitat tends to be long, in terms of demonstrating survival and recovery gains. In other words, we need to give the habitat "H" a chance to play out, Waste said.

There is also the issue of institutional impediments, said Waste, in particular, the ISRP report and its contention that institutional impediments could be insurmountable in this region. Because we're taking a bottom-up approach, he said, we disagree with the ISRP on that issue.

To conclude, Waste said, in terms of integrating subbasin planning with the Fish and Wildlife Plan development and the ESA implementation process, the only way to get there is by conscious choice and concerted effort.

8. Next Steps/Next RCG Meeting Date.

In the course of today's meeting, various issues were identified which will require further discussion and deliberation: the potential for a website for subbasin planning; the schedule for future Regional Coordinating Group meetings; about how to develop information on non-Bonneville funding sources for subbasin planning. Joe Peone recommended that the Recovery Coordination Group meet quarterly, at least initially. Jim Caswell disagreed, recommending that this group meet only on an ad hoc basis, as issues arise, noting that Brian Allee and Lynn Palensky have responsibility for convening this group when necessary. A brief debate ensued; ultimately, Danielson said she will discuss the scheduling issue with the rest of the Council, and

will likely schedule another meeting of the RCG in conjunction with the September Council meeting in Spokane. If additional issues are raised from the Level 2 subbasin planning infrastructure, the RCG will reconvene sooner of necessary.

With respect to using Council staff to develop information about alternative, non-Bonneville sources of funding for the subbasin planning effort, Allee agreed that such information would be useful to the region. If you want us to put that information on the website, said Danielson, we will need your help as well as Council staff's.

The discussion returned to the issue of schedule, and the problematic timelines for the completion of a number of the subbasin plans. That is a real issue, Allee agreed; one approach would be to ask Council staff to frame this issue for presentation to and resolution by the Council. It is already on the Council's radar, said Danielson; we are already planning to discuss it at the Council's next meeting in Yakima, and it would be very helpful if Council staff could frame the issue for Council discussion. We would like to have some input as to how the issue is framed, said Joe Peone. Absolutely, Danielson replied. We could also reconvene this group to develop a recommendation for the Council, prior to the July Council meeting, Palensky suggested. That's at your option, Danielson replied. It was agreed that those interested in at least an ad hoc RCG meeting prior to the July Council meeting will contact Allee and Palensky directly.

Meeting summary prepared by Jeff Kuechle, NWPPC contractor.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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