

Response to ISRP Concerns
Regarding Project ID: 35054

“Engaging the Public in Watershed Planning: A Tool Box for Cultural Shift”

The Columbia River Basin has embarked on much-needed fish and wildlife planning, through the Northwest Power Planning Council’s subbasin planning, and Technical Recovery Team efforts for ESA-listed species. Public statements by the NWPPC, the National Marine Fisheries Service, numerous local stakeholder groups and representatives of several of the basin’s tribes, as well as the ISRP, agree that such watershed planning efforts must be community-based. The purpose of this project is to use Open Space techniques to continue community-based watershed planning in the Walla Walla and Tualatin subbasins and extend it to the Hood River and Yakima subbasins. Open Space is a proven technique (see references) and Peter Donaldson is an experienced practitioner of the method as demonstrated by successes in the Walla Walla and Tualatin (see letters of support).

As with all coordination and communication projects, scientific technical review is problematic. All of the regular metrics (numbers of meetings held, number of attendees, number of hits on the web site, number of participants in associated chat rooms, extent of local press coverage, etc) will be monitored. However, these metrics will not illuminate the critical question, “Are we benefiting the fish and wildlife resources?” The region believes that community-based planning is politically necessary to improve habitat to benefit the resources. We believe that Open Space is one effective tool to accomplish community-based planning. We would be delighted to work with members of the scientific community and the ISRP to develop meaningful ways to evaluate non-technical projects, such as ours.