



**Notes: Northwest Environmental Data Network (NED) Executive Meeting**

**Time and Date: 9:30 –12:30, December 7<sup>th</sup> 2005**

**Location: Large Conference Room, Northwest Power and Conservation Council, 851 S.W. Sixth Avenue, Suite 1100 Portland, Oregon 97204**

Present: Co-Chair: John Stein (NOAAF), Doug Marker (NPCC), Cy Smith (OGIC), Cathy Kellon (State of the Salmon Coalition), Burney Hill (EPA), John Piccininni (BPA), Jim Gieselman (BPA), Bruce Schmidt (StreamNet), Tom Pansky (BPA), Peter Paquet (NPCC and NED Coordinator), Tom O’Neil (NWHI), Michael Beaty (USBoR), Michael Newsome (USBoR), Joy Paulus (IAC), Frank Young (CBFWA), David Tetta (EPA), Curtis Cude (ODEQ) and Stewart Toshach (NED Coordinator)

On phone: Jennifer Bayer (PNAMP), Russell Scranton (NOAAF-NWRO) and Cedric Cooney (ODF&W)

Apologies: Greg Delwiche (BPA), Olney Pat Jr., (CRITFC), Tom Karier (NPCC), Bruce Crawford (IAC), Bill McDonald (USBoR), Ed Backus SOS.

**Introduction**

John Stein welcomed participants to the first NED Executive Meeting, thanked the Steering Committee and work group members for their valuable contributions and summarized why the effort was needed to help support improvements in data quality,

data discovery and sharing. John suggested that the bar was being raised on these efforts, at least at the federal level and with respect to federal use of other data because of the Federal Data Quality Act.

### Review of Progress

Stewart and Peter provided a summary of progress on Steering Committee and NED Work Group efforts.

### Review of Participation

The meeting reviewed membership and participation. A core issue was how much time should be put into completing further outreach versus developing work products. Although this is a difficult balance it was agreed that NED needed to continue outreach efforts and, at the same time, work on developing products. The participation challenge is acute when the goal is develop protocols and standards for possible deployment. If agencies or entities are not at the table when these are developed they are less likely to deploy them.

It was also recognized that contributions are volunteer, that most participants have other obligations and regional data sharing is not on the top of their list of obligations. To increase participation from existing participants it would be necessary to develop specific proposals of why that participation is needed and present this to Executives. To increase participation from agencies not already participating, it would be necessary to continue outreach efforts. In doing so it would be important to identify what are the benefits for participating entities (what is in it for them?).

It was suggested that more progress might be made with Executive participation if NED scheduled regular reports to regional meetings where Executives came together. An example is the Federal Caucus, which meets regularly to discuss Salmonid Recovery for the Columbia.

### Review of May 25-26 Workshop Findings and Needed Executive Action

The White Papers and Recommendations from the Workshop were summarized and the Executive Decision Table was discussed. The Executive Decision Table was developed by bringing together the results of the NED SAIC study and the NED workshop recommendations. The workshop had endorsed the core approach identified by SAIC with respect to data sharing and exchange and the White Papers added some fine tuning.

### Governance

NED has developed a draft governance framework describing needed formal responsibilities and roles. Executives will need to decide on whether a more formal arrangement is needed to meet their agencies regional goals.

More signatories are needed on the NED MOU to ensure that a broader group of participants are authorized to speak for their Executive, and to improve chances of deployment of commonly developed products.

There is an absence of formal participation from most Federal land management agencies, from the States of Idaho and Montana and from up-basin Tribal entities. Follow up is needed in all these areas.

### Outreach

The NED project now has a web presence via the NPCC web-site. The longer term plan is to present more NED materials via the Portal and use the NPCC web site to re-direct NED queries. So there is a plan in place to meet the major technical recommendations on outreach. The other important outreach issue concerns garnering more participation as mentioned above.

### Data Content

It was recognized that data content is the “poor stepchild” of information/data management programs. Nevertheless, it is critical to successful data discovery and sharing programs and is the building block for information systems. The meeting participants recognized that while the extent of content expertise in the region is limited, it would be necessary to tap this expertise to succeed.

It was suggested that the NED project should look towards soliciting specific FTE in-kind support to complete data content tasks and include the data content material into a regional Data Partnership Agreement for signature by regional entities. Where FTE support is not available in an in-kind capacity, it would be necessary to identify some funding to support the effort. It was suggested that NED develop a work plan and present it, in the first instance, to the Federal Caucus.

### Finance and Business Case

While a business case study is desirable there is a significant cost to develop it. To date there have been no arguments put forward suggesting that improved regional data quality and data sharing would be anything other than cost effective. Given that this is the conventional wisdom there is no pressing need to invest in a business case argument.

### Data Technical Architecture

There will be inevitable debate about the relative merits of distributed data base management systems versus data warehouses. NED is supporting the use of more robust

distributed data architectures, understanding that they will also need to provide for the ability to share data amongst key warehouse systems, and understanding that the technology for warehouse systems is more readily accessible. There is potential to develop a regional request for funding support for these efforts, either from the EPA or possibly from the National Science Foundation. In any event, significant funding is needed and some matching funding from the region would help to support this initiative. It was agreed that NED would sponsor a work group to develop a comprehensive regional funding request.

### Summary

In particular it is clear that there is Executive support for:

- Development of an Executive support package to take to regional executive as a part of ongoing outreach efforts; to identify what in detail what NED needs from each contributing partner; to identify key staff who have the knowledge necessary for the effort to succeed, and to continue to work with PNAMP and other content groups to update specific regional data sharing needs.
- Development of a model Data Partnership agreement.
- Collaborative work with existing groups and in particular with PNW-RGIC to develop complementary work plans.
- Development of a proposal for pilot deployment of a DDBMS to relate fishery, water and habitat data sets based on the EPA's exchange network.
- In addition, there are short term issues of urgency and opportunities that NED can take advantage of. For example, there is some interest in conditioning Fish and Wildlife program funding with data management performance standards. NED needs to develop a short terms strategy to deliver products that can also improve regional data management in the short term.

### Demonstration of NED Pilot Portal

Tom Pansky provided an overview of the NED pilot portal

### Demonstration of Protocol Manager

Michael Beaty provided an overview of Protocol Builder