

Notes: Northwest Environmental Data-network Steering Committee and PNAMP Data Management Work Group Meeting

2007-10-03 from 9:00 to 3:00 at NPCC Portland, Oregon.

1) Introductions.

Present: Jim Geiselman (BPA), Tom Pansky (BPA), Phil Roger (CRITFC), Bruce Schmidt (StreamNet), Peter Paquet (NPCC), John Piccininni (BPA), Tom O'Neil (NWHI), Tom Iverson (CBFWA) and Stewart Toshach (NOAA-NWFSC). On phone: Joy Paulus, (WA IAC), Russell Scranton (NOAA-NWRO), Jen Bayer (PNAMP), Steve Rentmeester (ISEMP), David Tetta (EPA), Jaqui Schei (PNAMP), Cedric Cooney (StreamNet –ODF&W), Jen Pollock (USGS-NBII), Nancy Tosta (Ross and Associates) and Kristen Durance (Ross and Associates), Michael Newsom (USBRec) and Sheri Schneider (USGS Oregon Liaison).

2) Draft amendments to the NED MOU. It was agreed that until we all had a clearer idea about any new direction for NED arising from the Executive Summit we would ask the NED Co-Chairs to write to the NED signatories requesting an extension of the MOU. The changes already identified could be considered as a part of a future discussion.

3) Discussion on Data Management Best Practices doc and next steps. It was agreed that NED would pick up staff work on this product which had been delayed given the work needed to prepare for the Summit. There was agreement that it was an important and needed product. Stewart would prepare a next version and circulate before the next meeting.

4) Discussion of October 2nd Summit and any next steps. Nancy Tosta summarized the Summit, offering that the summit goals were generally accomplished with agreement on some next steps and 4 assignments to bring back to the Executive group within 4-6 months – as follows:

“Assignments

1. Craft a simple, one-page “motherhood and apple pie” vision statement for agencies to sign on to. (This will be done within the short term and circulated to Executives for their review.)
 - a. NED, PNAMP and PNW-RGIC will draft an initial vision statement for review and sign-on by the executive group.
2. Develop a pilot project for salmon population status and trends data. Identify and understand existing protocols and potential approaches to development of a regional monitoring strategy data across the agencies and the required steps to define a regional monitoring protocol.
 - a. NOAA (Barry Thom) volunteered to lead, with assistance from CBFWA.
3. Outline an approach for assessing watershed and ecosystem health

- a. NWFSC (John Stein) volunteered to lead, with assistance from the WA Dept. of Ecology (Josh Baldi).
4. Begin exploration of means to organize existing data through various management and technology approaches such as development of data portals for distributed access.
 - a. Options to be drafted by PNAMP, NED and PNW-RGIC.

Before work begins on these, they will be further elucidated in short descriptions by the executive advisors, Barry Thom, John Stein, and Tom Karier (within the next two weeks) for review by the executives. Once the tasks are clearly described, these three (potentially with additional volunteer executives) will outline a path to develop products for review in the next few months". (The above is an excerpt from the Summit write up – attached as: *Oct2_Summit Notes-101507*)

Nancy thought that there was a positive outcome from the executive to work further and explicit recognition of the importance of improving data sharing to accomplish current challenges. There was not yet a consensus on how the executives wanted to relate to NED, PNAMP or PNW-RGIC.

Main Comments:

Cedric thought that some Executive commitments from Oregon were qualified – and not as strong as we might think.

Cedric and Bruce thought that the Execs were not fully appreciating differences in the need for help – not everyone needs the same help and in particular the need for increased capacity for data collection and support for collectors.

There was some concern that an increased focus on a subset of needed regional data – Salmonid Trend and Abundance that could be at the expense of other data sets and needs.

Others commented that it was up to the Execs to define highest priorities and to reach agreement on what activities they are collectively committed to support.

Overall there was appreciation of the excellent turn-out, the interest of executives to do further work and the evident focus on the topic at the Summit. There was also an understanding that we are not yet in a position to judge a final outcome with a lot more work to be done and more decisions to be made.

Since the vision statement task was on a short time-line Stewart offered to coordinate with NED, PNW-RGIC and NED to work on a common vision statement. Jim, Peter, Tom Iverson, Joy and David offered to help. (Note: the group is now 21).

There was discussion about what Executive arrangements might help to serve regional information coordination needs. The idea that there could be a single executive leadership group with responsibility to guide and support NED, PNAMP and PNW-RGIC functions and efforts

was identified. While there was support for this idea it was also understood that this discussion would also need executive focus.

Noon to 1:00 - Lunch

1:00 to 3:00.

Work on “A Strategy for Managing Fish, Wildlife, and Habitat Data for the Columbia River Fish and Wildlife Program continued. The group collectively worked through much of the draft providing input and edits to Tom O’Neil. Tom agreed to write up the next version and circulate it for comment (attached as *Strategy for Managing FWP Data - ver7a*) – with a deadline for input. The deadline is noon on October 23rd with comments to go directly to Tom O’Neill habitat@nwhi.org

There was an interesting and important discussion on funding priorities for needed work elements with the following observations:

The priorities would depend largely on whether the starting objective is to work on systemic information system improvements, or to collect more data to add to existing information systems. Since NED was set up to undertake the former – prioritizing the need for more data might not be the right question for NED and regional executives should provide guidance if they wanted NED to prioritize spending for this objective.

Should the NED Steering Committee self-impose a budget ceiling on what is needed because of an informal external budget limit or, should its role be to identify the systemic actions that are most needed? The consensus was that NED was tasked to identify actions and complete approved tasks that are needed and has not been tasked to decide on overall budget allocated to a program or part of a program. There were comments that this issue should be further addressed by the NED Co-Chairs.

Next Meeting: November 7th

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