

Pend Oreille Salmonid Recovery Team Technical Advisory Group Meeting

Draft Meeting Minutes

February 10, 2011

Scheduled 9:00 am - 12:00 pm Kalispel Wellness Center, Usk

Facilitator: Nick Bean, Lead Entity Coordinator, Kalispel Tribe of Indians

Present: Nick Bean (KNRD), Sandy Dotts (WDFW), Jeff Lawlor (WDFW), Todd McLaughlin (PO County), Rob Lawler (USFS), Jill Cobb (IPNF), Carol Mack (WSU Extension), Todd Andersen (KNRD), Joe Maroney (KNRD), Pat Buckley (PO PUD), Tom Shuhda (CNF)

Meeting: Called to order by the Coordinator Nick Bean at 9:05 am.

Introductions: Given by each attendee at 9:10 am.

Announcements:

- The 12-15-2010 TAG meeting minutes were motioned for approval, seconded and approved with no changes.
- Nick explained the current situation with the House Bill that may eliminate boards and commissions in the state. The SRFB (board only not the program) is one of the boards up for elimination if the legislation passes. The status at this time is unknown but LEAG and many Lead Entities are fighting to support the SRFB. The Lead Entity operational grant may also be cut somewhat which will be determined at the beginning of the fiscal year. The Tribe is committed to maintaining the Lead Entity as long as there is enough funding available. Nick is working to get through the major expenses such as website development, outreach materials, major HWS update, etc. during the current grant cycle to make sure the work is complete if indeed funding is cut.
- An HWS demonstration and explanation was run through with the group and Nick explained that we are close to being done. Future projects would be less complicated since HWS and PRISM will be at least partially integrated.
- The IPNF has a new ranger coming on in February and Jill will also have a new supervisor in March.
- The MB LeClerc project is expected to be under contract with RCO soon and the FS anticipates completing the implementation during the 2011 field season, barring no major issues.
- Granite LWD project is in the infancy of NEPA and the FS will be taking over NEPA instead of WDFW. The project also has an additional reach added in SF Granite increasing the LWD number. The overarching NEPA for the watershed will be done by the IPNF at no cost to the SRFB (except for the portion funded for the LWD project). The sponsor is still waiting to hear from the USFWS on the supporting funds for the project; if they do not receive these funds the sponsor will find alternate means to address the issue.
- The Kapelke project is waiting for the FS special use permit but everything else is on task.
- The coverage's for the NetMap project are available but very large (1 gig). Once the tools have been developed the group will be able to get together and start using the product.
- The Mill Creek project designs should be available in June.
- The CCA project designs are complete and available now.
- Jeff Lawlor said that he will be taking over all FFFPP projects in the area since Doug Wiedemeier has moved on. Sandy will be working half time in the WDFW Wildlife/Habitat Program starting March 1 and she is unsure how it will affect the group.
- The group had a discussion on the Stagger Inn project regarding the sediment released into Granite beyond the fish work window (discovered by BT redd surveyors from the Tribe). There were also concerns about the upstream channel portion of the project site not being washed down and the effects it would have when spring flows flushed the sediment into Granite. Sandy indicated that the site was not washed down so there would likely be a pulse of sediment in the spring. The crews removed as much fine sediment as they could and also mulched the site as part of their BMP's. Jeff said that project managers frequently want to push out the work window due to the short duration season but we have to look at the potential issues involved with an extension and weigh the benefits. This project was not under an HPA with the state but more or less under USFWS jurisdiction. Since the State (WA) cannot have jurisdiction over the federal government (USFS) they often have an MOU with the Forests instead of issuing permits; there is not an MOU between IPNF and WDFW however Sandy said that USFWS had to clear the project to work outside of the fish window. WDFW cannot issue a violation for water quality to the FS regardless so it would have to come from EPA.

POSRT Strategy Revision/Implementation Schedule Discussion

- The group was shown a bulleted list (provided) that highlights some of the specific information that needs to be revised in the Strategy.
- We discussed how to divide priorities based on restoration versus protection. Jill Cobb indicated that making priorities for “protection” may hamstring some agencies when work needs done in a watershed. We agreed that being very clear on how we define this is crucial.
- One example of a needed revision regarded updating that we have made steps toward a large scale assessment of limiting factors in the WRIA. The NetMap project will get us partway there but the tool will have to be used by the group to conduct an actual assessment and report on the findings which will be integrated into the Strategy.
- There was some concern that we have been discussing the “Strategy revision” for too long and we need to get in gear with the actual work. We initially agreed to have the Coordinator get the work done that he can (generic revisions/1st cuts) and meet on March 23rd (full day) as a group to go through the revisions and continue the major next steps. Some of the actions Nick would try to get done include:
- We discussed excluding the bull trout sighting criteria from the prioritization process since the majority of recent (Ruby, McCloud, Kent) would elevate watersheds not currently high priority while the lack of sightings in our current priority watersheds becoming outdated would naturally drop the priority in these locations. The group discussed if single sightings of bull trout are strong enough to scientifically justify prioritizing the watersheds. Some felt that it at least indicates the bull trout may be interested in the location while others though this argument isn’t biologically sound.
- Habitat suitability and access for westslope cutthroat trout may serve as a proxy for determining priority watersheds since the single sighting rule seems to be creating some disparity amongst the watersheds. Using successfully reproducing WCT populations, biological competition and extent of suitable habitat may be factors useful in weighing watersheds based on WCT. Another idea is to look at prioritizing watersheds also on restoration needs. We could give priority to watersheds that need a minimal amount of work to close the book on the watershed.
- The group shifted to the PUD Box Canyon Restoration plan (not passage at major dams). Joe led the conversation until Pat could fill in. A large component of the Box Canyon settlement was the required restoration of 164 miles of tributary habitat in BCR over the next 20-25 years.
 - There are 8 priority streams total for PUD tributary restoration: Mill, Cedar, Tacoma, Calispell, Indian, Ruby, CCA, and LeClerc. Ideally the approach will be a top down watershed restoration when possible.
 - The first set of priority watersheds are LeClerc, Cee Cee AH and Calispell. The PUD had surveys conducted in 2010 in the LeClerc watershed (MB) and based on the surveys, past surveys, and technical information determined the restoration plan of MB LeClerc (LWD, riparian fencing and restoration) for 2011 which will give the PUD 4-5 miles of credit. For 2012 the restoration efforts will be focused on NF Calispell Creek; 2013 will be in Whiteman and the upper portions of MB LeClerc; 2014 will be 4th of July and Seco; 2015 will be MF Calispell. There’s also a plan to tentatively conduct piscicide treatments in Whiteman (2013) and MF Calispell (2015).
 - All of the proposed restoration is run through a BCR Technical group (aka Fish Subcommittee) for feedback, crediting discussion and overall approval of the work plan.
 - The crediting is not set for the entire restoration plan; credit will be determined on a case by case basis. The slower start is based on “feeling out” the process and coordination but will likely pick up in the future. If the restoration is not complete by the set time the PUD can be fined but this is not likely.
 - The projects will be monitored for performance based on standards upon completion and further work will be conducted if necessary.
 - Private land is also eligible for restoration. But projects like road decommissioning and culvert replacements are not likely going to be done by the PUD so we shouldn’t necessarily remove these watersheds (BCR) from our priorities. Pat indicated that the scope of work of right now would be roughly \$200,000 – 300,000 for annual implementation, which would likely exclude large scale projects. Also the work will be done based on surveys conducted in the year prior to implementation work.
 - Partnering on projects inside of the priority areas is not out of the question but should be brought to the table through the agency representative on the fish subcommittee and will be on a case by case basis.
 - Carol Mack brought up public involvement/outreach and Pat indicated that although there is potential, the larger group has not been discussed it at great length.
 - The group communicated to Pat that we should coordinate information on the annual restoration plan to avoid overlap and work together whenever possible. At a minimum the information should be updated in our Strategy.

- Jeff discussed the current status of HPA structure in legislation and indicated that there are several options that each has pros/cons. We will be updated as more information comes out.
- The Seattle City Light restoration efforts were discussed next. SSL's plan is to restore the majority of the tributaries in the Boundary pool. The status is the settlement with SSL is under review with FERC and the draft EIS should come out in March, be reviewed, and barring no issues a new license for Boundary Dam would be issued and a surrender order made for a portion of the Sullivan Creek projects for in February. The USFS (if satisfied/approved) would issue a special use permit (not a FERC license) for the operation of Sullivan Creek Dam. The PUD would be responsible for the decommissioning of Mill Pond Dam (2015), operations of the Sullivan Creek Dam and associated cold water withdrawal pipe (cost shared by PUD/SSL). The PUD is not paying for Mill Pond, just in charge of making sure it is removed. The information is available (Fish and Aquatics Restoration Plan); Tom can send it out to any interested parties. Other components are upstream fish passage at Boundary, downstream fish passage, significant non-native fish removal in tributaries and a conservation hatchery.
- Based on the SSL requirement of restoring the Boundary pool tributaries (Box Canyon Dam north), the group discussed how we should prioritize the Boundary tributaries. Tom indicated that the majority of the restoration work needed should be taken care of by SSL and the projects are more site specific versus credited by mile; they also include road/culvert work. We should integrate the SSL restoration plan into our Strategy when details are available. For now we might want to decrease restoration priorities for those watershed covered by SSL.
- The Strategy discussion continued and we determined that using WCT distribution maps may be an effective way to prioritize subbasins based on distribution and/or habitat. Nick will make his cut at the revision and contact appropriate technical members when needed.

Meeting Wrap-up Discussion; Upcoming Meetings/Items:

- The schedule for the SRFB/RCO grant round was provided to the group and we will mirror that as well as we can.
- Specific dates on the provided schedule for 2011 will be revised based on today's discussion and sent out to everyone.
- The SRFB Project Conference is April 26-27 at the Great Wolf Lodge in Grand Mound, WA. Ray Entz (KNRD) will be presenting the restoration efforts in the LeClerc watershed. Nick will send out the conference information when available.
- Next meeting will likely be March 23rd (full day) and will be a Strategy Revision Meeting.
- We will discuss the grant round requirements and implementation schedule briefly at the next meeting.

Meeting Adjourned at 12:00 pm