

Actions & Explanations

Introduction

Wallowa County

- Fish runs are down to 10% to 15% of historic numbers
- Dramatic declines in smolt escapement downstream
- May 22, 1992 – Listed as threatened

Wallowa County Concerns

Community stability threatened

- Tribal fisheries
- Timber
- Ranching
- Farming
- Recreation
- Recreation fisheries

Overlapping strategies

- Eastside Ecosystem Management Plan (ICBEMP)
- PacFish (interim strategy)
- President's Forest Plan
General in scope, broad in application

Case Study: A community's response to ESA listing

Introduction

Wallowa County

Wallowa County is in the northeast corner of Oregon and lies entirely within the traditional territory of the Nez Perce Tribe. Wallowa County is a land of diverse landscape, high mountain peaks of nearly 10,000 feet, vast rangeland, canyon country as in the Hell's Canyon, crop ground (both dryland and irrigated land), and forest land. Wallowa County is 2,034,000 acres (3,153 sq. mi.) in size with a population of 7,100. Land ownership is approximately 63% public land and 37% private. Wallowa County in its entirety is the north zone of the Wallowa Whitman National Forest.

Wallowa County Concerns

The Wallowa County Court and the Nez Perce Tribe had the foresight to recognize the economic devastation this community would suffer as a result of the listing of the chinook salmon as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. Their solution was to take a pro-active approach in creating a plan that would result in resource management and use that would again stimulate our economy. The Wallowa County-Nez Perce Salmon Habitat Recovery Plan covers all lands in Wallowa County, Oregon. The reason for writing the plan was due to the potential listing of the chinook salmon as a threatened species and the desire by Wallowa County to be proactive rather than reactive. The listing of the chinook salmon occurred May 22, 1992.

Overlapping strategies

We are also dealing with overlapping strategies such as the Interior Columbia Basin (Eastside) Ecosystem Management Plan (ICBEMP), PACFISH, INFISH, and the President's Forest Plan, which are general in scope and broad in application. We believe that since the Salmon Plan is site-specific in scope and application, it allows watershed restoration to move forward without these overlapping strategies.

Common Goals

Continue to build alliances

- Community at large
- Conservationists
- Agencies
- Industry

Writing the Plan

Wallowa County Approach

- Form a strategy committee
- Define the mission
- Perform watershed analysis
- Receive peer review
- Have a broad base of support
- Be solution oriented
- Be dedicated to carry through
- Be economically efficient

Committee Selection Philosophy

- Knowledge of Wallowa County
- Technical expertise
- To represent Wallowa County's diversity

The Salmon Plan

Mission:

Develop a management plan to maintain and enhance watershed conditions to aid in recovery of Snake River salmonids

Consistent with the needs of:

- Wallowa County
- The Nez Perce Tribe
- The rest of the United States

Common Goals

Our common goals are to work together and continue to build alliances with the community at large, conservationists, agencies and industry to achieve the best watershed conditions we can in Wallowa County.

Writing the Plan

Wallowa County Approach

The Salmon Plan is a locally driven, grass-roots initiative built by consensus. Nineteen individuals representing 14 different groups with over 440 years of Wallowa County experience participated in the development of the plan. The committee was solution-oriented, the members were dedicated to carry through, and their philosophy was that the plan needed to be environmentally sound as well as economically efficient. Committee membership consisted of representatives from agriculture/grazing, BLM, community, business, recreation, environmental interest, labor, large landholders, logging industry, Nez Perce Tribe, Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife, Wallowa County Small Woodlands, US Forest Service and Wallowa County Court.

The Salmon Plan

Mission

The mission statement of the plan states: *"To develop a management plan to assure that watershed conditions in Wallowa County provide the spawning, rearing, and migration habitat required to assist in the recovery of Snake River salmonids by protecting and enhancing conditions as needed. The plan will provide the best watershed conditions available consistent with the needs of the people of Wallowa County, the Nez Perce Tribe, and the rest of the United States, and will be submitted to the National Marine Fisheries Service for inclusion in the Snake River Salmon Recovery Plan"*.

Done - Reach-by-reach
-Ridgetop-to-ridgetop

Salmon Plan Strategy

Enable habitat improvement by:

- Creating guidelines for habitat improvement
- Including all ownerships
- Reducing bureaucracy
- Expediting approvals

Watershed Approach

- Considers cumulative effects
- Long-term goals
- Short-term requirements

Focus:

- Water
- Forests
- Riparian management
- Livestock
- Weeds
- Roads
- Campgrounds
- Filter Strips

The Salmon Plan sets forth to enhance and maintain watershed conditions that provide for spawning habitat, rearing habitat, and migration habitat within Wallowa County. The results are that we have a site-specific analysis which has been performed on the 11 sub-basins in the county. This analysis was done reach-by-reach, ridgetop-to-ridgetop creating a plan that was developed locally based on sound science and sound economics.

Salmon Plan Strategy

The Salmon Plan strategy is to create guidelines for habitat improvement through adaptive management. These guidelines are intended to include all ownerships, reduce bureaucracy, and expedite approvals. Adaptive management is a process that starts with a watershed analysis of current conditions.

Watershed Approach

Management prescriptions on watershed-wide issues were identified as potential solutions to identified problems. These management approaches were developed to facilitate options for land managers in implementing solutions. These include: water management, forest management, riparian management, filter-strip management, livestock management, weed management, recreation management and road management. These management approaches were designed to be ridgetop-to-ridgetop and to consider the cumulative effects including short-term requirements and long-term goals.

Paper Actions

The Plan was:

NEPA Regulations part 1506.2 requires federal agencies to cooperate in the planning processes.

- Adopted custom, culture and community stability into Land Use Plan
- Salmon Plan adopted into the Wallowa County Land Use Plan
- Zoning articles amended to include Salmon Plan

- County adopted Ordinances:
 - Controlling noxious weeds
 - Land & natural resource use management policy
 - Prohibiting release of wild species
 - County as land resource management agency
 - Recognizing grazing rights
 - Protection of constitutional and civil Rights
 - Protecting from taking of private property without just compensation and due process
 - Preservation of custom, culture and community stability
 - Weed eradication
 - Non-introduction of exotic species
 - Right to farm

- Resolution between Wallowa County Nez Perce Tribe and USFS to implement on all lands in Wallowa County

Paper Actions

All laws governing forest management state that local governments must be included in the decision-making process. The Endangered Species Act (ESA) gives local governments the latitude to develop recovery plans that **must be** considered. The Wallowa County Board of Commissioners adopted ordinances that include: The right to farm; designation of Wallowa County Court as a land resource management agency; and preservation of custom, culture and community stability in Wallowa County.

Wallowa County's Land Use Plan has been amended to include custom, culture, community stability and the Salmon Habitat Recovery Plan as a guide to land resource management. Wallowa County's Land Use Plan states that Wallowa County "shall develop and implement habitat conservation plans for the protection of threatened and endangered species within the County and that state and federal agencies shall coordinate their management activities and plans with the County." Implementation measures for the Salmon Habitat Recovery Plan are included in the zoning articles of Wallowa County. As a result of the ordinances, Wallowa County has been able to proceed in an orderly, common-sense manner to implement land-use planning.

In 1995 the Wallowa County Court, the Nez Perce Tribe, and Wallowa-Whitman National Forest signed a resolution to implement the Wallowa County-Nez Perce Salmon Habitat Recovery Plan within all lands in Wallowa County, and a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been signed granting Wallowa County Court government-to-government consultation status with the US Forest Service.

People Actions

Natural Resource Advisory Committee created

- Overall Committee
- Standing Committee
- Technical Committee

Standing Committee and Technical Committee meet monthly, Overall committee meets quarterly

People Actions

Natural Resource Advisory Committee

The Wallowa County Natural Resource Advisory Committee (NRAC) and its technical committee were appointed in the spring of 1996 by the Wallowa County Court. The mission of the Wallowa County Natural Resource Advisory Committee is to *review implementation of agricultural, forest and natural resource provisions of Wallowa County's Comprehensive Land Use Plan*. The committee is comprised of twenty members representing the following interests: tribal, federal, landowner, business, industry, professional, state, environmental, county and community.

The Advisory Committee is also supported in its endeavors by a six member standing committee that was appointed by the overall committee and a Technical Committee that provides natural resource expertise.

The Technical Committee * is comprised of the following expertise/representation:

Fish Biologist	Nez Perce Tribe
Fish Biologist	Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife
Soils	Natural Resource Conservation Service
Forester	Oregon Department of Forestry
Forester	Industry
Logging Systems	United States Forest Service
Range/Livestock	Oregon State University Extension Service
Planning	Wallowa County Planning Department
Wildlife	United States Forest Service
Engineering	Wallowa County Road Department

* Access to other disciplines is available upon request

The Wallowa County Nez Perce Tribe Salmon Plan is now a guiding document for land use projects in Wallowa County. Under this umbrella, Wallowa County, in cooperation with the Nez Perce Tribe, is taking significant steps toward continuously improving watersheds and fisheries habitat.

Watershed Actions

Watersheds

- Identifiable unit of land
- Boundaries are ridges
- Support all human land uses
- Sum of all surface & underground features
 - Supports all life forms
 - Unit size can vary
 - Columbia River Basin
 - Joseph Creek

Project Identification

Opportunities may exist to:

- Improve ecosystem health
- Improve long term sustainability
- Create/sustain healthy economies
- Promote social stability

Define Objectives

- Manipulate vegetation?
- Manipulate road locations or density?
- Rehabilitate degraded areas?

Implementation Tools

- Vegetation Management
 - Grazing
 - Planting
 - Harvesting
 - Burning
 - Protecting
 - Altering species composition

Watershed Actions

The Salmon Plan strategy is to create guidelines for habitat improvement. The concept of the Salmon Plan is to develop on-the-ground projects through Coordinated Resource Management Plans (CRMP's), action plans and watershed assessments. Projects are implemented to correct problems identified in watershed analysis.

Educational programs through a slide show, presentations and written material have been presented for the general public, landowners, and decision-makers by the OSU Extension Service, the Wallowa County Court and others.

To date over a hundred projects through the Grande Ronde Model Watershed Program, Wallowa County Soil & Water Conservation District, or Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife, USDA Forest Service, Oregon Department of Forestry and private entities, exceeding \$5.5 million have been implemented in Wallowa County with funding from: Bureau of Reclamation, Bonneville Power Administration, State of Oregon (OWEB/GWEB).

About 170 watershed enhancement projects have been completed during the past seven years since the Salmon Plan has been initiated. Those projects included:

- 150 miles of fencing (exclosure fencing and cross fencing)
- 5 miles of road closures/obliteration
- 54 miles of road improvements
- 13 miles of stream treated with instream work including 184 instream structures
- 62 spring developments
- 4 Livestock Watering systems for off stream watering
- 8 fish passage improvements
- 6 irrigation diversion structures
- 2,214 primary acres treated (approximately 135,000 acres of secondary treatment)
- Several large USFS Ecosystem management projects of: prescribed fire, biomass reduction and combinations of fire and mechanical resource manipulation.

- Soils management
 - Road maintenance
 - Bridges
 - Creek crossings
 - Limit overland flow
 - Limit compaction
- Water hydraulics
 - Change slope of stream
 - Change roughness of streambed
 - Control timing of release
 - Control volume of release

Successful monitoring

- Clearly defined objectives
- Monitoring plan must include:
 - Statistical design
 - Parameter selection
 - Sampling protocol
 - Data collection
- Work according to protocol
- Analyze according to design
- Report results, make recommendations

These projects will enhance the utilization of upland portions of the watershed, reduce the impacts grazing will have on riparian areas, and riparian areas should show increased shrub growth and reduced compaction of soils in some areas. Also reduced sedimentation into streams, improved ground cover and forage availability for both domestic and wildlife grazing, reduced overland flow, reduced sedimentation from unstable stream banks, increased fish habitat, improved fish migration, improved fishery hiding cover.

Included in all projects is the requirement that noxious weed control be a part the work accomplished.

Examples of on-the-ground projects occurring in Wallowa County are:

- | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Diversion dams | Low-flow channel |
| Logging – single grip | Off stream watering |
| Bridges | Cross fencing |
| Road management | Rock dips |
| Rock crossings | Fish screening |
| Irrigation ditches | Riparian fencing |
| Corrals/feedlots | Woody debris |
| Logging – forwarder | Low-impact logging |

Successful monitoring

The plan must be monitored for project compliance and for long term watershed conditions. The monitoring done is being coordinated through a county wide monitoring group that began meeting in 1998. The monitoring plan is developing objectives consistent with local agency and land managers needs, laws and regulations defining the various monitoring requirements, and requirements of watershed projects.

The protocols, parameter selection, statistical design and data collections have been collaboratively developed by a by the Wallowa County monitoring group. The monitoring data analysis and reporting is being done through a monitoring coordinator, funded by watershed council, Oregon Watershed enhancement support as well as many local in kind contributions.

Conclusion

The philosophy is that resource utilization is compatible with salmon recovery--that we are willing to face our problems to expedite solutions which allow us to influence our own destiny.

Conclusion

What Have We Learned

- Changes in watershed management are occurring, be a part of it or take what is imposed on you
- Learning about the watershed will make better managers
- Participating in watershed planning opens up many opportunities to learn
- A healthy watershed equals a healthy economy
- Management of many lands has changed
- Sucking-chest-wounds of watersheds addressed
- Salmon populations still declining
- Monitoring of projects and watershed are occurring
- Public and private lands will continue to be impacted by ESA and Clean Water Act (CWA)
- Local landowners need to defend their management
- The easiest way to defend your management is have a healthy Watershed or -- Have a plan to restore the land to a healthy state

We have just started with the implementation of the Salmon Plan. We know that we need to do the “no-brainers” such as salvage dead and dying forests; fence off feed lots; and improve riparian management. Many landowners have done these types of things without funding or other assistance.

The future of the Salmon Plan in Wallowa County depends on follow-through by County and Nez Perce tribal leadership. As stated in the forward to the plan: “This document is intended to be dynamic, designed to change rapidly with new knowledge and changing conditions in a manner that will promote understanding and cooperation among all parties involved.”

