

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WALLOWA COUNTY/ NEZ PERCE TRIBE SALMON HABITAT RECOVERY AND MULTI-SPECIES STRATEGY (WC/NPS&MS)

Wallowa County will be managed on a watershed basis. The management will be coordinated by the Wallowa County Natural Resource Advisory Committee (NRAC) and its technical committee. The Wallowa County Court appointed this committee in the spring of 1996. 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 supported in its endeavors by a Technical Committee that provides natural resource expertise.

The delineation of the watershed units has not been completed. The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) are currently debating a system to delineate watershed boundaries. This agreement is necessary for the incorporation of the data into various GIS systems. Once the hydrologic boundaries have been agreed to, NRAC will recommend the various watershed planning units.

A Watershed unit analysis will provide current baseline data and should be compared to the historic range of variability. Monitoring and flexibility will be incorporated in the analysis so that implementation of the WC/NPS&MS moves ahead in a positive, proactive manner. Analysis is currently being accomplished in several ways. Coordinated Resource Management Plans (CRMP's) and/or Watershed Action Plans have been developed or are being developed on Bear Creek, Lostine River, Big Sheep Creek, Little Sheep Creek, and Upper Joseph Creek. These Coordinated Resource Management Plans and/or Watershed Action Plans, and the projects identified in them, are based on the Plan.

The use of the WC/NPS&MS reach-by-reach information and the on-the-ground cover type/stand structure analysis of the watershed will provide a basis to design projects to enhance, maintain or create habitat in each management area. Should the landowners choose to implement changes, the management approaches suggested in the WC/NPS&MS may be used. Landowners will be offered encouragement and assistance in project implementation. It is intended that the implementation of projects be adaptive and that projects be monitored.

Participation in WC/NPS&MS implementation includes private landowners, Nez Perce Tribe, USFS, Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD), NRCS, Oregon Department of Fish Wildlife, Grande Ronde Model Watershed Program (GRMWP), Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF), and Oregon State University (OSU). Because the WC/NPS&MS is incorporated into the Wallowa County Land Use Plan and Zoning Ordinances, requests for County Permits or County sign-off through the Wallowa County Planning Department require review by the Technical Committee in all Land Use Zones. These reviews sometimes include the creation of developmental or resource management plans for a land ownership.

Recommendations of the technical committee based on the WC/NPS&MS are incorporated into the projects. The effectiveness of the projects is reviewed annually on a project-by-project basis and on an overall watershed basis. This monitoring also provides the opportunity to adapt that which is learned into future projects.

Baseline and project monitoring data is currently being collected by a coalition of entities in Wallowa County including:

- Wallowa Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)
- Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW)
- USDA Forest Service (USFS)
- Nez Perce Tribe (NPT)
- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
- Grande Ronde Model Watershed (GRMWP)
- Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA)
- Wallowa County Road Department
- Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
- Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF)
- Oregon State University Extension Service (OSU)
- Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB)
- Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)
- Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)
- Oregon Division of State Lands (DSL)

This coalition of entities has agreed to the use of the DEQ protocols for water quality monitoring. Field training was done in the spring of 1999 taught by DEQ on the monitoring techniques and protocols for over 20 individuals. The coordination of the water quality monitoring in the watershed has been established so that duplication of efforts is minimized. A software package to allow for the sharing of temperature data with attached meta-data included. It has been agreed that any data that is shared will be collected by the appropriate protocols.

Activities addressing the many biological conditions in our County must be accomplished in a timely manner to be efficient and successful. Injunctions and appeals can be counterproductive to restoration/enhancement activities. Endorsement of the WC/NPS&MS by the various regulatory agencies (National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), United States Fish & Wildlife (USF&W), and Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) will form a basis with which to avoid some of the blanket appeals that are currently filed.

Wallowa County is a "demonstration area" under the State of Oregon and is being considered for designation as a Reinvention Laboratory under the Federal Government for watershed enhancement activities. The intent of this designation is to show that active management can produce a variety of healthy conditions for endangered species, forest health, clean water, and a stable socio-economic structure.

Any plan that does not have local ownership and support as well as the cooperation of

governmental agencies will not succeed. Wallowa County views the consensus effort that produced the Wallowa County/Nez Perce Tribe Salmon Habitat Recovery and Multi-species strategy as the best solution to providing healthy ecosystems that balance the needs of animals and humans.

