Subbasin Planning in the Columbia River Basin: What Did We Learn and What are the Next Steps?

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The Columbia River Basin

- Drains parts of seven states and the provinces of British Columbia and Alberta
- Area encompasses about 260,000 square miles.
- 62 subbasins are designated in the U.S.
The Columbia River Basin fish and wildlife populations have declined over time as the result of:

- habitat losses
- overharvest,
- ocean conditions and other causes
"Our review constitutes the first independent scientific review of the Fish and Wildlife Program…"

"The Program’s…lack of a process for prioritization provides little guidance for annual implementation…"

"We recommend incorporation of an integrated approach based on an overall, scientifically credible conceptual foundation…"

"This version of the program expresses goals and objectives for the entire basin based on a scientific foundation of ecological principles".

"If the vision for the basin is to be realized, it will be through successful selection and implementation of subbasin level goals, objectives and strategies".
2000 Fish & Wildlife Program
Visions, Biological Objectives and Strategies

Basin level
(Basin vision, objectives & strategies complete)

Province level/ESU
(To be developed later)

Subbasin level
(Developed through subbasin plans)

Subbasin Planning

• Defined in Council Fish & Wildlife Program
• To be based on available information
• Offered EDT, IBIS, QHA as non-mandatory tools
**Purpose of Plans**

- Coordinate and focus projects
- Guide BPA investment
- Guide Federal plans and other investments
- Basis for ESA Recovery Plans
- ESA Conditional Compliance
- Basis for monitoring and evaluation

**Subbasin Planning Infrastructure - Functional Levels**

**Subbasin Level 1**
- Subbasin planning group(s)
  - Regional Recovery Boards
  - Coordinator
  - Local government
  - Tribes
  - Federal
  - State
  - Others
  - Develop subbasin plan
  - Assessment
  - Resource inventory
  - Management plan
  - Ensure broad participation
  - Coordinate with Level 2
  - Regional Recovery Boards in Washington represent multiple subbasins

**State/Tribal Level 2**
- Statewide coordination group
- Statewide technical support
- Represent tribes/states
- Regional Recovery Boards fill coordination role in Washington
- Guide subbasin planning
- Provide policy guidance
- Organize resources to assist in planning process
- Review and package plans for submittal to Council
- Provide coordination and project management

**Regional Level 3**
- Regional coordination group
- Regional technical support
- Council, Tribes, BPA, NMFS, USFWS, and statewide coordination group representatives
- Advise Council on overall schedule, budget, federal coordination issues
- Assist Council SBP policy decisions
Subbasin Planning Assumptions

- Provided by Council and NMFS
- Include juvenile survival, mainstem harvest, and ocean survival
- Province-level technical advice by provided by state & regional technical teams and NOAA TRTs.

Subbasin Plan Review

- Review by ISRP with peer review groups
- Must meet ESA obligations
- Must be consistent with CRB Fish & Wildlife Program, including scientific foundation
- Review based on
  - biological objectives of plan
  - reasonable scientific judgment
IDENTIFIES LIMITING FACTORS:
Spawning habitat loss due to development in headwaters, 
passage problems at culverts, high water temperature in lower 
reaches, extinct coho run

Guides and Prioritizes Actions:
Establish protected and rebuild self-sustaining fish runs; 
maintain genetic integrity; reconnect habitats

Type 1. Population: Return 5,000 spring chinook & 1,000 coho
Type 2. Habitat: Water temperature < 70°F in lower reaches

Build from Strength - protect all actively spawning redds
Restore Ecosystem - recover riparian functions in lower reach
Artificial Production - restoration of coho run

Habitat Acquisition in
Headwaters
198504501
Cohoe Reintroduction (RFP)

Culvert Replacement and Fencing Exclosure
200100001

Indicators:
water temperature, sediment load, redd and juvenile counts
Performance Standards:
lower reach water temperatures < 70°F

Subbasin Plan
Component &
and Logic
Integration and Linkages: the Subbasin Plan Logic Path

• The Subbasin Management Plan is the end product of an integrative process that links the factors limiting production in a subbasin (identified in an Assessment) to a future Vision, through defined quantitative Objectives and the Strategies that will be used to achieve them.

• Strategies will be implemented via Projects.

• Monitoring and Evaluation will adaptively assess and guide projects.

Who developed subbasin plans?

• Coordinated by states and tribes with local governments (examples are Washington regional recovery boards and Oregon watershed councils)

• Transboundary Subbasins – Canadian Partners

• Involves NMFS Technical Review teams for ESA recovery planning

• Funded by the Bonneville Power Administration

• Administered by the Power Planning Council
Results

• 59 Subbasin Plans Delivered on May 28th, 2004
• Independent Science Review Completed
• Public Comment Completed
• 29 Subbasin Plans Adopted – Dec. 2004
• XX By February 16, 2005

Things That Worked?

• Locally driven planning process
  – “bottom-up” approach
  – “ask, don’t tell”
• Adherence to Schedule & Budget
• High quality assessments
• Greater uniformity of regional knowledge base
  – Fish and wildlife
  – Inventories
• Enhanced project review & selection
**Things To Work On**

- Fish and Wildlife Models
- Integration of terrestrial and aquatic components
- Maintaining local planning structure
- Coordination with ESA Planning
  - Biological Opinion
  - Recovery Plans

**What’s Next?**

- Subbasin Plan Integration
  - “Rollup”
- Monitoring & Evaluation
- Information Management
- Project Implementation
What’s in it for fish and wildlife?

• Improved habitat and greater abundance of species and genetic diversity.
• Plans will give context to where mitigation projects should occur and provide assurance that the most beneficial projects are being undertaken.

What’s in it for government?

• Help agencies dealing with fish & wildlife, water, land, hydropower, & ESA build better relations & deeper understanding with the public about complex & controversial environmental issues.
• Promote improved, collaborative planning consistent with local & regional goals & direct limited funding to fish & wildlife projects with the highest probability of success.
Here’s how to find out more:

• Go to www.subbasins.org and find your subbasin in the pull-down list of subbasins on the left side of the page.