



## Independent Scientific Review Panel

for the Northwest Power & Conservation Council  
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**Memorandum (ISRP 2011-9)**

**March 16, 2011**

**To:** Bruce Measure, Chair, Northwest Power and Conservation Council

**From:** Eric Loudenslager, ISRP Chair

**Subject:** Final review of two BiOp projects from the Nez Perce Tribe, #2007-092-00 Protect and Restore Selway River Watershed and Project #2010-086-00 Protect and Restore the Crooked and American River Watersheds

### **Background**

At the Council's February 18, 2011 request, the ISRP reviewed responses for two proposals from the Nez Perce Tribe. These projects are intended to meet needs identified in the Biological Opinion for the 2008 Federal Columbia River Power System. The first project is *Protect and Restore Selway River Watershed*, [#2007-092-00](#), which intends to restore habitat function and channel processes in the Selway River. The second project is *Protect and Restore the Crooked and American River Watersheds*, [#2010-086-00](#), which intends to restore habitat function and channel processes in the South Fork Clearwater.

In a December 9, 2010 memo, the ISRP provided a preliminary review of the initial proposals and requested responses on a number of items for each proposal ([ISRP 2010-43](#)). The ISRP finds that each proposal, augmented by the responses, meets scientific review criteria. The detailed reviews for each proposal follow below organized by the response request items.

### **1. Protect and Restore Selway River Watershed**

#### **Recommendation**

##### *Meets Scientific Review Criteria*

The proponents have done a good job overall of responding to the ISRP's comments at a technical (scientific) level.

## Comments

- 1) *Clarify the proposed actions in the O'Hara Creek watershed regarding cattle grazing and water temperatures.*

The magnitude of the cattle issue was clarified in the response; it was thought not to have a significant impact on success of proposed re-vegetation because relatively few cattle are grazed in the O'Hara watershed. Effects will be monitored, although the proposal said "frequently on an annual basis." Presumably this means several times per year. Based upon summer water temperatures recorded in the project area, increased shading from the re-vegetation project should be beneficial to fish rearing.

- 2) *Provide an overview of the criteria and methods for assessing and prioritizing roads and stream crossings.*

The response describes a functional prioritization process for road decommissioning and improvement and for evaluating stream crossings. The proponents indicate that "Additional modeling techniques will be employed as conditions warrant to determine the sediment contributions and conditions of critical road segments." It appears, however, that most assessment/prioritization will come out of interdisciplinary teams, with a decision matrix used for identifying passage barriers. It was not clear exactly if or how much of the project area, if any, had already been subjected to the sediment models mentioned (WEPP and GRAIP). It is also not clear how much, if any, of the watershed needs to be subjected to these models and what those benefits might be in terms of identifying problem areas in need of sediment reduction.

- 3) *Provide additional information regarding the role of sediment in project streams.*

The response was very thorough in some regards, including an effort to estimate quantitative benefits of the proposed work on sediment yield. While not specifically linked to salmonid fishes in the target reaches of the Selway River (as ISRP reviewers would have preferred), the response gives adequate detail to enable support of project actions designed to reduce sediment inputs. Again, it is not clear whether additional use of the GRAIP model might assist in this portion of the project.

- 4) *Discuss how adaptive management will be implemented.*

Adaptive management was adequately described and addressed.

- 5) *Explicitly define and differentiate the implementation, status and trends, and effectiveness monitoring components of this project with at least an overview of study design, metrics, and methods of measurement. How does the Habitat Status and Trend monitoring program proposed by the Nez Perce Tribe in collaboration with ISEMP and CHaMP relate specifically to this project?*

Overall, the response was adequate. It is agreed that CHaMP survey protocols applied to a system like the Selway would serve as a good “control” for other systems where more extensive changes are needed and envisioned. Consideration could be given to including this project in the CHaMP suite of monitored watersheds. The ISRP emphasizes that a plan should be developed for monitoring fish spawning and presence and juvenile rearing in these habitats in response to restoration measures.

## **2. Protect and Restore the Crooked and American River Watersheds**

### **Recommendation**

*Meets Scientific Review Criteria*

### **Comments**

- 1) *Provide an overview of the criteria and methods for assessing and prioritizing roads and stream crossings.*

The proponents indicate that “Additional modeling techniques will be employed as conditions warrant to determine the sediment contributions and conditions of critical road segments.” However, it appears that most assessment/ prioritization will come out of interdisciplinary teams, with a decision matrix used for identifying passage barriers. It was not clear exactly if or how much of the project area, if any, had already been subjected to the sediment models mentioned (WEPP and GRAIP). It is also not clear to what extent, if any, these watersheds need to be subjected to these models.

- 2) *Provide details relating to the Maines Estate*

The response describes several important attributes of the Maines property: it never has been dredge-mined, is an important location on the stream where several tributaries converge, and is an important spawning area. Support from the USFS, BLM, and a neighboring property owner for the acquisition of the Maines Estate was documented. It seems to be a critical habitat parcel, although it is difficult to visualize it in the context of this proposal without seeing it and

no photos were provided. Its acquisition seems supportable, but better familiarity with the site would be needed in order to prioritize the importance of its acquisition.

3) *Discuss how adaptive management will be implemented.*

Adaptive management was adequately addressed.

4) *Explicitly define and differentiate the implementation, status and trends, and effectiveness monitoring components of this project with at least an overview of study design, metrics, and methods of measurement. How does the Habitat Status and Trend monitoring program proposed by the Nez Perce Tribe in collaboration with ISEMP and CHaMP relate specifically to this project?*

Implementation monitoring was adequately addressed, but the monitoring would have been strengthened by explicit ties to fish population monitoring. Are the American and Crooked Rivers part of the South Fork Clearwater CHaMP project? The ISRP emphasizes that a plan should be developed for monitoring fish spawning and presence and juvenile rearing in these habitats in response to restoration measures.