

Ripples

in the Grande Ronde

Summer 2007

RIVERS UNITING NEIGHBORS · QUARTERLY NEWS FROM THE GRANDE RONDE MODEL WATERSHED

To plant a tree



by Mary Estes, GRMW

The Grande Ronde Model Watershed board members and staff had some real fun with the children of the Grande Ronde Basin this year in a variety of educational activities. The biggest educational focus was Arbor Day in April. Arbor Day is recognized throughout the world at various times of the year. Even though here in the United States we call it "Arbor Day," other places like India call it "The National Festival of Tree Planting."

The first Arbor Day took place on April 10, 1872, in Nebraska. A Nebraska journalist and politician, Julius Sterling Morton, felt that Nebraska's landscape and economy would benefit from the wide-scale planting of trees. He set an example, himself, planting orchards, shade trees and wind breaks on his own farm, and urged his neighbors to follow suit. He proposed that a special day be set aside dedicated to tree planting and increasing awareness of the importance of trees. In the years following the first Arbor Day, Morton's idea spread beyond Nebraska. Today all 50 states celebrate Arbor Day, although the dates may vary in keeping with the local climate. Oregon celebrates Arbor Day the first full week in April. Oregon's state tree is the Douglas-fir.

"He who plants a tree plants hope."

~Lucy Larcom

Clockwise: A youngster at the Watershed Festival in Enterprise shows off his fish print. Enterprise Junior High students plant tree seedlings to celebrate Arbor Day. Mary Estes of the GRMW teaches a group of La Grande sixth-graders about animal tracks. Dan Hoyt with the Private Land Forest Network helps a Union County resident with his new 2-year-old Douglas-fir.

The Grande Ronde Model Watershed celebrated Arbor Day throughout the month of April with various activities that resulted in the planting of 1,000 Douglas-fir and ponderosa pine tree seedlings. On April 12, we had a fun-filled day providing 185 tree seedlings for planting by the seventh- and eighth-graders of Wallowa, Enterprise and Joseph. Tammy Crawford's Enterprise students went a little further than just planting the trees. As part of their reading class, they read information on Arbor Day, tree planting, and about the Douglas-fir and ponderosa pine trees. After reading, students drew comic strips to show what they learned about planting trees. The students also took the time to plant their tree seedlings in pots before taking them home to be replanted at another time.

Wendy Clerget and Peggy Lanman, Imbler Elementary School teachers, taught an Earth Day unit on April 17. Their students talked about how trees clean the air and why we need trees. As part of the unit, the elementary students planted 30 tree seedlings.

The La Grande Arts Commission, which is overseen by the City of La Grande Parks and Recreation Department, hosted the annual "Arts for All" event on April 20 and 21. This is a fun, free, hands-on event for children to learn how to do different activities and to take their creations home. The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and Eastern Oregon University's Navigators assisted the GRMW in its tree planting booth. Children planted approximately 250 tree seedlings in brightly painted cans.

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Outside looking in



OSU students get a taste of community-based restoration in the Grande Ronde Watershed

by Patrick MacQuarrie, PhD Student, Oregon State University, and Julia Doermann, Instructor, Institute of Water and Watersheds, Oregon State University

From June 18–22, nine Oregon State University graduate students and faculty members were hosted by the Grande Ronde Model Watershed and Wallowa Resources for a field course in water governance. Our trip to northeast Oregon followed the completion of a spring term class called “Water Governance and Conflict Management,” the capstone course of a new graduate Certificate in Water Conflict Management and Transformation.

Our visit to northeast Oregon was an opportunity to experience and apply what we had learned during the spring about working with conflict, and the community structures that offer a place for people to come together to work on common problems and opportunities. We got the chance to deepen our understanding about the needs and interests of different stakeholders, and how programs like the Grande Ronde Model Watershed offer creative ways to come together that are mutually satisfying. We also got a sense of a bigger shift in the ways community members and agencies are choosing to work together to make progress on common problems – a heartening experience in light of the similar challenges that face people all over the world in their own communities.

We were fortunate to be invited to visit the GRMW for five days. Coming from the classroom to the field, we were aware of how our perspectives might be different from those living in the region. Our hope was to experience the activities in the Grande Ronde watershed as part of a much wider effort to restore fish habitat, build sustainable communities, and enrich people’s lives.

The first day in Union County we visited the GRMW office in La Grande. We met the GRMW staff, board members, and restoration partners and were overwhelmed with hospitality. Jeff Oveson, executive director, gave us an overview of the GRMW’s history and purpose, and arranged for presentations from many of the staff, partners, and board members, highlighting how the GRMW interacts with a wide range of stakeholders in the basin. We

were impressed with the level of cooperation among private landowners and local, state, and federal and tribal agencies such as the Wallowa County Board of Commissioners, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, NOAA Fisheries, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. There was a sense of community amongst this diverse group of stakeholders, and a larger sense of purpose around restoring key elements of fish habitat and the environment. Later that evening we were treated to a tasty barbecue at the ODFW Ladd Marsh headquarters.

The second day started early with a visit to the CTUIR adult fish weir on Catherine Creek. Laurie Hewitt allowed us to jump right into oversized waders and climb down into the fish trap where we monitored, tagged, and treated adult spring chinook salmon returning to Catherine Creek. It was

“We got the sense that we were witnessing a new chapter in the future of environmental stewardship.”

impressive that these fish had traveled over 700 miles and overcome eight large dams to get back here and spawn. We had driven this distance ourselves and it seemed at times long and arduous. The enormity of the task of caring for these amazing fish became visceral, and it was clear that the watershed was involved in more than just fish monitoring. The GRMW was putting life back into the rivers and streams, and putting life back into the community.

Later that day we visited the End Creek/Rice Project, an 800-acre restoration project imple-

mented by Vance McGowan from ODFW and Allen Childs of CTUIR. This site was one of the largest and complex restoration projects undertaken by the GRMW, with huge potential for restoring fish habitat while creating functional and sustainable wetlands downstream in the Willow Creek watershed. We were not only impressed by the project’s size and complexity, but how its implementation served as an example of a large-scale economically viable option to the landowner while at the same time contributing to the habitat of returning salmon and steelhead. These new types of land-use options are starting to get more attention by neighboring landowners in an area where communication is largely handled through reputation and word-of-mouth. In the big picture, it appeared that more and more members of the community were becoming part of a collective effort to repair the environment, playing a greater role in restoring the natural ecosystem together.

The Wednesday meeting at the Lostine Tavern provided our group with an opportunity to see active community collaboration. Partners from the Natural Resource Conservation Service, ODFW, Oregon Water Trust, Nez Perce Tribe, NOAA Fisheries, the Oregon Water Resources Department, and some irrigators all joined together to discuss late-summer flows and water in the Lostine watershed. The energy and emotions were high in the room, but there remained a respectful and productive spirit among every partner present. The participants carefully considered the

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The Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds

by Jeff Oveson, GRMW

Western author Wallace Stegner once wrote, “Angry as one may be at what heedless men have done and still do to a noble habitat, one cannot be pessimistic about the West. This is still the native home of hope. When it fully learns that cooperation, not rugged individualism is the quality that most characterizes and preserves it, then it will have achieved itself and outlived its origins. Then it has a chance to create a society to match its scenery.”

2007 marks the 10th anniversary of *The Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds*, an effort to utilize both the rugged individualism and the cooperation to which Stegner alludes. In this case, the rugged individual is the entire state of Oregon, reminiscent of an “us against the world” attitude so common among the pioneers that came to and settled this once remote and rugged wilderness. The cooperation so necessary

Key Elements of The Oregon Plan

The Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds has been likened to a four-legged stool, with success depending on strong implementation of each element:

Restoration. Voluntary restoration actions by private landowners – individuals and industry, rural and urban – with support from citizen groups, businesses, and local government. It takes local knowledge of problems and a local sense of ownership to achieve solutions.

Coordination. Coordinated state and federal agency, and tribal actions to support private and voluntary restoration efforts, effectively implement regulatory programs, soundly manage public lands, and promote public education and awareness about watersheds and salmon. These agencies are responsible for water quality; water quantity; and a wide variety of habitat protection, alteration, and restoration activities; as well as fishery harvest management and production of hatchery fish.

Monitoring. Monitoring watershed health, water quality, and salmon recovery to document existing conditions, track changes, and determine the impact of programs and actions. Biological and physical sampling is conducted to determine whether salmon habitats and populations are improving under conservation and restoration efforts.

Evaluation. Strong scientific oversight by the Independent Multidisciplinary Science Team, an independent panel of scientists who evaluate the plan’s effectiveness, identify needed changes, and guide research investments. The IMST helps ensure that the best available science is incorporated into decision making and actions.

to the success of *The Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds* is elicited from state and federal agencies, watershed councils, soil and water conservation districts, non-profit organizations, and individuals all interested in the long-term health and sustainability of Oregon’s ecosystems and communities.

In the decade since its inception, *The Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds* has become less of a plan and more of a philosophy – a way of doing business, of living, thinking and acting. Commonly referred to in its shorter form as “The Oregon Plan,” it came about because of thoughts like this:

“Salmon, and the rivers that are their home, are fundamental and treasured elements of Oregon’s diverse landscapes. *The Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds* is Oregon’s cooperative effort to restore salmon runs, improve water quality, and achieve healthy watersheds and strong communities throughout the state. Such an effort cannot succeed through laws and government actions alone, and so *The Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds* also relies on Oregonians’ characteristic spirit of volunteerism and stewardship.”

– Governor John Kitzhaber

This statement is a clear recognition of Oregonians’ will to balance the needs of the environment with those of the people, and a determination to achieve that balance without adding regulation and laws that tend to divide more than unite the people upon whom implementation of The Oregon Plan relies.

Origins of The Oregon Plan

In 1997, with the support and participation of a wide spectrum of stakeholders from all sectors and regions of the state, the Oregon Legislature and the Governor established *The Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds*. Motivated at first by the conviction that Oregon must devise its own homegrown response to listings of coho and other salmon species under the federal Endangered Species Act, the plan quickly evolved and expanded into an unprecedented statewide program to preserve and profit from Oregon’s natural legacy.

Why is the plan needed?

Populations of anadromous (ocean-going) fish have declined dramatically all over the Pacific Northwest. Many populations of chinook, steelhead, coho and chum salmon are at a tiny fraction of their historic levels. At the same time, 13,326 miles of Oregon’s streams and rivers, and 30 lakes do not meet the water-quality standards that support drinking water, recreation and fisheries.

There is no single or simple reason why fish populations are so low. Many factors have combined to reduce the number of ocean-going fish returning to



Oregon streams to spawn. These factors are usually characterized as harvest, hatcheries, hydroelectric power, and habitat changes – known as the four H’s. They are the result of an historical lack of understanding of how human activities affect salmonids. Natural factors, like predators and ocean conditions, also affect fish populations.

How does the plan work?

The Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds organizes specific actions, called “measures,” around the factors that contribute to the decline in fish populations and watershed health. Most of these focus on actions to improve water quality and quantity, and restore habitat. Landowners and other private citizens, community organizations, interest groups, and all levels of government come together to organize, fund, and implement these measures. Watershed councils, and soil and water conservation districts lead efforts in many watersheds.

In contrast to endangered species recovery and environmental protection plans that rely primarily on regulatory approaches, *The Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds* represents a new way of restoring natural systems, one that relies on the spirit of volunteerism and stewardship that is so characteristic of Oregonians. Citizens, sport and commercial fishing interests, the timber industry, environmental groups, agriculture, utilities, businesses, tribes, and government agencies are working together to make sure people and salmon can thrive over the long term. ■

The BPA connection



by Beth Stewart, Editor

You might say that Mark Shaw of the Bonneville Power Administration holds the purse strings to fish and wildlife projects here in the Grande Ronde Basin. Shaw is one of two managers in BPA's Division of Fish and Wildlife who manage people who manage contracts. Those contracts are key to the mission of the Grande Ronde Model Watershed and so many other agencies and tribes that devote time, energy and money to improving conditions for fish and wildlife in northeast Oregon.

Shaw is responsible for the implementation of projects in the upper "provinces" of the Columbia River Basin. The basin is divided into 11 provinces (see map); Shaw oversees six of them, including the Blue Mountain Province, which contains eastern Oregon's Grande Ronde, Imnaha and Willowa River subbasins.

In fiscal year 2007, BPA will spend a generous \$143 million in efforts to improve habitat and restore populations of fish and wildlife in the Columbia Basin. Another \$36 million will be spent on capital projects, such as purchasing land, improving hatcheries, or installing fish passage measures. \$7.5 million of those monies is dedicated specifically to projects in the Blue Mountain Province.

The Bonneville Power Administration is the federal agency that markets electricity off the 30-something federal dams in the Columbia River Basin. The actual dams are owned and operated by either the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers or the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. BPA is unique in that it is one of six federal power marketing administrations in the United States that, for the most part, are "self-financed" federal agencies. That means BPA finances its administration, electrical transmission sys-

tem, and fish and wildlife program directly through the sale of electrical power. No tax monies are involved. Despite the millions of dollars pumped into fish and wildlife projects each year, the Pacific Northwest still enjoys some of the lowest electrical power rates in the nation.

According to Shaw, BPA provides about 40 percent of all the power used in the Pacific Northwest, of which more than 80 percent is hydroelectric. About 60 percent of the region's electricity comes from hydropower. BPA sells any excess electricity or buys electricity to fulfill its contracts with public utilities, such as Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative, and investor-owned utilities, such as Portland General Electric. "We have two floors of people who work 24 hours a day buying and selling power," says Shaw.

So what does BPA and electricity have to do with fish and wildlife? Back in 1980, Congress passed the Pacific Northwest Electrical Power Planning and Conservation Act. The act authorized the states of Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington to create the Northwest Power Planning Council. The council was charged with three tasks: (1) to develop a 20-year electric power plan for the region that would guarantee adequate and reliable electrical energy at the lowest economic and environment cost to the Northwest; (2) to develop a program to protect, mitigate and enhance fish and wildlife adversely affected by hydroelectric power development in the Columbia River Basin; and (3) to educate and involve the public in the council's decision-making processes.

Historically, the Columbia Basin supported runs of 10-16 million returning adult salmon and steelhead each year. Today that number has dwindled to about 1 million. While harvest, loss of habitat, and ocean conditions have contributed to the demise of the runs, hydroelectric development in the Columbia Basin is the largest culprit. The Northwest Power Plan-

ning Council estimates that the construction and operation of hydroelectric dams in the basin is responsible for the loss of 5-11 million adult fish.

In November 1982, the council adopted its first *Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program*. Through long and sometimes arduous public processes, the Fish and Wildlife Program has been revised and amended several times since. In its program, the council, now renamed the Northwest Power and Conservation Council, makes funding recommendations to BPA. BPA, not the council, is the agency that actually funds projects on the ground. It is here where we come back to Mark Shaw and his crew of contracting specialists.

Based in Portland, BPA's Fish and Wildlife Division is 64 people strong. Twenty-eight of them are part of the two "implementation groups." In any one year, contracting specialists manage 550-600 contracts throughout the 11 Columbia Basin provinces. Those contracts represent anywhere from 300 to 350 projects. "One project may involve up to five contracts," says Shaw, pointing to the various fish and wildlife agencies and Native American tribes that manage the projects in the field. From there, the agencies and tribes may contract with subcontractors to do the actual earth moving.

When it comes to the Blue Mountain Province in northeast Oregon, the Grande Ronde Model Watershed plays an integral role in what restoration





projects get funded and when. According to Shaw, the model watershed makes his job a whole lot easier.

“The Grande Ronde Model Watershed is unique in its scale, complexity and involvement with the broad spectrum of interests,” shares Shaw. “It is by far the largest and most active organization of its kind.” Shaw is alluding to the GRMW’s clearinghouse process and consensus-building efforts when it comes to prioritizing projects in the watershed. Shaw says it mimics the Northwest Power and Conservation Council’s process, but on a watershed-specific level.

Shaw also says the Grande Ronde Basin mimics the entire Columbia Basin when it comes to demands on

water resources. The local watershed is home to various resident and anadromous fish species, including steelhead and spring chinook salmon stocks listed as “threatened” under the Endangered Species Act. Much like the entire basin, the Grande Ronde watershed also supports hatchery and broodstock programs; research efforts; sport fisheries, hydroelectric power development, agriculture, irrigation and logging.

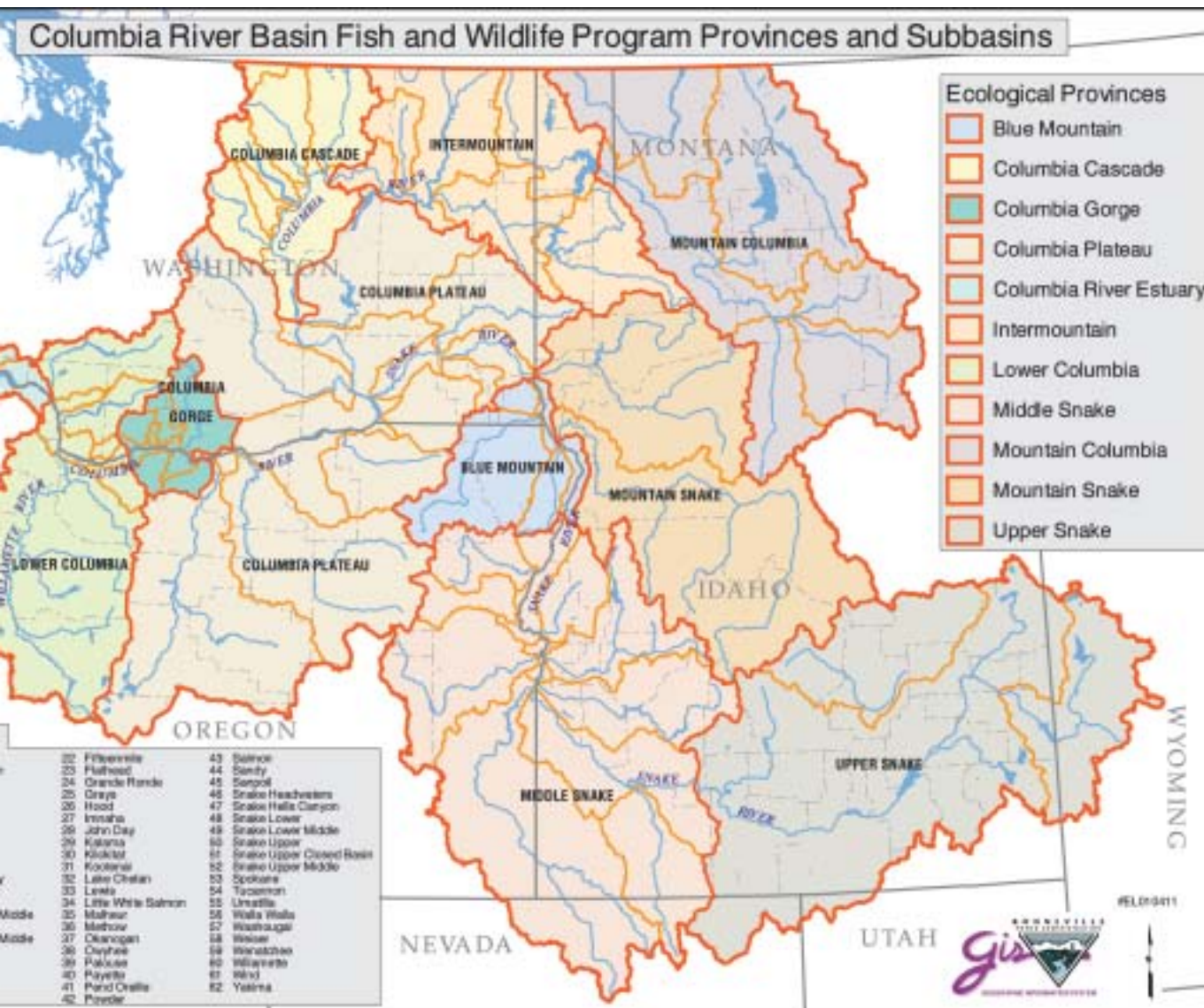
In the Blue Mountain Province, BPA contracts not only with the Grande Ronde Model Watershed, but with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, the U.S. Forest Service, the Nez Perce Tribe, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, Willowa Resources, Eastern Oregon University, soil and water conservation districts, and the counties, to name a few. Since 2000, BPA has funded more than 110 contracts representing more than 70 projects in the Blue Mountain Province. Thirty contracts are active in fiscal year 2007 alone, totaling more than \$7.5 million worth of restoration measures.

Shaw has nothing but praise for the Grande Ronde Model Watershed. “It provides a means by which local entities – fish and wildlife managers, counties, universities, the Forest Service and others – to participate in the planning process and implement projects,” says Shaw. He has observed that the decision-making process is not dominated by any one group, but allows all interests to wade through the challenges and complexities associated with getting a project on the ground.

“I wish other areas of the Columbia River Basin were functioning at this level,” adds Shaw. “Having that local control and ability to work with the state agencies has been a huge benefit for the Grande Ronde Basin as well as the state.”

Mark Shaw, 56, has been working for BPA since 1992. A Montana native and a graduate of Montana State University in Bozeman, Shaw began his career in the natural resources fighting fires on a hot-shot crew. After three years in the Peace Corps, he worked several years as a fish biologist for the U.S. Forest Service. Now with 15 years in at BPA, he is ready to retire. What’s on his new agenda? Hiking, skiing, kayaking and traveling – perhaps appreciating the very things he’s dedicated the last 15 years of his life to improving. ■

Clockwise: Mark Shaw is manager of the Upper Provinces Implementation Group at the Bonneville Power Administration. BPA markets electricity generated at Ice Harbor Dam, which is owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and is the first of four federal dams on the mainstem Snake River. Shaw and his colleagues at BPA manage fish and wildlife contracts in these 11 Columbia River Basin provinces. The Grande Ronde River and its tributaries are part of the Blue Mountain Province.



Fish Eye Valley

A Poem by Stacy Polkowske,
Oregon State University student who
attended the June tour to eastern Oregon
(story on Page 2), spolkowske@yahoo.com

Joseph's spirit blankets this valley,
runs these rivers and climbs these peaks.
Salmon struggle to fulfill their sacred prophecy,
unaware of the landscape above the waters they seek.
Salt of the earth smile at the dawning sun still unseen.
These hills cradle our stories and tell our feats.
Yet generations still drink their fill
from the cold clear Lostine Creek.

Magnificent faces of beauty and age
gaze upon the valley veins.
Alpine air swirls between lashes of old trees
and whips around her long tale of change.
A tear drop lake shimmers with clouds,
reflecting a history of ourselves, our people, and the land.
Carved by the frozen hand of time,
jetties of geologic wonder stab the eye and tug the heart.
White knuckles of snow caps
cling onto the sharp handles of rock and ridge.

Yet their grasps let go too soon and run away too fast.
Fall harvest sparkle white up there,
so do the salmon highways and byways.
Irrigation and migration bear an
urgent theme on these local streams,
calling for graceful coordination among the basin cast.
A common language speaks across the board,
through the streets, up the road, down the creek.

This great circle holds us all.
What we do gives the life we seek.
What we don't do also leads our tired feet.
Together we discover our strength;
We step forward, out of our minds,
onto earth's black ground.
The love of land, fish and sky unites us
to restore the Grande Ronde.

Our Mistake ...

In the last issue of "Ripples in the Grande Ronde," the cover story spoke of the extensive restoration efforts on End Creek in the Grande Ronde Valley. By mistake, we failed to mention the contractor, Partney Construction. We apologize for the omission and wish to recognize Joe Partney and his crew for their outstanding work.

Update

Chinook salmon and steelhead recovery planning in the Grande Ronde, Wallowa and Imaha River basins

In the Fall 2006 "Ripples" we outlined the need, process, and expectations for recovery planning for spring chinook salmon and steelhead within the Grande Ronde, Imnaha, and Wallowa River systems under requirements of the Endangered Species Act. Since then, much progress has occurred with the help of many experienced, local, interested citizens; state and federal agency staff; and Grande Ronde Model Watershed directors and staff, with overall guidance from NOAA Fisheries staff in La Grande. In this article, we would like to update you on this progress.

Recovery planning

As stated last fall, the Endangered Species Act requires the development of recovery plans for species listed under the act. The ESA envisions these plans as road maps for species recovery and eventual delisting. Recovery plans are guidance documents to assist in coordinated progress in recovery. They are not regulatory instruments. Plans are intended to be grounded in existing conservation efforts, utilizing local expertise and other current planning efforts. The ESA specifically requires that plans contain (1) objective, measurable criteria for delisting the species; (2) site-specific actions; and (3) estimates of time and costs for implementing the plan.

Recovery plans are being developed throughout the Columbia Basin and coastal regions of Washington and Oregon, and will generally follow the outline listed in the box (*on right*).

Where are we?

Last fall, teams were working on identifying limiting factors and threats, having completed initial efforts on preceding steps in the outline. Since then, these have been refined and management actions have been identified for several hundred stream reaches for both chinook salmon and steelhead. Teams have completed most of the work in developing these actions and reviewing costs of implementation. Preferred management actions will then be recommended. A strategy for prioritizing projects has been developed, and work is beginning on the monitoring, research and implementation strategies. While most local work to date has focused on fish habitat, efforts are also progressing on other aspects of recovery planning, including hatchery, harvest, and hydro-power actions and options.

Over the next few months, NOAA Fisheries staff expect these efforts will be further refined, leading to draft recovery plans later next winter. NOAA Fisheries' primary goal throughout these efforts has been to develop effective plans that are understood and supported by local communities and entities involved in improving watershed conditions. Over the past year, the Grande Ronde Model Watershed has hosted workshops to help achieve this goal. These workshops have provided NOAA Fisheries with invaluable feedback, suggestions and guidance for the recovery planning process. As plans develop this summer and fall, we anticipate additional efforts to share goals and progress in recovery planning throughout the communities within these river systems. This work will then be incorporated into similar efforts within the Snake River Basin. ■

For additional information on recovery planning or involvement interests, please contact Randy Tweten of NOAA Fisheries at 541-975-1835, ext. 229, randy.tweten@noaa.gov, or Jeff Blackwood, 541-276-4240, jeff.bwood@gmail.com.

Basic Outline of a Recovery Plan

- Background/overview. Why were species listed?
- Population and major population group structure. How are they identified?
- Desired status, including viability criteria, recovery goals, and recovery scenarios.
- Current status and gaps. Current population conditions, and what changes in populations would be necessary to move to desired status.
- Limiting factors and threats. What are the challenges to get to desired status?
- Management actions. Based on limiting factors and threats, what management actions could be implemented to move to desired conditions?
- Cost and time estimates. What would it cost, and over what period of time would it take to reach desired conditions and status?
- Preferred management actions. Based on recovery scenarios and most realistic management actions over reasonable timeframes, what management actions should be undertaken?
- Research, monitoring and evaluation. What strategies should be used to monitor progress, and how should actions be implemented? What additional research is needed to support these efforts?

Meet the Board

Allen Childs

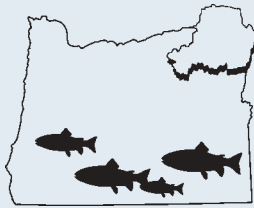
A director on the Grande Ronde Model Watershed board since 2004, Allen Childs serves as a representative for the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, where he is employed as a journeyman level fish and wildlife biologist. Allen has been with CTUIR since 1993.

A native of Utah, Allen spent part of his life on the family ranch in Mt. Pleasant, and attended and graduated from high school in Salt Lake City. He accepted an offer for a full scholarship to play baseball at the College of Eastern Utah in Price, where he also had the good fortune to meet Julie, his future wife. After two years at Eastern Utah, both Allen and Julie transferred to Eastern Oregon University, where they received their degrees, Allen's being a bachelor of science in biology. In the summer prior to his senior year, Julie and Allen returned to Utah for their wedding.

Upon graduation from EOU, Allen joined the U.S. Forest Service as a technician, working on fish habitat-related projects. After a couple of years, still a term employee, Allen served as a leader on various interdisciplinary teams in planning timber management and habitat restoration projects.

When Allen started with CTUIR in 1993, it was as fish biologist, working on the Hanford Nuclear Reservation in the CTUIR ground-water remediation program, dealing in particular with contamination issues related to the operation of the facility.

Allen followed that assignment by taking a position overseeing the CTUIR Wildlife Mitigation Program, developing a mitigation strategy for tribal ceded lands in both Oregon and Washington. This was a program mandated by Congress in the 1980 Northwest Power Planning Act, and an \$8 million program whose jewel was the acquisition of the Rainwater project, an 8,700-acre parcel of mid-elevation timber and rangeland near Dayton, Wash. Allen still oversees the management and operation of this property, after having



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dedicated innumerable hours coordinating the public involvement, fish and wildlife habitat assessments, comprehensive monitoring plans, and overall management plan for the Rainwater property.

The Iskulpia project, a 3,000-acre acquisition in the Squaw Creek watershed of the Umatilla River Basin, followed. With additional leases from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, this acquisition allowed the CTUIR to have management authority for more than 70 percent of the steelhead and bull trout spawning and rearing habitat in the Squaw Creek watershed.

In 1995, as CTUIR's Fish and Wildlife Program expanded into the Grande Ronde Basin, Allen began working on fish habitat restoration projects. In the time since, he has been an integral partner in projects on McCoy Creek, Meadow Creek, Ladd Creek, and End Creek, among many others. Allen's practical on-the-ground expertise and experience lends a unique perspective to the GRMW board, where he adds his technical abilities to adeptness at working with others, including those who do not necessarily share his views.

Allen and Julie reside in Island City and are very proud of their family. Their eldest son, Cody, graduated from La Grande High School this past June and will be entering EOU in the fall. Daughter Jacey, 15, and son Ely, 10, remain at home.



Fish Online!

www.grmw.org

- Adult salmon counts at the dams
- Snake River Basin streamflows
- Snow and precipitation reports
- Habitat enhancement projects
- Meetings, activities and events
- Past issues of "Ripples" and more!

Grande Ronde Model Watershed

Upcoming Board Meetings

The public is welcome to attend

- Tuesday, July 24, 6:30 p.m.
Wallowa Community Center, 2nd St, Wallowa
- Tuesday, August 28, 6:30 p.m.
St. Mary's Catholic Church, 12th St, Elgin
- Tuesday, September 25, 6:30 p.m.
Wallowa Community Center, 2nd St, Wallowa
- Tuesday, October 23, 6:30 p.m.
Elgin Community Center, 10th St, Elgin
- Tuesday, November 27, 6:30 p.m.
Wallowa Community Center, 2nd St, Wallowa

*Meeting dates are subject to change. Please call
541-663-0570 to confirm. Thank you!*

TREES, continued from Front Cover....

April 29 was another big day. The Private Land Forest Network, Oregon Department of Forestry, and the Grande Ronde Model Watershed hosted an Arbor Day event for the local folks of Union and Wallowa counties to pick up free tree seedlings. The PLFN also offered 2-year-old Douglas-firs and Giant Sequoia trees for \$1 each as well as Colorado Blue Spruce and other trees for \$.35 a tree. This was a great effort, getting about 1,000 trees out of the tree coolers and into the hands of our local folks.

Other educational activities this spring included the La Grande Middle School Sixth Grade Outdoor School in the Spring Creek picnic area. GRMW staff enjoyed the sun rays and the clean outdoors with the 130 students. The students were shown wildlife replicas and learned about animal tracks, scat, teeth and skulls.

On June 29, Wallowa Resources hosted its annual Watershed Festival at the Enterprise Fairgrounds. The GRMW had a blast showing folks how to make fish prints. The fish replicas were salmon, rainbow trout, perch and blue gill.

The various materials used during these educational activities, including the tree seedlings, wildlife replicas, books, paint, fabric and other supplies were purchased with funds through an Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board educational grant. ■

OSU STUDENTS, continued from Page 2....

challenges of late-summer water availability, and some of the pros and cons of different options for working together to meet a range of water needs. Many emphasized the preference and responsibility of the local community to find solutions to the problems of instream summer flows to the over-allocated Lostine River. We also sensed that there was a feeling that creative changes were needed to bring back essential habitat for fish.

While any satisfactory, long-term solutions were still illusive at the end of our meeting, it not only seemed possible that everyone in that room, with support of state and federal funds, could address the low flows and sometimes-dewatered stream reaches, it also felt like these diverse stakeholders could find mutually acceptable ways to restore the health of the broader watershed. This way of working together is innate to the Grande Ronde Model Watershed, and the broader statewide effort to restore salmon and watersheds. We'd talked about it in class during the spring and understood how unusual it is in a national or international context. It was such a thrill to see it happening before our eyes.

After leaving the Lostine Tavern we visited the 6 Ranch Project site, a fine example of private landowner cooperation. We were struck by comments from the son of the landowner when he said that he did not blame previous generations for move-

ment of the river channel, but that since we know more about healthy ecosystems now, we need to put it right (meanders). This simple statement captured our observed sense of healing in parts of the Grande Ronde watershed. We could see real changes in the way people feel, think, and act with respect to their livelihoods, their environment, and to each other. We felt privileged to witness a part of it.

Our Wednesday ended with a trip to the privately owned Wallowa Dam, and history on its significance to Wallowa County. Questions were asked about the potential significance of the dam and reservoir to addressing water issues in the basin, and its tie to the communities of Wallowa County. We could feel the stable and strong presence of the dam, but it would take time and effort to determine its future roles in the watershed, and in the larger effort of balancing fish habitat and rural economic needs.

On Thursday we were hosted by Wallowa Resources at the Oregon State University Extension office in Enterprise. "Relationships are key," said Wallowa Resources' Nils Christoffersen. We learned about the importance of sustainable community development and how Wallowa Resources was helping to create a more diversified conservation-based economy in Wallowa County. We then visited the impressive McDaniels Restoration Project where a half-mile of the Wallowa River had been restored. The scale and beauty of the designed river impressed me and I thought about how salmon would respond to their new home. In fact this was now attracting not only salmon, but deer, elk, visiting students, summer volunteers, and many others from wide reaches of the community. Life was responding abundantly everywhere along the new river habitat, providing us and the community with a hope these and similar projects would sustain new life well into the future.

At the end of the week we had seen, heard, and learned a great deal about the Grande Ronde Model Watershed. We had access to a professional and generous community-based organization diligently focused on habitat restoration. The projects we visited were expertly designed and successfully implemented, and attracted funding from a wide range of agencies at local, regional, and national levels. We got the sense that we were witnessing a new chapter in the future of environmental stewardship. Agencies and groups that once avoided each other were now working together toward the same goals. Several local landowners were seeking new ways to manage their land and those species that depend on it for survival. I was impressed that decisions were made locally and collaboratively. There was not a sense among stakeholders of giving up something for nothing. Instead there was a sense that everyone could benefit from healthy fish and healthy streams. I started to feel that the community was caring for the land as if it was their own child – preserving, protecting, and nurturing it as it grows and blossoms for future generations. ■

Grande Ronde Model Watershed

1114 J Avenue ■ La Grande OR 97850
ph 541-663-0570 ■ fax 541-962-1585

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Cecilia Noyes, Database Manager

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Beth Stewart, Editor
bstewart@eoni.com

