

Section 2. Introduction

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2. Introduction

2.1 Description of Planning Entity

The formal planning process for this draft began with the formation of the Umatilla/Willow Core Partnership in 2002. The Core Partnership is the lead entity for the subbasin planning process in the subbasin, and consists of representatives from six major stakeholder groups in the Umatilla/Willow subbasin: the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR), Morrow Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), Umatilla Basin Irrigation Districts Association (UBIDA), Umatilla Basin Watershed Council (UBWC), and Umatilla County SWCD. Members of the Core Partnership had the greatest role in the subbasin planning effort, and were responsible for taking the lead in coordinating among groups, developing the vision and biological objectives, and prioritizing subbasin strategies.

Members of a larger Stakeholder Group also played a vital role in the process by participating in reviews of early drafts and by attending five public meetings. The Stakeholder Group was composed of individuals or entities which reside in, derive their livelihood from, or are involved with business, research, or regulatory processes within the Umatilla/Willow subbasin, and members represented over 60 organizations, watershed councils, cities, counties, irrigation districts, state agencies, and federal and resource management agencies. In addition, three technical teams provided their expertise in the development and review of the plan. The General Technical Team was an interdisciplinary team that worked under the direction of the Core Partnership and was composed of specialists from various subbasin agencies and entities, as well as members of the Core Partnership. Members of this team reviewed the general information presented in the overview portion of the subbasin plan. Two more specialized teams, the Aquatic Workgroup and the Terrestrial Wildlife Workgroup, were responsible for providing the technical expertise for the development of the aquatic and terrestrial wildlife portions of the assessment and management plan. The Core Partnership hired a Project Manager to help compile, edit, and write various sections of the plan, and to facilitate technical team meetings and take the lead in compiling data contributed by agency staff. Two technical writers were also hired to work as principal authors of the plan. CTUIR was responsible for the fiscal management and contract administration involved with planning in the Umatilla/Willow subbasin.

2.2 List of Participants

Many individuals participated in the development of this draft. Participants that contributed to the writing or offered ideas and comments are listed in Table 1. This list includes participants involved in developing and writing the Draft Umatilla/Willow Creek Subbasin Summary (2001), which formed the starting point for this draft. In addition, numerous individuals attended the five public meetings that occurred during the planning process.

Table 1. List of contributors to this draft of the Umatilla/Willow subbasin plan.

Advisory Board of the Lower Umatilla Basin Ground Water Management Area	Morrow Soil and Water Conservation District
Ron Rickman	Janet Greenup
City of Pendleton	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Karen King	Nora Berwick
Sue Lawrence	Natural Resources Conservation Service
Robert Patterson	Chet Hadley
Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation	Tom Bennett
	Northwest Habitat Institute
Janet Brim Box	Tom O'Neil
Craig Contor	Cory Langhoff
Allen Childs	Oregon Department of Agriculture
David Close	Tom Straughan
Kate Ely	Oregon Department of Environmental Quality:
Aaron Jackson	Don Butcher
Gary James	Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
Paul Kissner	Susan Barnes
Michael Lambert	Tim Bailey
Scott O'Daniel	Kevin Blakely
Eric Quaempts	Darren Brunings
Gerry Rowan	Will Cameron
	Shannon Jewett
Carl Scheeler	Mark Kirsch
Stacy Schumacher	Russ Morgan
Jesse Schwartz	Scott Patterson
Amy Sexton	Greg Rimbach
Todd Shaw	Tara White
	Oregon Natural Heritage Program
Aaron Skirvin	Eleanor P. Gaines
Cheryl Shippentower	Jimmy Kagan
Jed Volkman	Oregon State University
Jim Webster	George Clough
Brian Zimmerman	Sandra DeBano
Ecovista	Gary Reed
Anne Davidson	David Wooster
Craig Rabe	Oregon State University Extension Service
Dora Rollins	Donald Horneck
Darin Saul	Randy Mills
Human Dimensions Consulting	Oregon Water Resources Department
William Warren	Tony Justice
Morrow County	Michael Ladd
Carla McLane	

Table 1 (continued). List of contributors to this draft of the Umatilla/Willow subbasin plan.

Stewards of the Umatilla River Environment	United States Department of Agriculture – Agricultural Research Service
Betty Klepper	John Williams
Umatilla Basin Watershed Council	United States Forest Service
Ron Duetz	David Crabtree
Tracy Bosen	Charles Gobar
Mike Pelissier	Kristy Groves
Gary Rhinhart	Tom McLain
Umatilla County	Katherine Ramsey
J.R. Cook	Diane Shirley
Umatilla County Soil and Water Conservation District	United States Fisheries and Wildlife Service
Ray Denny	Keith Paul
Guy Hopkins	Others
Marty King	James Phelps
	Char Corkran
	Karen Kroner

2.3 Stakeholder Involvement Process

The Stakeholder Group (see Section 2.1 for description of members) and the general public were involved in the Umatilla/Willow subbasin planning process in a number of ways. Public meetings were held on June 4, 2002; August 6, 2003; November 12, 2003; March 3, 2004; and May 6, 2004. Members of the Stakeholder Group were sent postcards with meeting announcements several weeks in advance and the public was informed about public meetings through newspaper and radio announcements. In addition, early drafts of the document were made available for public review and comment on the Umatilla County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) website. Members of the Stakeholder Group and the general public who did not have access to computers were encouraged to contact the Umatilla County SWCD for hard copies of drafts.

2.4 Overall Approach

2.4.1 Approach to the Development of the Plan

Several sets of guidance documents were followed by subbasin planners to maximize the likelihood that the plan would meet the requirements set forth by the Council. One of these documents, the *Technical Guide for Subbasin Planners* (Council 2001), describes three necessary components of subbasin plans: the assessment, the inventory, and the management plan. The assessment forms the scientific and technical foundation for developing the subbasin management plan; it not only describes the status and limiting

factors of aquatic and terrestrial wildlife species and their habitats, but it also provides relevant information about the context in which fish and wildlife management takes place, including information on the social, economic, and cultural realities of the subbasin. The inventory summarizes and synthesizes fish and wildlife protection, restoration, and artificial production activities and programs within the subbasin that have occurred within the last five years, with the goal of demonstrating 1) current management directions, 2) existing protections, and 3) current strategies implemented through specific projects. These activities are related to limiting factors identified in the assessment. Another component of the inventory is a “gap analysis”, which seeks to identify gaps between actions taken and actions needed. In combination with results from the assessment, the inventory should indicate the value and efficacy of current activities. The third component, the management plan, is described as the “heart” of the subbasin planning process (Council 2001). The primary goal of the management plan is to define the environmental and biological vision, objectives, and strategies specific to fish and wildlife in the subbasin. The planning horizon for the management plan is suggested to range from 10 to 15 years.

Another planning document that played an important role in guiding this draft of the Umatilla/Willow subbasin plan is the *Oregon Specific Guidance* (Oregon Subbasin Planning Coordination Group 2003). This document augments the guidance provided by the *Technical Guide for Subbasin Planners* (Council 2001) for Oregon subbasins. One guideline in this document that had a major effect on the organization and content of this draft plan is the stipulation that Oregon subbasin planners use a standardized outline¹. Umatilla/Willow subbasin planners attempted to follow the outline provided by this document to the degree possible.

Using these technical guidance documents to direct the development of the plan, subbasin planners began their effort by incorporating all relevant information from the 2001 Draft Umatilla/Willow Creek Subbasin Summary into the current plan. The information was updated and corrected, as necessary, and supplemented with other existing sources of information. In addition, several new tools were made available to subbasin planners for fish and wildlife assessment. The Ecosystem Diagnosis and Treatment Model (EDT) was one of these tools and was used to identify limiting factors and prioritize geographic areas for restoration and protection for anadromous salmonid species. The Qualitative Habitat Analysis Model (QHA) was used to gather similar information for bull trout in the Umatilla River subbasin and redband trout in the Willow Creek subbasin. Terrestrial wildlife planners took advantage of a new wildlife database, the Interactive Biodiversity Information System (IBIS), to provide information on 1) wildlife species occurrences in the subbasin, 2) the ecological and conservation status of those species, 3) historic and current distribution of habitat types found in the subbasin, 4) general information about focal habitats, 5) information on the ownership and protection status for each habitat, and 6) functional redundancy analyses.

¹ This stipulation reads as follows on p. 9 of the *Oregon Specific Guidance* “Oregon subbasin plans are required to use this outline for at least the first two levels (i.e., [sic] level 2.1, 4.1) for all sections except Section 3, which should include the first three levels (i.e., [sic] 3.1.1, 3.2.1, etc.)”

Work on the inventory began with existing information found in the Draft Umatilla/Willow Subbasin Summary (2001) and other documents. This information was supplemented with information received in response to a questionnaire sent out to 35 stakeholder groups in the Umatilla/Willow subbasin in July 2003 (see Appendix F for a copy of questionnaire and responses). The questionnaire requested updated information on existing protections, plans, management programs, and restoration and conservation projects. Further information was provided by members of the Core Partnership on activities being conducted by their agencies. This information was used in conjunction with the assessment results to conduct a gap analysis, which was designed to determine whether existing projects have been addressing the limiting factors identified in the assessment and if those projects have been conducted in the appropriate geographic areas as identified in the assessment.

Subbasin planners worked together to create the management plan. The primary goal of the management plan is to define the environmental and biological vision, objectives, and strategies specific to fish and wildlife in the subbasin. The vision statement for the Umatilla/Willow subbasin was adopted by the Core Partnership on November 6, 2003 and was presented and approved at a public meeting on November 12, 2003. The biological objectives describe the physical and biological changes within the subbasin needed to achieve the vision and the strategies are the actions need to achieve the objectives. The objectives and strategies were driven by the vision for the subbasin, the current biological and ecological conditions, and the economic and social realities described in the assessment. When sufficient information existed, strategies were prioritized. When forming aquatic and wildlife biological objectives and strategies, subbasin planners worked to satisfy the criteria set forth by the Council (2001) in its *Technical Guide to Subbasin Planners* and to ensure consistency of the plan with the requirements of the Endangered Species Act and the Clean Water Act. A partial set of aquatic and terrestrial management goals and objectives was presented at a public meeting on May 6, 2004 and suggestions provided at that meeting were used to revise the objectives and strategies.

Subbasin planners made a major effort to clearly establish linkages between the different components of the subbasin plan. Particular attention was paid to ensuring that linkages between the strategies, the biological objectives, the subbasin vision, and the assessment were obvious. In addition, planners also worked to ensure that the plan was consistent with the Council's scientific principles and program strategies.

2.4.2 Challenges Encountered

Significant challenges were encountered in the development of this plan. These challenges included:

- Insufficient time to adequately develop some products, especially with regard to EDT modeling
- Insufficient time to evaluate the consequences of missing data and other problems related to EDT modeling
- Inaccuracy of some information found in databases, such as IBIS
- Subbasin planning products or services falling short of original expectations

- An abundance of unreferenced material or incorrectly referenced material in earlier subbasin documents
- Difficulties interpreting and following the outline provided for Oregon subbasins
- Difficulties in reconciling guidance that directed subbasin plans to be brief on one hand, but complete on the other

Finally, subbasin planners constantly encountered the dilemma between the need for quantitative data in developing solid management plans and the lack of quality data in many cases. Ultimately, subbasin planners attempted to avoid “estimating” or “quantifying” when insufficient good quality data were available. Many aspects of fisheries and wildlife management are controversial, which makes the use of scientifically defensible data particularly important. For example, sufficient data do not exist to quantify the effects of most human disturbance in the subbasin in historic times. When tools are available to estimate the magnitude of these effects (such as EDT), subbasin planners used them. However, in many cases this is not possible. Attempting to quantify with insufficient data defeats one of the most important goals of subbasin planning: to produce a scientifically defensible management plan.

2.4.3 Comments on Presentation

As directed by technical guidance documents, subbasin planners tried to make the plan readable to the layperson, although extensive citations are used in some sections. Measurements are recorded in English units because of the convention of reporting stream locations in river miles, the use of acres in the IBIS database, and the widespread use of the English system in many of the source documents for local data. Common animal and plant names used in the text follow the convention established by the organization with responsibility for standardizing common names for each taxon. For most taxa, common names are not capitalized. Bird common names are the notable exception; the American Ornithologists’ Union has determined that common names of birds are capitalized.

2.5 Process and Schedule for Revising/Updating the Plan

Once the draft Umatilla/Willow subbasin plan has been received by the Council on May 28, 2004, it will undergo an initial review by Council staff from May 29 through June 4, 2004 to determine if all the required components of the plan are included. On June 4, 2004, the plan will be sent to the Independent Scientific Review Panel (ISRP) and posted for public review on the Council’s website at <http://www.nwcouncil.org/>. At that point, three simultaneous processes will take place between June 4 and August 12, 2004. The three reviews will be: 1) a scientific review by an expanded ISRP, which will include presentations by the subbasin planners on July 21 and 22, 2004 in Pendleton, 2) an adoptability review by Council staff to determine the adequacy of the plan under the Northwest Power Act (NWPA), and 3) a general review by NOAA, BPA, USFW, the states, public, and others. The comment period ends on August 12, 2004. With additional funding available through BPA, local subbasin planners will begin editing and re-writing the plan to incorporate review comments from all contributors. These changes will be completed by November 1, 2004, when the Council staff will compile all plans into a draft Fish and Wildlife Program Amendment. On November 18, 2004, the Council will

propose the Draft Amendment of Subbasin Plans, with another public comment period occurring from November 10 to mid-December, 2004. The process will end during December 2004 and January 2005, when Council staff will meet again and adopt the plans.

If and when the Council adopts the Umatilla/Willow subbasin plan, the Core Partnership will coordinate efforts to assess the progress made in reaching the objectives of the plan and to use data obtained from research, monitoring, and evaluation activities to engage in adaptive management. Subbasin planners anticipate that these systematic reviews will occur every three years to allow sufficient time to collect data, obtain funding, and produce reports for the review process. The Core Partnership also plans to meet yearly in a more informal setting to share information about current and planned activities.

Literature Cited:

Council (Northwest Power Planning Council) (2001) *Technical Guide to Subbasin Planners*. Northwest Power Planning Council Document #2000-20, Portland, Oregon.
Oregon Subbasin Planning Coordination Group (2003) *Oregon Specific Guidance*. Revised version: September 15, 2003

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