

**Program Evaluation and Reporting Committee (PERC)
Portland, OR
Draft Meeting Notes
September 13, 2012**

Background

The Northwest Power and Conservation Council (Council) convened the Program Evaluation and Reporting Committee (PERC) to engage in a regional discussion of existing data management systems, tools, and processes. The mission of the PERC is to identify areas of improvement for communicating summary level information above high level indicators (HLI) that support the Council's evaluation and reporting of their F&W Program performance. The PERC is a committee of Council staff led by Council member Bill Booth.

As part of a trial assignment supported by the Council (see June 4, 2012 recommendations at <http://www.nwcouncil.org/fw/budget/2013/staff.pdf>), the PERC will review the Status of the Resource (SOTR), Pacific Northwest Aquatic Monitoring Partnership (PNAMP), StreamNet, and Northwest Habitat Institute (NHI) to confirm how these Bonneville funded projects support the Council's information needs. The PERC held a regional meeting on September 13, 2012, to receive input from fish and wildlife managers, involved entities, and interested parties concerning PNAMP and StreamNet, as well as receive an update from Coordinated Assessment and BPA's Draft Data Management Framework. A list of attendees, the meeting agenda, and materials presented during the meeting are available on the PERC website at <http://www.nwcouncil.org/fw/program/perc/>.

Discussion Summary

Introductions were made and opening remarks provided an opportunity to discuss the purpose of the meeting as well as concerns of the group. The PERC staff introduced the role of this meeting as a session to learn about the role of PNAMP and StreamNet in the larger process of data management. PNAMP and StreamNet representatives were requested to present on their program's contribution to data management activities that support the synthesis of high level summary information on (1) habitat improvement and protection for mainstem and tributaries, (2) species status, (3) harvest opportunities and contributing actions, and (4) recent accomplishments and emerging science and tools.

The meeting was designed to allow significant time for all attendees to discuss opportunities to streamline the management, synthesis and accessibility of information. The members were reminded of the F&W Program's review process next spring. Recommendations engendered from this review process beyond the scope of the PERC project may be offered during this Amendment process. Key discussion points not covered explicitly in the presentations are summarized below.

Pacific Northwest Anadromous Monitoring Partnership (PNAMP)

Jen Bayer presented on PNAMP. The group discussed the following topics during the session.

- Participation in PNAMP is voluntary but relies on regional collaboration to identify shared data needs. BPA funds 75% of PNAMP with the remaining funding coming from in-kind contributions (i.e. subject matter experts from partner organizations) and grants. Recent BPA funds have been used primarily for developing web tool resources. For example, Sitka Technology Group is a PNAMP sub-contractor working to integrate separate web tools (e.g. Pisces, cbfish.org) into a comprehensive data network. BPA funds are typically used for high priority projects that need to be accomplished in a relatively short time frame. In-kind contributions typically rely on “volunteer” time. In-kind resources are assigned to lower priority projects. For example, habitat data sharing is funded exclusively by in-kind contributions. Grant funding is sought for projects outside BPA’s scope. For example, PNAMP has co-contracted with Washington State’s Department of Ecology for the Integrated Status and Trends Monitoring (ISTM) project.
- Participants discussed PNAMP’s evolution of scope and the budget growth since its genesis. PNAMP began as a forum for regional coordination on monitoring methods and has expanded to address topics such as data standardization and management. PNAMP members attributed PNAMP expansion to the dissolution of other data management entities (e.g. NED, CBFWA Data Management).
- The group acknowledged improved data sharability resulting from PNAMP monitoring coordination. The ISTM project, for example, improves data coordination, efficiency, and effectiveness between regional data sets. However, participants recognized a gap remains in data coordination until all regional Fish and Wildlife Program projects incorporate PNAMP tools (e.g. consistent data collection and reporting methods). PNAMP is closing this gap by soliciting state and tribal input when develop monitoring tools. Meeting participants suggested the PERC recommendations support regional integration of PNAMP tools.
- The PERC staff inquired about PNAMP prioritization of projects utilizing BPA funds versus in-kind contributions. Some members suggested PNAMP projects could better align with existing BPA needs. PNAMP representatives clarified that the Steering Committee solicits regional input when allocating BPA funds to high-priority projects. BPA reviews the Steering Committee recommendations before making final funding decisions.
- Participants identified the evolution of scientific questions and data skill sets requiring ongoing communication of data needs. The PERC staff requested a breakdown of PNAMP cost-sharing to help identify use of BPA funds for priority projects. PNAMP representatives conveyed the difficulty of tracking partner in-kind contributions as they

are primarily related to staff time from partner organizations. The PERC staff requested additional information concerning PNAMP's allocation of BPA funds, past accomplishments, cost-sharing among partners, and activities yet to be completed that will require continued funding.

StreamNet

Bruce Schmidt presented on StreamNet. The following items were addressed during the discussion.

- The PERC staff inquired about the recipients of BPA funds for incorporating BPA funded project data into StreamNet. StreamNet representatives clarified that PSMFC retains 10% of BPA funds for StreamNet staff. Remaining funds are distributed to five subcontractors (i.e. ODFW, WDFW, IDFG, MFWP, and USFW) to acquire data stored in their databases. The states are not mandated to share their collected data; BPA resource funding ensures all Columbia River Basin data is compiled within StreamNet.
- BPA representatives questioned whether or not incorporation of data on projects outside the Columbia River Basin (e.g. Coastal Coho, the Puget Sound) interfered with ensuring that BPA funded data from within the Columbia River Basin is incorporated in a timely manner. For example, ESA population assessments are BPA funded projects three years behind on data submission. A representative from ODFW clarified that NOAA funds the Coastal Coho project and that employees separate time for BPA funded efforts. It was further explained that the data from outside the Columbia River Basin gets incorporated automatically as part of the data transfer from the state database to StreamNet. StreamNet requested that BPA provide guidance for prioritizing data collection.
- Between 40 and 60 BPA funded data collection projects do not submit data to StreamNet. The cause for this gap requires further exploration but could relate to gaps in entries into the Pisces/Taurus systems. The data gaps could also relate to data collection in emerging fields that are not currently recognized by StreamNet. The group suggested the PERC recommendations address data collection gaps for BPA funded projects.
- StreamNet representatives identified the need for ongoing policy-level guidance from the Council and BPA. The StreamNet Steering Committee provides only technical support. A possible topic for PERC recommendations is a permanent forum addressing regional data needs and priorities.

BPA: A Framework for Fish and Wildlife Program Data Management

Russell Scranton presented on BPA's Draft Management Framework (BPA Framework).

- The BPA Framework is an action plan for data management. The group identified connections between the BPA Framework, StreamNet, and PNAMP data collection and management. Members of the PERC staff identified the opportunity to incorporate the BPA Framework into the Fish and Wildlife Amendment process next spring.

Coordinated Assessments

Tom Iverson presented to the group on the Coordinated Assessments project.

- Coordinated Assessments was a pilot project that focused on anadromous fish population status to meet NOAA data needs. Members of the group acknowledged the success of Coordinated Assessments within the field of data management and anadromous fish monitoring. A key point of the success of Coordinated Assessments was the funding of data technicians to facilitate timely identification and transfer of data among regional databases.
- The group supported regional cooperation through the expansion of Coordinated Assessments or similar projects. However, members of the group were concerned over the cost associated with continued funding for data technicians. It was suggested that further efforts utilize StreamNet data stewards. StreamNet representatives clarified that the current StreamNet scope of work fully occupies the efforts of current data stewards. CBFWA representatives suggested that the initial Coordinated Assessments efforts established a framework for data coordination, and expansion would likely require fewer data technicians. Additionally, integrating data exchange templates (DETs) could reduce the role for data technicians within state and tribal entities.
- The topic of mining old data was raised, but it was acknowledged that old data would be converted on an as-needed basis. The demand for historic data was viewed as less significant than the regional coordination of data moving forward.

Path Forward

Participants are invited to participate in the October 3rd Fish and Wildlife Committee conference call hosted at the Council offices in Portland, OR. During this meeting, the PERC staff will discuss recommendations and receive public input. Final recommendations will be developed after the October 3rd meeting and presented to the Council during the October 10th meeting in Whitefish, MT.