

Summary of notes from the Lower Basin Project Focus Team (PFT) meeting 3/27/08

Notes taken by: Rebecca Stevens- Coeur d'Alene Tribe. Introductions started the meeting and a presentation followed.

Soil Survey of the Coeur d'Alene River Area, Kootenai County- USDA NRCS-Soil Survey Division- Allyson Young Soil Survey Project Leader.

- Allyson provided a PowerPoint presentation on the recent work she has been conducting along the Coeur d'Alene River under the auspices of the National Cooperative Soil Survey to update the Soil Resource Inventory.
- The impetus of the Coeur d'Alene River Soil Survey Update Project was initiated by the Kootenai-Shoshone Soil and Water Conservation District and NRCS Conservationists/Planners to update the soils for conservation programs/technical support.
- Allyson defined a Slickens soil type which in the past has been used to identify soils along the Coeur d'Alene River. Slickens: "...accumulations of fine-textured material, such as that separated in placer mine and ore mill operations. Slickens are usually confined in specially constructed basins." Slickens is a miscellaneous land type (not a soil) with very limited soil properties or interpretations for land management/planning purposes.
- The extent of the soil survey will be ~20,000 (+/- 5,000) acres from Cataldo to Harrison of which ~13,500 acres named soils (~17% Slickens) and 6,500 acres are water.
- Allyson will: 1) gather existing data, 2) re-characterize the influence of mine waste on the floodplain soils in phases, 3) update the soil characterization to current taxonomic standards, 4) update soil map delineations in the digital environment, 5) make a join between the Coeur d'Alene River and St. Joe Soil survey, 6) populate the National Soil Information System (NASIS), 7) and the end product will be a digital soil survey which will be available on the web at <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/>. She will provide an update to the PFT after her work is completed in the summer or fall 2009. Allyson provided brochures on how to navigate the Web Soil Survey as well as electronic copies of the Kootenai County Soil surveys that were completed in 1981. In an email dated 6/19/08, Rogers Hardy requested that it be recorded in these notes that he feels it is impossible to "re-characterize mine waste influences on the floodplain" merely by visual inspection only. He said there needs to be lab work back-up.

-Discussion followed regarding whether the NRCS will be conducting extensive metal laden sediment sampling and the answer was "No" but that there would be some sampling. Some PFT members questioned what "some sampling" means. Testing of metal laden sediment is not in the scope of work for the Coeur d'Alene River soil re-classification purposes.

Other agenda items

Review list of completed CWA project summaries

-The group then reviewed the list of completed CWA projects with executive summaries that Terry Harwood provided. There was an overall agreement that the lay-out of the summary looks good however, Rebecca will follow up with Terry regarding whether the reports need the contract name and if Terry can insert the dates on the projects. The group also feels that the summary can be posted on the website but not necessarily the Lower Basin PFT link. The group suggested working closely with the Communications PFT on anything that gets posted to the web.

Collection of electronic copies of completed CWA projects

-There are some final CWA project reports that are not in electronic format. Rebecca will contact the TLG representative that sponsored those projects and request electronic forms to be sent to Terry Harwood. It was suggested that in order to avoid sub-contractors having to support the cost of scanning (if the only final copy is in hard copy format) that the sponsoring agency scan and save the documents electronically. The group also suggested that any final CWA projects be provided in electronic format in order to prevent having to go back and scan in the future.

Eco-Planning PowerPoint review (provided by Bill Adams, EPA)

-Bill Adams presented an Ecological Planning PowerPoint at the May 14, 2008 BEIPC meeting and was gracious to let Rebecca utilize it for this Lower Basin PFT meeting. Rebecca put up on the screen only those slides that pertained to Lower Basin Ecological data gaps and need as well as prioritization.

-There was some discussion regarding sediment sampling at BEMP stations and it was noted that sampling is scheduled for 2009 and CH2MHill is also conducting some sampling (no specific sites provided).

-The group discussed proposing to use remaining CWA funds to conduct sampling after the water recedes.

-The group then reviewed The ROD for OU-3 Section 8.2 ECOLOGICAL where it states that the Remedial action objectives (RAOs) are designed to:

- Return the rivers and tributaries to conditions that will fully support healthy fish and other aquatic receptors, with an emphasis on native species, including sensitive native fish such as the westslope cutthroat trout and the bull trout (listed as “threatened” under the ESA).
- Return the wetland, lake, riparian, riverine, and upland areas to conditions protective of waterfowl, migratory birds, and other plants and animals that live in these areas.

-Discussion followed regarding O&M on project sites into perpetuity, the visual assessment that river and streambanks could be stabilized with more vegetation, and whether the riverbeds contribute more Pb into the system or riverbanks contribute more. There were thoughts about requesting USGS back into the area to justify this. PFT members also had a discussion regarding the fact that the Dudley Reach was identified as an area to be dredged due to the fact that it is a natural sink for sediments after high water events. Rogers said that he would like to see CWA funds spent on just how much bed sediment is really contributing to floodplain contamination during a flood event, now is the perfect time.

Other Project ideas

-PFT members discussed sampling in order to identify upstream Pb sources besides that of which are already being sampled at BEMP stations.

-DEQ and KSSWCD staff bounced around the idea that there is a need for bank pin placement along the Coeur d'Alene River in order to get new numbers of annual soil loss. They also suggested some sampling at the same time they placed bank pins. They said that they would go back and look at the USGS and other data and compare with assumptions.

-PFT members expressed some concerns about the 'Trail of the Coeur d'Alene's' and Rebecca reported that UPRR is responsible for the maintenance of the barrier (asphalt, vegetated, and gravel) in perpetuity. Currently and their subcontractor has completed their assessment of damage and is moving forward with repairs.