

**Grande Ronde Model Watershed
Board of Directors' Meeting
February 26, 2008 – 6:30 pm
Elgin Community Center in Elgin**

Approval of Minutes and Agenda:

Mike Hayward brought the meeting to order shortly after 6:30 p.m. With such a great turn out, introductions followed. Norm Cimon moved to approve the January 22, 2008, meeting minutes; Steve McClure seconded, and the motion carried. The proposed February 26, 2008, meeting agenda was approved. (attachments to file)

Calendar and Announcements:

A calendar for the rest of March and April was provided (attachment to file). Mike Hayward indicated that the next Recovery Planning meeting will be held on April 8, 2008, at 1:00 p.m. at the GRMW office.

Old Business:

BiOp Discussion:

Bill Maslen, Director of Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) Fish & Wildlife Program, gave a power point presentation on the BiOp (Biological Opinion) and BPA's obligations laid out in the BiOp (attachment to file). He went over the BiOp history and the BiOp priorities for habitat actions in the Grande Ronde. The final BiOp is due May 5, 2008. BPA is expected to reach their final decision on their responsibilities within three to four weeks after the final BiOp is in. BPA is unsure when and what the Judge will do once the final is in. Judge Redden may convene a scientific review panel to look over the BiOp.

The areas of emphasis for tributary mitigation identified in the BiOp process include the Methow, Entiat, Wenatchee, and Okanogan subbasins, the Columbia Estuary, Grande Ronde and Imnaha subbasins (with emphasis on actions that benefit Snake River Spring/Summer Chinook in the Catherine Creek and Upper Grande Ronde), Tucannon subbasin, and areas of the Salmon and Clearwater subbasins. GRMW and partners will be working on filling in the habitat quality improvement gaps in the Catherine Creek and Upper Grande Ronde areas. BPA's decision on the current budgets for GRMW is: expense funds FY07 - \$1,186,737; FY08 - \$1,660,281; and FY09 - \$2,105,529. The capital funds will be FY07 - \$0; FY08 - \$304,359; and FY09 - \$1,211,641. The \$1,186,737 figure is the base funding recommended in the Northwest Power and Conservation Council FY 07-09 Solicitation process. Funds above that annual recommendation were added by BPA in response to the BiOp process.

Chris Furey, BPA, indicated that GRMW staff and their partners involved in projects listed in Table 4 for the BiOp need to schedule a meeting soon and work on identifying specific projects to address the actions identified in Table 4. These projects will need to be implemented to the extent it is possible. Jeff Oveson will schedule the meeting with partners and Board members. Board members that want to be involved in this process are Norm Cimon, Allen Childs, Steve McClure, and Tim Bailey. Jeff will provide an overview of projects identified in Table 4 at the March Board meeting. The GRMW Board and Technical Committee's role is to continue doing

business as they have; to provide technical review; and be the coordinating body in the BiOp process for the Grande Ronde Basin.

Project Proposal Review:

The four project proposals (listed below), one budget sheet for the Deer Creek Project, and additional information from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board's (OWEB's) Regional Review Team on three of the projects were provided to the Board prior to the meeting (attachments to file). These five project proposals are being submitted for BPA funds. Lyle Kuchenbecker led the discussion on the project proposals. Also provided were written comments from GRMW Board members, Anna Cavinato and Pat Wortman (attachments to file). Anna sent her comments in an email, while Pat provided his project rankings to Jeff, who recorded and submitted them.

La Grande Ranger District (LGRD) Project Proposal Review:

These two project proposals were reviewed and discussed at the planning session last December. At that time the Board did not recommend these projects for BPA funding. Both project proposals needed more detailed information. These proposals were revised before being mailed to the Board.

Fly Creek Stream Restoration Project Phase II:

The revised proposal included the detailed information that was requested to be included in the proposal, including a more complete the monitoring plan, description of the existing conditions and a more realistic budget. The budget request now is \$45,700.00 for the helicopter tree transport. GRMW Staff expressed concern with the scheduling of the project. The scheduled actions for instream work runs well beyond the in-water work window, July 1-31. Completion of the work depends on an extension of the work window which is not a certainty. Tim Bailey stated that in-water extensions are normally granted when work begins during the in-water window but cannot be completed without extending the window. Kurt Wiedenmann stated that part of the scheduling issues was that Mark Gomez took another position within the Forest Service and there is another person coming in to take his place over the next couple of months. He indicated that Mark will be there to help with the helicopter and the implementation of the project and that they intended to complete the project in 2008. GRMW staff recommends funding the project since there is more flexibility with BPA funds now with the scheduling of other projects between 2008 and 2009. After discussion, Bruce Eddy moved to approve this project proposal for the requested amount of \$46,606.00, Allen Childs seconded; and the motion carried.

Upper Grande Ronde Watershed Enhancement & Protection Project 2008:

The revised proposal had more detailed information on each trough, pond, or spring site but still lacked responses to several items of concern identified by the Technical Committee. GRMW staff deferred making a funding recommendation pending the Board discussion and input from BPA. Board members shared their comments on the project. BPA folks indicated that BPA takes ownership in projects that have credible measurable results and that they look at the limiting factors that are supposed to be addressed by specific actions and projects. Mr. Maslen also spoke briefly about adhering to "in lieu" spending limitations related to one federal agency funding work that is the responsibility of another federal agency, acknowledging that it does happen, but

is still not technically within the limits of the in lieu spending regulations. Board response to the new proposal was mixed. No one made a motion to fund the project.

GRMW Project Proposal Review:

Board members previously reviewed and approved the Deer Creek project for partial funding but have not previously reviewed the Dry Creek and Camp 9 projects. All three projects were submitted to OWEB for funding during OWEB's October 2007 solicitation process and were approved but fell short of the funding cutoff line. The OWEB Regional Review Team comments were provided (attachments to file).

2008 Deer Creek Culvert Replacement:

The project objective is to improve fish passage by replacing an arch and removing a log weir which will open up 2.5 miles of habitat for juvenile steelhead trout and 5.0 miles of habitat for juvenile and sub-adult bull trout. The project is being jointly sponsored by GRMW and the Eagle Cap Ranger District. The Eagle Cap Ranger District will administer the project. Coby Menton went over the new revised budget sheet dated 2/21/08 (attachment to file). Norm Cimon moved to approve the project proposal for the requested amount of \$169,659.00, Bruce Eddy seconded; and the motion carried.

Dry Creek Fish Passage:

The project objectives are restore steelhead passage to the headwaters of Dry Creek by removing asphalt, rock and logs placed many years ago to maintain an irrigation point of diversion. The channel will be re-graded; four grade control cross vanes and two rootwad revetments will be installed. A letter of support for funding was mailed to the Board with the proposal from the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife (ODFW) (attachment to file). Bruce Eddy moved to approve the project proposal for the requested \$49,172.00, Daryl Hawes seconded; and the motion carried.

Camp 9 Ranch/Mud Creek Riparian Enhancement:

The project objectives are to protect riparian areas and control non-native weeds along 7 miles of Mud and Buck Creeks (tribs to L. Grande Ronde) on private land. The landowner proposes to fence the riparian area to exclude livestock, conduct weed control management activities and reseed with native grasses. Jeff Oveson went over this project. He indicated that Oregon Trout Streambank Pilot Program may fund this project. He should know if they will be funding the project in a couple of weeks. The landowner is contributing over 50% towards the project. Bruce Eddy moved to approve the \$54,267.00 only if the Oregon Trout funds do not come through, Norm Cimon seconded; and the motion carried.

New Business:

La Grande Ranger District Roads Decommissioning:

Kurt Wiedenmann, La Grande Ranger District Ranger, presented a preliminary proposal on the Upper Grande Ronde Road Decommissioning Project on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest (WWNF). The WWNF has identified over 60 miles of road to be decommissioned in the Meadow Creek Watershed of the Upper Grande Ronde River Basin. The Forest is proposing to decommission 26.38 miles of road in 2008 and is soliciting the Board's interest in supporting the

activities. The Forest would request \$187,328.00 in BPA funds for decommissioning these roads. The Forest would provide a 30% cost share of \$80,283 towards the total project cost of \$267,611.00. A handout was provided (attachment to file).

Kurt had previously talked to Jeff about bringing the proposal to the GRMW's Technical Committee and Board. Kurt will be working with Steve McClure and Colleen MacLeod, UC Commissioners, during the month of March. He would like to bring this proposal back to GRMW Board at their March or April Board meeting. Bruce Eddy asked "why is this proposal coming now to the Board between the project solicitation processes?" Mike Hayward asked "what is the urgency of getting this proposal to the Board in March or April?" Kurt stated that this is a great opportunity because the funds are available now. Paul Boehne, La Grande Ranger District, indicated that the funds are appropriated Legacy Road Funds and that these funds have to be spent by the end of FY '08 (September 30, 2008). Lyle Kuchenbecker asked for clarification as to whether "spent" meant "obligated" because as he understood appropriated funding, obligating them by the end of a fiscal year was essentially the same as spending them. Paul Boehne replied that in this case Legacy Roads Funds had to be "put to the ground" by end of FY'08, not just obligated. Larry Cribbs stated that Union County has taken a position on the Access and Travel Management Plan (no further road closures); he asked if these roads fell under the provisions of the Access and Travel Management Plan. Kurt stated that they potentially could. Norm Cimon motioned to have the Board revisit this after the Forest Service has worked with Union County and the GRMW Staff, considering the provisions already discussed; Joe McCormack seconded, and the motion carried with one no vote from Larry Cribbs.

Staff Report/Project Report:

A written report was provided (attachment to file). An update on the Spring/Summer Chinook Salmon and Steelhead Recovery Planning Oregon Portion of the Snake River was provided (attachment to file).

Next Meeting:

The next Board meeting will be held on March 25, 2008, at the Wallowa Community Center in Wallowa at 6:30 p.m. If you have any questions or comments, please call (541) 663-0570 or write GRMW, 1114 "J" Avenue, La Grande, OR 97850. To reach us on our website, go to <http://www.grmw.org>. The mission of the Board of Directors' of the Grande Ronde Model Watershed is "to develop and oversee the implementation, maintenance, and monitoring of coordinated resource management that will enhance the natural resources of the Grande Ronde River Basin. Meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Meeting Attendance:

Board Members and Alternates: Mike Hayward, Steve McClure, Bruce Eddy, Norm Cimon, Ted Taylor, Joe McCormack, Daryl Hawes, Larry Cribbs, Allen Childs, Bill Howell and Tim Bailey.

Others: Bill Maslen (BPA), Tracy Hauser (BPA), Chris Furey (BPA), Timmie Mandish (BPA), Kathleen Cathey (Sen. Wyden's Office), Barbara Van Alstine (USFS), Jeff Yanke (ODFW), Paul Boehne (USFS), Kurt Wiedenmann (USFS), Debby Holland (USFS), Joe Spinzola (BOR), Darrell Dyke (BOR), Andy Perry and Chas Hutchins (Anderson Perry).

Staff: Jeff Oveson, Coby Menton, Lyle Kuchenbecker and Mary Estes.