

## Meeting Notes

### Lost River and Shortnose Sucker Recovery Plan Recovery Implementation Committee (RIC) #1

**Klamath Falls Fish and Wildlife Office  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
1936 California Ave.  
Klamath Falls, OR**

**October 14, 2008  
8:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.**

RIC committee present: Glen Barrett, Lisa Brown, Richard Ford, Mark Hampton, Heather Hendrixson, Eric Janney, Steve Kirk, Chris Leeseberg (alternate), Dave Mauser, Terry Morton, Roger Nicholson, Linda Prendergast, Shannon Peterson, Rob Roninger, Roger Smith, Dave Solem, Belinda Stewart (alternate), Torrey Tyler, Anita Ward, TJ Woodley

RIC committee absent: Jim Carpenter, Will Hatcher, Andrea Rabe, Marshall Staunton, Theresa Wright, Marty Yamagiwa

Others present: Laurie Sada (USFWS), Mark Buettner (USFWS), Matt Baun (USFWS), Nolan Banish (USFWS), Don Sada (DRI), Saxon Sharpe (DRI), Sandra Davis (ECO Resource Group), Dave Sale (ECO Resource Group)

#### **Welcome and Introduction**

Dave Sale introduced Laurie Sada, Acting Field Supervisor for the Klamath Falls Fish and Wildlife Office. Laurie welcomed the Recovery Implementation Committee and thanked the group for their interest and involvement. She told the group that she wanted the Recovery Plan process to be transparent and informed, and that RIC input will be valuable during this process.

The USFWS is responsible for the content of the Recovery Plan; it is not a group or multi-agency document. It is a USFWS document even though the compilation of it is contracted to the Desert Research Institute (DRI). USFWS upper management makes the final decision on document approval.

Laurie introduced the rest of the team: Mark Buettner (USFWS), Dave Sale and Sandra Davis (Eco Resource Group), meeting facilitators, and Don Sada and Saxon Sharpe, Desert Research Institute. Don will be writing the plan and Saxon is assisting Don.

As part of the introduction process, participants were asked to turn to the person beside them, introduce themselves and discuss their greatest hope for the project, before introducing that person to the group. Most of the answers fell into three categories: move toward recovery and delisting;

## **Welcome and Introduction**

clearly define measurable goals for delisting criteria; and balance water use and recovery needs.

Hopes included:

- learning more about the Recovery Plan and process
- alleviating the burden of recovery and water use
- achieving an equitable and fair balance between recovery and water
- balancing species recovery with water deliveries
- using the best science in the recovery plan process
- using realistic goals and common sense in the process
- finding a common cause
- incorporating total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) into the Recovery Plan
- delisting the species
- finding a fair and balanced approach
- achieving prioritized, effective, measurable, quantitative, transparent goals
- defining recovery
- a plan that is easy to implement
- good and efficient communication among all parties

The group agreed to follow four ground rules for their meetings.

- It is the responsibility of each individual as well as the group to keep the meeting on track and focused.
- Practice active listening with one person speaking at a time.
- Speak as you would like to be spoken to.
- Don't criticize the motivation or intent of others; take all comments at face value.

## **RIC Interview Summary**

Dave explained that 20 of 23 RIC members had participated in confidential interviews so that we could better understand their interests and perspectives regarding the sucker recovery planning process. The interviews showed a diversity of opinion and depth of experience.

The following questions were asked:

1. What is your interest in the Recovery Plan?
2. What is your level of understanding or experience with the recovery planning process?
3. How can your organization assist with implementation?
4. What do you think will be the controversial aspects of the Recovery Plan?
5. What will allow the plan to be successful?
6. Is there anything else you would like to add?

The interests of the participants varied, but virtually all participants were

interested in getting the suckers delisted, recovered, or ensuring their long-term survival. Interview responses paralleled the hopes expressed in the introduction section of this meeting (above). For a summary of the interview comments go to Stakeholder Meeting Notes and click on Klamath Basin RIC Interview Summary 10-10-08.

**Briefing on the recovery plan process**

As part of his introduction to the recovery planning process, Don noted that he is an aquatic biologist with over 25 years' experience in aquatic systems and has written a number of recovery plans for more than 30 species. He went on to tell RIC members that the information presented today will help the RIC to better understand the recovery plan and scientific process. He asked that all RIC members attend each meeting and that they avoid sending alternates, if at all possible. This is because each meeting will cover a lot of ground so everyone will need to be up to speed at the meetings to maximize their participation. Don invited RIC members to attend the public meeting the following day.

DRI was contracted to update the 1993 Recovery Plan for the Lost River and shortnose sucker. New data on suckers exists that can be included in the plan and criteria will be better defined. The public was not included during the development of last plan so USFWS wants to be sure to include public input in this update. The draft plan should be completed by fall 2009. The RIC will know what the criteria are and what the plan contains early on, before the draft is distributed for review.

Recovery plans are guidance and not regulatory documents, such as an Environmental Impact Statement. Recovery Plans are outreach documents that describe why a species was listed and the goals, objectives, criteria, and strategy for recovery and removal from the list of endangered species. A Recovery Plan always includes certain chapters. The background section of a recovery plan must adequately build the case for recovery criteria and the necessary recovery actions. Desert Research Institute will do all the writing for the draft plan, but will rely heavily on the Recovery Team to provide input and review the draft document. The draft Lost River and Shortnose Sucker Recovery Plan will also receive reviews by scientific peers, the RIC, and the public. Don Sada presented a slide show on how a recovery plan is organized and what it contains. (To view the slide presentation, go to the Sucker Recovery Team link and click on Recovery Plan Process PowerPoint).

The goal of the recovery process for a given species is to create conditions such that the species is no longer endangered or threatened and can be delisted. A recovery plan develops appropriate criteria and provides technical guidance to work toward recovering populations and making the species secure.

Recovery plans are available on the USFWS web site:  
<http://www.fws.gov/endangered/recovery/index.html#plans>  
Don encouraged the RIC to look through some of them.

Recovery plans are prepared for each threatened or endangered species. They outline criteria for delisting that include a description of demographic characteristics that must be achieved and reduction of threats that are attributed to the five listing factors that were considered during the listing process. These factors are:

1. Loss of habitat
2. Overutilization
3. Disease or predation
4. Inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms
5. Other natural or manmade factors

Recovery Teams provide technical guidance to develop the recovery plan, which includes the following elements that are the foundation of the plan:

1. Recovery Strategy
2. Recovery Units (if appropriate)
3. Recovery Goal
4. Recovery Objectives
5. Recovery Criteria
6. Recovery Action Outline
7. Implementation Schedule

ESA mandated criteria in Sec. 4(f)(1)(B) states “to the maximum extent practicable ... incorporate in each plan ...objective, measurable criteria which, when met, would result in a determination ... that the species be removed from the list”. The recovery criteria are specific values (or measures) for the parameters, needed to determine that a species has achieved its down-listing or delisting objectives. These may include demographic, genetic, or trend measures or threat reduction or elimination measures. Designating specific, quantifiable recovery criteria was a concern expressed by stakeholders in the Klamath Basin to set an accepted quantifiable end-goal for recovery.

Once the Recovery Actions (tasks) are determined, concise, action-oriented, and fundable recovery actions explicitly related to threats identified in the background section of the plan are delineated. These are specific activities that need to be completed before the species can be delisted. These activities must be related to the five listing factors. An implementation schedule which estimates costs for different activities, prioritizes recovery actions, allows tracking of accomplishments, identifies

(without compelling or requiring) responsible parties, and establishes an initial timeframe for recovery actions is also required.

**Committee  
Discussion and  
Questions about  
the Recovery Plan**

After Don went through his presentation on the recovery planning process, the group had comments and questions related to:

- Credit (defined by some in group as more flexibility to share resources) for actions already taken. As an example, flexibility in water management operations (such as lake level) would provide flexibility for agriculture. Previous actions should be recognized along with an understanding of the effectiveness of those actions in helping recovery efforts. Even if quantitative measurements of population increase were not available, it could be stated that a certain project has the potential to increase the population. It was hoped that the plan will address issues of flexibility and have flexibility in how to achieve recovery criteria. Listing previous restoration activities in the Appendix of the recovery plan was suggested. The focus of the plan must be on fish, however.
- The concepts of time issues and baseline. Several members of the group wanted to know what the baseline was from which we were measuring successful recovery. It is important to note that Recovery Planning under section 4 of the ESA does not address "baseline." This is a term that relates to consultation under section 7 of the ESA and it defines past actions and what the current conditions for the species are so that the affects of a proposed project can be analyzed against the baseline. For recovery, the goal is to meet the established recovery criteria. Previous projects/activities may already have contributed to recovery of the fish and, so, have contributed to meeting the recovery criteria.
- Addressing uncertainty. It is difficult to link population response to a specific restoration action. How will regulations for salmon affect the recovery plan? Might other populations of fish be useful to the process (i.e., Jenny Creek suckers).
- Addressing removal of threats (i.e., Chiloquin Dam) and how removal will affect recovery. Address feedback loops between actions to remove threats and recovery.
- Use of "old" information in the new plan (previous hypotheses, rewriting info from previous plan background). A new plan with updated information will be written.
- Addressing the "bar" (standard for recovery) and how flexibility can/will be built into plan. Bar for listing is lower than bar for delisting. Want flexibility in how to get to recovery criteria.
- What will the recovery action prioritization process be, and how will the RIC be involved? USFWS will bring recovery criteria (including why some criteria were not chosen) to the RIC along

with an explanation as to why these criteria were chosen. RIC will have information before the meeting. The plan will emphasize getting the biggest bang for the buck.

- Using past projects to prioritize future projects. Is there enough information on past projects to do this? Funding is limited/challenged, so monitoring cannot occur everywhere, for example.
- Relationship of the Recovery Team and the RIC. The Recovery Team's charge is to determine what a healthy population looks like in terms of habitat and quality. The RIC provides a reality check; increases vigorous thinking; provides input into the Plan to achieve a better product with alternative ways to do things; fosters partnering opportunities; informs a broader public; identifies what water management processes exist in the private sector that could be helpful; and helps with plan implementation.
- Coordination of various efforts among agencies. The Lost River and Shortnose Sucker Recovery Plan should dovetail with the Strategic Habitat Conservation Plan.
- Forming a working group of RIC members to assist in discussing ongoing efforts and priorities, coordination, and input could provide long-term benefit.

**Goal and Charge/Objectives for the RIC**

Sandra discussed goals and objectives. She pointed out that we can be flexible about how the team accomplishes its goals and objectives and that it is important to recognize that this is not a consensus process.

A goal statement, as well as objectives for the RIC were discussed and agreed upon by the group.

**GOAL**

The Recovery Implementation Team (RIC) is a group of stakeholders with various interests in the revision of the Lost River and Shortnose Sucker Recovery Plan (Plan). The goal of the RIC is to provide stakeholder and community input, knowledge, and perspective to the Lost River and Shortnose Sucker Recovery Team, USFWS, and the project contractors during the development of the revised Recovery Plan.

**OBJECTIVES**

1. Through a series of four RIC meetings between October 2008 and October 2009, RIC members will be informed of the process, requirements, science and strategy related to the revision of the Plan, and will provide input, knowledge and perspective to the Recovery Team on various elements of the Plan.
2. During the development of the revised Recovery Plan, RIC members

will assist the Recovery Team, USFWS, and the project contractors in acting as a conduit to other members of their respective groups or communities regarding the Plan.

RIC members commented that USFWS providing information to the RIC is key. RIC members expressed that they want to know what comments, concerns, and recovery actions were discussed and if some were not used, why.

The method for USFWS to reply and/or provide feedback regarding the Plan comments received by the RIC needs to be defined.

The RIC needs to inform USFWS what topics they would like to hear about at future meetings. USFWS needs to inform the RIC about the outcomes of the Recovery Team meetings.

RIC members want presentations at their meetings similar to those given at the previous Recovery Team meeting.

RIC members are responsible for reviewing documents and material posted to web site or sent to the committee via mail or email.

A discussion was held about how the RIC fits into review process of the Draft Plan and the participation of other stakeholders in that process, i.e., Oregon on Recovery Team.

USFWS will work with the State of Oregon to define the state's role during the review and comment period.

**Schedule and Next Steps**

The next RIC meeting will be held in January 2009. Criteria will be a main point of discussion. Information relating to this meeting will be posted on the USFWS website at least 2 weeks prior to the meeting.

The next meeting will start at 8:30, no earlier. RIC members should plan for a full-day meeting. At the end of the January meeting, we will discuss when to have the next meeting. The next meetings are scheduled for March 2009 (Recovery Tasks) and October 2009 (Prioritization, Implementation, Schedule).

**Administrative Matters**

Mark Buettner, (541) 885-2520, is the point of contact for the RIC.

It was made clear that the RIC is not an advisory committee and that the Recovery Plan process is exempt from FACA (also see Goals and Objectives).

RIC members agreed not to advertise the RIC meetings in the newspaper. However, notice of the meetings will be posted on the USFWS website

and people will be able to find out about the meetings through conversations with RIC members, as well as information provided in RIC members' (newsletters, emails). What's more, attendance at the meetings is open, so anyone wanting to attend a meeting will not be excluded. Meeting protocols will govern, as RIC members feel it is important for them to focus on the sharing of information and to build common knowledge and understanding, which requires concentrated deliberation.