



# United States Department of the Interior

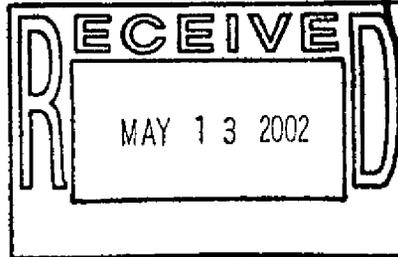
## BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Oregon State Office  
P.O. Box 2965  
Portland, Oregon 97208

IN REPLY REFER TO:  
6840 (OR-930)

APR 25 2002

Robert Lohn  
Regional Administrator  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
7600 Sandpoint Way, N.E.  
Bin C15700, Building 1  
Seattle, WA 98115



Dear Mr. Lohn:

Enclosed is the Bureau of Land Management progress report on implementation of the Federal Columbia River Power System Biological Opinion and the Basinwide Salmon Recovery Strategy. Since this document was prepared in a short time, I anticipate improvements in future years both in the completeness of our report and in the consistency of reporting formats between the federal agencies. In particular, I look forward to working with your agency over the coming year to develop performance measures for these activities in the Columbia Basin. Performance measures would serve both to focus our implementation efforts and to provide continuity of reporting across the federal agencies.

Sincerely,

*EY* Elaine Y. Zielinski  
State Director

Enclosure (as stated)

cc: Anne Badgley, Regional Director, Fish & Wildlife Service

## **Basinwide Salmon Recovery Strategy Measures Identified for BLM Report on Progress, April 2002**

Salmonid species found on land managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in the Columbia River Basin include bull trout, several species of cutthroat trout, rainbow trout, redband trout, steelhead, and coho, chinook, sockeye, and chum salmon. Five of these species are on the Endangered Species Act list in all or portions of their distribution.

### **Changes in Standards and Practices**

In response to the listing of salmonids in the Columbia Basin, numerous changes have been made over the last decade in standards and practices on BLM lands that directly benefit fish. Some of these changes involve major revisions in our Resource Management Plans that are specifically designed to improve salmonid habitat. Others are changes in procedures to ensure that the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) have continued involvement in activities and decisions that might affect listed fish. Still other changes have resulted from the strong agency emphasis on partnerships and collaboration with other land owners and managers in the basin.

### **Major Protection Strategies**

The most significant changes in standards leading to improvements in fish habitat include PACFISH and the BLM Bull Trout Strategy, the Northwest Forest Plan, and our Healthy Rangeland Standards. These major strategies have hundreds of standards and guidelines between them that are targeted at improving salmonid habitat. All BLM-administered lands with listed salmonids have protections provided under at least one of these strategies, and the benefits of these strategies continue to accrue each year they are in place. The strategies are briefly described below:

**PACFISH and the BLM Bull Trout Strategy** - In 1995, BLM supplemented its Resource Management Plans to implement PACFISH, an interim strategy designed to protect salmonid habitat in the Columbia Basin. Several months later, interim direction and the guidelines of the INFISH strategy were instituted for bull trout. Taken together, these aquatic conservation strategies guide management activities in or adjacent to streams anywhere listed salmonids are present. The specific standards and guidelines for these strategies can be viewed in full on a Forest Service website ([www.fs.fed.us/r6/fish](http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/fish)).

**Northwest Forest Plan** - In 1995, those BLM District Offices that are both in the Columbia River Basin and in the range of the northern spotted owl (Salem and Eugene Districts) incorporated the newly developed Aquatic Conservation Strategy (ACS) and other critical elements of the Northwest Forest Plan. The ACS provides some of the most protective stream standards in the Columbia Basin. The specific standards and guidelines for these strategies can be viewed in full on the Forest Service website ([www.fs.fed.us/r6/fish](http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/fish)).

**Rangeland Health Standards** - In 1997, BLM adopted Standards for Rangeland Health that shifted focus from commodity outputs to watershed function and biological health of the rangeland ecosystem. These standards are designed to guide rangeland watersheds to properly functioning conditions, to maintain or restore ecological processes (i.e., hydrologic cycle, nutrient cycle, and energy flow), to make progress toward meeting state water quality standards, and to maintain or restore habitats for native and threatened and endangered plants and animals (including salmonids). The standards are being implemented throughout the Columbia Basin, and the results are monitored annually. The specific Oregon and Washington Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing can be viewed on the Oregon/Washington BLM website ([www.blm.or.gov/rangelands/s&gfinal.htm](http://www.blm.or.gov/rangelands/s&gfinal.htm)).

The Basinwide Salmon Recovery Strategy (a.k.a. All H Paper) calls for ongoing implementation of PACFISH/INFISH or equally protective strategies. These strategies provide the basis for managing the aquatic network on federal lands and also form the basis for meeting our commitments under the All H Paper. All three remain a high priority for BLM. In addition, NMFS and FWS participate collaboratively in our implementation of these strategies. Regular reviews are in place that evaluate the performance of the programs. A reference for the applicable standards and guidelines for the strategies was listed above. Recent accomplishment reports are also available on the same website ([www.fs.fed.us/r6/fish](http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/fish)). Refer to the PACFISH/INFISH 1999, 2000, and 2001 Report Cards; the PACFISH/INFISH 1999, 2000, and 2001 Grazing Summaries; and 1999 and 2001 Field Reviews (field reviews were not completed in 2000 because of the fire season). Also available on the website are Northwest Forest Plan fiscal year reports from 1995 to 2000.

### **Actions Beyond Major Protection Strategies**

In addition to implementing the broad protection strategies described above, the Basinwide Salmon Recovery Strategy suggests activities within 18 other categories of actions that may benefit salmonids. These categories and some of the actions taken to make progress in these areas are summarized below.

As we set out to prepare this report, it became clear that the agency needs a more systematic approach to gathering essential information to measure our progress toward implementation of the Basinwide Salmon Recovery Strategy. In addition to a better measurement system, we need to better define terms like "high quality aquatic core" and "connecting habitats" to provide a meaningful focus for field activities and ensure the intent of the basinwide recovery strategy is being carried out. As a result, the agency will work with field units this year to develop the needed information and tools for reporting the results for 2002.

In addition to improved reporting, this year BLM will prepare an implementation plan for the Basinwide Salmon Recovery Strategy. As with the reporting tools and definition of terms described above, an implementation plan will help focus agency activities, enabling us to more fully accomplish the broad All H paper objectives.

In an attempt to report implementation activities that have occurred over the last several years, we have relied on records generally available in the State Office and knowledge of existing processes now in use within the agency. While by no means a complete list, the information below should provide a few examples of the kinds of activities that are underway.

- 1. Retain or recharter the Interagency Implementation Team (IIT) (or similar interagency team) that guides PACFISH and INFISH.**

The IIT has continued to function since it was chartered in 1998. The IIT oversees the implementation of these broad-scale Biological Opinions on federal lands across four states through an interagency, interdisciplinary process. The group has produced the annual accomplishment reports and field reviews listed above. Both State Offices of BLM continue to participate in the IIT, providing a liaison to the field. Much of the original charter has been accomplished. The Regional Executives are evaluating options for team direction in the future.

- 2. Building out from high quality aquatic core habitat and rebuilding connecting habitat that supports spawning and rearing.**

BLM continues to support the concept of building out from high quality core habitat and rebuilding connecting habitats. District fish biologists use this principle to build their Annual Work Plans. In 2002, the BLM State Offices will work with district biologists to develop a consistent definition of high quality core and connecting habitats for application across the basin.

Under the Northwest Forest Plan, we have focused restoration efforts on the Key Watersheds that were identified to be strongholds of species recovery. Where the Key Watersheds do not adequately address the needs of listed salmonids, we have broadened restoration efforts to cover high quality habitat outside of these areas.

The Basinwide Recovery Strategy identifies seven high priority watersheds for restoration, all of which are downstream from four Lower Snake River dams (McKenzie, Hood River/15 Mile, Wenatchee/Yakima, Entiat, Wind River, Middle Fork John Day, and South Fork John Day). The BLM Oregon State Office places a priority on project proposals within these seven watersheds as discretionary funds become available (e.g., Challenge Cost Share, Clean Water Action Plan), and also focuses base budget resources on the restoration of these watersheds.

The Basinwide Recovery Strategy also identifies five watersheds with a lower priority for restoration, four of which are upstream from the Lower Snake River dams, and one that is downstream. These are given a lower priority because adult anadromous fish escapement during the last decade was not sufficient to seek existing federal habitat in these areas. But as escapement increases, the need for high quality habitat in these watersheds will also increase; thus it is important to take advantage of the opportunities that are available now to build better habitat. As a result, the Idaho State Office places a priority on proposals within the four watersheds that it manages (Clearwater, Yankee Fork, Upper Salmon, and Pahsimeroi), and the Oregon State Office has focused attention on the lower priority watershed within its jurisdiction (Lower Grande Ronde).

Examples of actions to restore top priority watersheds are listed in item 13 below. There are numerous examples of actions to restore lower priority watersheds in both Oregon and Idaho. In Oregon, the Baker Field Office has been working closely with the Grande Ronde Model Watershed to restore the Lower Grande Ronde, rebuild connecting habitats, and monitor progress. Projects include installing fish screens, removing blockages to passage, and improving streamside vegetation. In Idaho, in addition to restoration in the Clearwater, Yankee Fork, and Pahsimeroi, BLM has been working over the last five years to restore the Upper Salmon and rebuild connecting habitats. Projects include installing fish screens on diversions, restoring flow to dewatered stream segments, and improving streamside vegetation. In 2001 alone, Idaho BLM had 22 restoration projects underway along the Upper Salmon River.

### **3. Prepare hierarchically linked analyses at different geographic scales.**

While hierarchically linked analyses are desirable to understanding the conditions and needs of a basin, the agency's ability to complete them depends upon priorities and available funding. Over the last decade, many analyses have been completed, and additional progress is anticipated over the next five years.

In the area of the Northwest Forest Plan, watershed analyses have been completed for all watersheds within the Columbia Basin. In the lower McKenzie, these analyses have been linked to an analysis for a grouping of 5<sup>th</sup> field Hydrologic Unit Codes (HUCs). Plans to complete other subbasin analyses are underway.

In the Interior Columbia Basin, a major science assessment was completed as a part of the Interior Columbia Basin ecosystem planning process. While the plan did not go

forward, the forests and districts continue to use the science assessment. In addition, field units complete baseline condition assessments to be included in watershed-level Biological Assessments. For example, working with the Forest Service, the Baker Field Office has completed four interagency assessments. In other areas where there are fisheries issues (e.g., Upper Okanogan, John Day), the agency is working with partners to complete watershed analyses. In addition, subbasin reviews have been completed in some basins, and subbasin analyses are planned or underway in other basins. For example, they have been completed for the Upper and Lower Salmon and the Clearwater watersheds in Idaho, and the Upper Crooked River in Oregon.

**4. Cooperate with basin planning processes of the Northwest Power Planning Council, the Bonneville Power Administration, other federal agencies, states, and tribes to identify habitat restoration opportunities and priorities.**

BLM participates in numerous forums with our federal, state, and other government partners to identify habitat restoration opportunities and priorities. BLM participates with the Bonneville Power Administration on the Federal Caucus and Federal Habitat Team (FHT) to set priorities for restoration. The agency also has been directly involved in helping shape the salmonid and water quality restoration efforts led by the states of Oregon and Idaho. BLM's efforts have included participating in or leading interagency teams, providing data, developing analyses, and monitoring funding. In addition, the agency has participated in the development of the subbasin summaries and will participate in the development of subbasin plans. As an example, the Oregon State Office provided both an office and direct staff support for writing the Willamette Basin summary. Finally, the agency has worked collaboratively with tribes throughout the basin to identify and help fund high priority salmonid restoration. As an example, Idaho BLM worked with the Shoshone-Paiute Tribe to complete the Dave Creek habitat restoration project.

**5. Consult with NMFS and FWS on land management plans.**

BLM consults with NMFS and FWS on area management plans and on all projects where Endangered Species Act listings occur or critical habitat exists. The 1998 Steelhead and Salmonid Biological Opinions and the 1998 Bull Trout Biological Opinion are examples of consultation on all land use plans at the regional level. BLM prepares a Biological Assessment describing the affect of the project on the species, and the regulatory agency issues a Biological Opinion with which the land managing agency must comply as it implements the plan or project. This process has been in place since 1995. In addition, in areas where coho and chinook salmon are found, consultation takes place with NMFS to protect "Essential Fish Habitat" as required under the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

**6. Collaborate early and frequently with states, tribes, local governments, and advisory councils.**

BLM has an excellent track record of collaborating with our government and non-government partners. We provide support and assistance to numerous watershed councils, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and Resource Advisory Councils. In Idaho, BLM collaborated in the development of the Idaho Bull Trout Plan and serves on the watershed advisory councils that implement the state's plan. In Oregon, BLM collaborated in the development of the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds and serves on the implementation team that oversees that plan. Working closely with local governments and the Forest Service, BLM has recently helped establish new Resource Advisory Committees in the western portion of the Columbia Basin to collaborate on watershed restoration opportunities. In the Interior Columbia Basin, Resource Advisory Councils have been in place for several years to collaborate on the management of resources. Finally, BLM has involved tribal representatives in these collaborative activities and has participated in tribal processes as well.

In addition to collaboration on watershed restoration, species recovery, and other land management issues, BLM works closely with the Forest Service, Environmental Protection Agency, and the states to implement the 303(d) protocol for water quality restoration.

**7. Cooperate in development of recovery plans.**

BLM has participated with FWS in the development of plans to recover bull trout, and in Idaho has worked closely with the State of Idaho in a state-led plan to restore bull trout. In Oregon, BLM has worked closely with the State of Oregon in the development of a plan to restore coho and steelhead.

While not species recovery plans, BLM has responsibility for managing Wild and Scenic Rivers, as thus prepares plans to maintain and restore the values of those river systems. In Oregon alone, BLM manages 813 miles of Wild and Scenic Rivers from 21 different river systems. As an example of the activities underway for Wild and Scenic River reaches, the Prineville District recently completed a plan for the John Day River. This plan resulted in the amendment of three Resource Management Plans, protecting instream flow values across the length of the Wild and Scenic River. In addition to managing the Wild and Scenic River System, BLM also has a responsibility through other federal laws to protect State Scenic Waterways. These two systems, taken together, protect hundreds of miles of important salmonid habitat in the Columbia Basin.

**8. Collaborate on watershed plans for federal and non-federal lands.**

BLM has worked collaboratively with tribes, watershed councils, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and other federal agencies to develop watershed analyses and

watershed plans. For example, in the Upper Salmon Basin BLM provided leadership on a project to restore both federal and non-federal lands. In the Baker Resource Area, we have worked closely with the Grande Ronde Model Watershed to develop restoration plans. Baker has also worked on the Blue Mountains Demonstration Project to restore the health of federal lands. The Spokane District has worked in the Entiat with federal and non-federal (including the City of Entiat, the county, the state, and both the Yakima and Colville Tribes) for more than ten years to complete a watershed analysis, a plan, and obtain funding for watershed restoration projects. In the Okanogan, BLM has been working with the local conservation district to develop a watershed plan. As a final example, the Wenatchee Field Office has been working with partners to develop a habitat conservation plan to address multiple species that are at risk.

#### **9. Share information, technology, and resources to improve adaptive management.**

As a result of substantial foresight more than a decade ago, BLM has been a leader in the Northwest in developing strong data management capabilities and encouraging common data standards and shared databases. The purpose of a strong data management program is to improve our analytical capabilities, and to know when our approach needs adjustment. Two examples of our recent work sharing resources and technology are described below.

Both BLM and the Forest Service have been developing and expanding water resources databases which, where possible, use common data standards that were jointly developed by the Interagency Resources Information Coordinating Council (IRICC). IRICC is an interagency and intergovernmental council established for the purpose of sharing resources, technology, and developing common data standards. Oregon/Washington BLM is now deploying a database (Aquatic Resources Information Management System or ARIMS) to store stream geomorphology, fish habitat, water quality, and fish population information. This database will allow the agency to track changes in stream conditions over time and will become the basis for watershed assessments and planning documents. The data feeding into ARIMS is acquired through numerous efforts such as a statewide stream inventory using Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife survey protocols, fish habitat inventories performed by state fish and wildlife agencies, water quality monitoring by state and federal agencies, and both plan-level and project-level effectiveness monitoring. ARIMS is designed to transfer water quality information to the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality in their prescribed data submission format. In addition, to facilitate analyses ARIMS easily accesses data from the Oregon Water Resources Department's water rights database.

BLM, the Forest Service, and the states of Oregon and Washington are jointly developing a Hydrography Framework Clearinghouse. This clearinghouse will provide a shared set of Geographic Information System (GIS) information on hydrography and watershed boundaries at the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> field HUC levels. The new framework will

help the agencies develop common, accurate base information for completing analyses and making decisions on water-related issues.

**10. Maximize efficient use of funds for highest priority restoration on federal or non-federal lands.**

As BLM participates in salmonid restoration activities, both those that are led by the agency and those that are led by other entities, we attempt to steer funding to the highest priority restoration projects as identified by field biologists. The agency views maximizing funds both as using resources carefully and encouraging partnerships with both government and non-governmental entities. With passage of the Wyden Amendment, the agency has been able to use federal resources on non-federal lands. During FY 2000, BLM and the Forest Service together used the Wyden Amendment 46 times, involving approximately \$2 million of appropriated funds that were leveraged with collaborator contributions and resulted in more than \$8.5 million of investments. The major focus of Wyden Amendment projects has been aquatic restoration. An example of use of the Wyden authority was the purchase of a culvert in 1999 that was installed by the county on Smokey Creek, a tributary to the South Fork of the John Day River. The project resulted in improved fish passage, providing better access for steelhead to spawning and rearing areas on BLM land.

As another example, the Salmon Field Office oversees habitat for three listed salmonids and works with numerous partners on restoration, including the Lemhi County Youth Employment Program, The Nature Conservancy, the Forest Service, and the Idaho Department of Fish and Game. In 2001 alone, 21 new restoration projects were completed by the field office; and 32 previous projects were maintained, resulting in an improvement of more than 40 miles of riparian habitat. In addition, more than 200 miles of stream were monitored to evaluate recovery progress and the results of project implementation.

Yet the overall process of prioritizing restoration projects across a subbasin has not yet begun in earnest. Federal land managers attempt to identify priority projects on federal lands, tribal managers identify priorities on tribal or federal lands, private landowners on private lands, etc. Many watershed councils have completed Action Plans which attempt to identify top priority projects. And generally those entities that fund watershed restoration also have a system for identifying high priority projects, to ensure their money is well spent. On the other hand, it is really the process of subbasin planning across all ownerships in a watershed where we would expect the overall prioritization of projects to occur, and implementation of this broad subbasin planning is in its infancy. BLM will participate in these subbasin plans as they are developed and will work toward completion of high priority restoration projects as they are identified.

**11. Collaborate on monitoring habitat measures.**

BLM participates in numerous monitoring activities each year in the Columbia Basin. The agency monitors the implementation of PACFISH and the Bull Trout Strategy, as well as implementation of the Northwest Forest Plan.

We participate in an interagency process to monitor the Federal Columbia River Power System Biological Opinion and "All H" Strategy through the FHT. Since 1997, we have been working with the State of Oregon in the development of an integrated, statewide monitoring framework for salmonids.

In addition to these activities, every field unit works with NMFS, FWS, and other agencies to develop and implement strategies to monitor the effects of plans and projects in areas where listed fish species are present. Some of this monitoring is required under Biological Opinions, and some is not. In Idaho, for example, the Challis Field Office monitored 60 grazing allotments in 2001, 11 of which were required under the PACFISH/INFISH Biological Opinions. In the Willamette Basin, BLM annually funds the cooperative maintenance and operation of U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) stream gauging stations to monitor water quality in numerous stream reaches.

In the Baker Resource Area, BLM has been working with the Grande Ronde Model Watershed to develop an integrated approach to monitoring the entire Grande Ronde Basin. The State of Oregon, the counties, and the tribes are all participating in the effort. The purpose of the monitoring is to gather needed information on water quality and fish populations throughout the basin without duplication.

An example of collaborative monitoring in the John Day River Basin is our cooperation with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and private landowners, through local watershed councils, for spawning counts for anadromous fish. A model of collaborative monitoring that includes physical channel, aquatic habitat, and water quality characteristics is outlined in the USGS document, "Framework for Regional Coordinated Monitoring in the Middle and Upper Deschutes River Basin, Oregon, Open File Report 00-386, 2000." This was developed jointly by USGS, BLM, the Forest Service, FWS, Bureau of Reclamation, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, Oregon Water Resources Department, Portland General Electric, and the Upper Deschutes River Watershed Council.

**12. Participate in new interagency basinwide coordinating committees to aid ecosystem-based management, resolve issues, coordinate data management and monitoring, and incorporate new information through adaptive management.**

At this time, new interagency coordinating committees have not been established in the Columbia Basin. If a decision is made to proceed with these committees, BLM will participate. The IIT for PACFISH/INFISH is an example of a basinwide coordinating

committee that has been in operation for several years. In addition, BLM has established Resource Advisory Committees across much of the Columbia Basin that coordinate on resource issues and Provincial Advisory Committees for the western portion of the basin.

The concept of new interagency coordinating committees should be further evaluated by the federal executives. Careful consideration should be given to participation, the geographic extent of each committee, and the existing groups already active in each area. In addition, it will be important to consider any linkage to the Northwest Power Planning Council subbasin planning process as it gets underway.

**13. Implement seven watershed restoration initiatives targeting core populations most at risk (McKenzie, Hood River/15 Mile, Wenatchee/Yakima, Entiat, Wind River, Middle Fork John Day, South Fork John Day).**

While full watershed restoration initiatives have not been completed for these watersheds, watershed analysis and restoration work is underway. In addition to activities that are a part of the agency's base budget, BLM has a small amount of discretionary funding for restoration (e.g., Challenge Cost Share and Clean Water Action Plan) to direct toward the watersheds identified in the Basinwide Salmon Recovery Strategy.

Examples of the kinds of work underway in these watersheds include the BLM Eugene District analysis of the Vida/McKenzie and the recently completed habitat restoration project on the Entiat River by the Wenatchee Field Office of the BLM Spokane District.

To provide one example that addresses two of the high priority watersheds, BLM has focused significant attention over the last decade on habitat restoration in the John Day Basin, including both the Middle and South Forks. From 1993 to 1995, progress was made on establishing instream flows for the basin. More recently, BLM has made a high priority of fencing riparian areas in the South Fork and along some of the tributaries to increase the protection of vegetation, streambanks structure, and water quality. In February of 2001, the BLM Prineville District completed a comprehensive management plan for BLM lands adjacent to the mainstem and the North, Middle, and South Forks. The Prineville District is also working cooperatively with the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality to develop Total Maximum Daily Loads and Water Quality Improvement Plans for the 303(d)-listed Middle and North Forks of the John Day.

**14. Accelerate land acquisition to protect high quality aquatic habitat using Land and Water Conservation Funds.**

There have been numerous examples in recent years of land purchased by Land and Water Conservation funds. In 2001, there were two major purchases on the BLM

Salem District, the Fisherman's Bend parcel on the North Santiam River and the Sandy River corridor parcel, at a cost of over \$1 million. Both rivers have listed salmon and steelhead. In 2000, the Eaton property was acquired in the Yakima River Basin at a cost of \$244,000. This river corridor also has listed fish species.

Over the last few years, and after completion of an Environmental Impact Statement, BLM has acquired 11 miles of the North Fork of the John Day. Similar purchases of river habitat have been made on the Grande Ronde, the Lower Snake, the Clearwater, the Entiat, and elsewhere.

In addition to purchases, BLM has acquired important river frontage through land exchanges where there are listed anadromous fish. A major benefit of these exchanges is that the land is now managed under federal aquatic habitat conservation strategies.

As an example, BLM has been working in the John Day Basin with private land owners to protect riparian habitat. In December of 2000, the agency completed an exchange on the North and South Forks and several tributaries of the John Day that transferred approximately 30 miles of riparian habitat to BLM. This major exchange is known as the Northeast Oregon Assembled Land Exchange, or NOALE.

**15. Protect existing high quality habitat and accelerate restoration in high priority subbasins.**

BLM has made protection of existing high quality habitat a high priority. This protection is accomplished through the implementation of PACFISH, the Bull Trout Strategy, the Aquatic Conservation Strategy of the Northwest Forest Plan, consultation with NMFS and FWS, and compliance with appropriate laws and regulations.

The ability of BLM to accelerate restoration in high priority subbasins is dependent upon available funds. Within our regular base program and the few discretionary fund sources available, the agency has made some progress toward restoring high priority subbasins. A few of those activities are described elsewhere in this report. However, what is lacking in many areas at the current time is a systematic approach to setting restoration priorities. While we are proceeding with projects that provide an obvious benefit for salmonids, resources might be better utilized over time if we had a subbasin analysis to help guide priorities. At the current time, subbasin plans are underway in several parts of the Columbia Basin and are anticipated across the entire 63 subbasins of the Columbia over the next decade. BLM will participate in these analyses and will be able to use the resulting priorities to guide restoration.

BLM's budget process requires the identification of priority subbasins in an attempt to better target restoration funding to local, state, and regional priorities. The All H priority subbasins include stream and river segments managed by the Baker Field Office, and Prineville, Salem, and Spokane Districts.

**16. Work with states to secure and protect minimum flows with federal nexus.**

BLM has made progress in several areas on securing and protecting minimum flows. A few examples are provided here.

As a Wild and Scenic River manager, the agency has taken steps to ensure that habitat along these corridors is in good condition and water is available for the resources found along these corridors, including salmonids. In Oregon, for example, field offices have worked with the state to develop the minimum instream flows needed to protect Wild and Scenic River resources.

Several processes are underway in the Deschutes River Basin that address water for listed fish. BLM participates in the Deschutes Working Group, a broad-scale effort to better use the water in the basin. The Working Group is developing strategies to prepare for drought conditions and make more efficient use of water. Also in the Deschutes Basin, the Prineville District Office has proposed an instream flow assessment for the Lower Crooked and Middle Deschutes Rivers.

BLM is currently developing a strategy to conduct an Instream Flow Incremental Methodology study for the Upper Crooked River. The study will give the agency the data needed to secure and protect Wild and Scenic River values for fisheries, recreation, vegetation, and water quality.

While BLM cannot apply for instream water rights, the agency can lease its existing consumptive water rights for conversion to instream flows. For example, BLM recently acquired land along the John Day River with the rights to water from the river. In order to provide needed water at critical times of the year, the agency has leased a portion of those rights to the Oregon Water Resources Department to help maintain instream flows. These activities are described in more detail in the agency's John Day River Management Plan.

**17. Fix flow, screening, and passage problems in priority subbasins (beginning in the first year in the Methow, Upper John Day, and Lemhi).**

BLM is working to identify and correct blockages to fish passage across the basin. Under the Northwest Forest Plan, engineers and fish biologists are completing inventories of culverts as a part of watershed analysis. This information is being transferred into the ARIMS database and GIS for more effective management activities. BLM District Managers are then setting priorities for replacing or retrofitting culverts and removing other barriers to fish passage. As an example, last year the Salem District replaced five culverts that were blocking passage and monitored salmonid production using adult surveys and smolt traps in six watersheds. In addition, the district promoted conifer establishment on 123 acres adjacent to streams and decommissioned 26 miles of road to reduce road erosion impacts.

In Idaho, a ditch/diversion inventory is being completed in the Upper Salmon Basin where there are numerous diversions. The Salmon and Challis Field Offices are designing and seeking funding for more than \$10 million of projects to address priority fish passage problems. A recent example in Oregon is the Baker Field Office completion of a fish passage restoration project at Grouse Creek, a tributary to the Grande Ronde. The purpose of the project was to connect the Lower Grande Ronde with good spawning habitat further up Grouse Creek.

Little of the road network in the Interior Columbia River Basin in Oregon and Washington is managed by BLM, thus passage of the Wyden Amendment helped the agency address passage problems on county or other roads that would benefit upstream public lands. To accomplish this non-federal restoration, the agency is partnering with watershed councils, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and other agencies to address fish passage issues. As an example, using Wyden Amendment authority the agency was able to purchase a culvert in 1999 that was installed by the county on Smokey Creek, a tributary to the South Fork of the John Day River. This improvement in fish passage resulted in better access for steelhead to spawning and rearing areas on BLM land. Also in the Upper John Day, the Prineville District Office has been working with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to screen water diversions.

**18. Through the Federal Habitat Team, help coordinate watershed restoration efforts at the subbasin scale.**

BLM participates in the FHT. In the All H Paper, the team is charged with coordination among federal agencies in four major areas on habitat issues: policy, budget, technical issues, and recovery planning. In addition, FHT is charged with coordinating with our non-federal partners. Finally, the team is addressing other issues that are assigned by the Federal Caucus.

In its initial plan of work, FHT has established several work groups to accomplish its goals: the Funding Work Group, the Data and Information Management Work Group, and a Process/Pilot Work Group. This latter group is charged with identifying impediments that may come from lack of authority, identifying critical issues, and figuring out which areas of the basin may be right to begin implementation of concepts from the FHT. As a potentially important part of all three work groups, FHT is participating in the development of the subbasin planning process.

FHT has wrestled with the complex task of coordinating watershed restoration at the subbasin scale. While none of the approaches we have settled on fully accomplish the task, they will improve coordination in the short term and may open the door to a better long-term solution. As a first step, FHT is opening its work group meetings to the states and tribes. These other levels of government are also wrestling with coordination of restoration activities. Second, FHT is establishing a pilot project to coordinate monitoring activities in the John Day Basin. The Bureau of Reclamation is taking the

lead on this task, working with BLM and other agencies to develop a proposal. Third, FHT has been working with the Northwest Power Planning Council and NMFS to refine the subbasin planning process. Subbasin plans may ultimately provide a useful tool for coordinating watershed restoration activities at the subbasin scale.