

# Clearwater Focus Watershed

## Nez Perce Tribe

Annual Report 2003 - 2004

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# **NPT Clearwater Focus Watershed**

Annual Report CY 2003

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## **ABSTRACT**

The Nez Perce Tribe Department of Fisheries Resource Management, Watershed Division, approaches watershed restoration with a goal to protect, restore, and enhance a connected network of functioning habitat types capable of supporting all fish life stages. Its goal is also to re-establish normal patterns of production, dispersal, and exchange of genetic information within the 1855 Treaty Area.

The Nez Perce Tribe began watershed restoration projects within the Clearwater River Subbasin in 1996. Progress has been made in restoring the sub-basin by excluding cattle from critical riparian areas through fencing, stabilizing stream banks, decommissioning roads, and upgrading culverts. Coordination of these projects is critical to the success of the restoration of the sub-basin. Coordination activities also includes: inter and intra-department coordination, sub-basin assessment and planning, involving government and private organizations, and treaty area coordination.

## **Background**

The Clearwater River sub-basin is massive in size, totaling 9,645 square miles, with a complex pattern of ownership and jurisdiction, and multiple understandings of how fisheries restoration should proceed. This watershed is located within the 1855 treaty territory of the Nez Perce Tribe, and it provides habitat for Spring Chinook, steelhead trout, and resident fish.

Management activities, by various landowners, have affected aquatic processes within this drainage. Some of the key objectives of the Nez Perce Tribe and this position are to overcome fragmentation by managing communications within the sub-basin, providing an overall framework and process for coordinated fisheries restoration, and managing the planning, assessment, implementation and monitoring and evaluation process.

## **Objectives & Tasks**

The objectives of this project address coordination activities associated with watershed restoration in the Clearwater River sub-basin and the 1855 Treaty territory.

Coordination objectives include:

1. Coordinate watershed project development within the 1855 treaty territory of the Nez Perce Tribe among federal, state, and local government agencies and private landowners in cooperation with the Idaho Soil Conservation Commission Focus Program.
  - a. Coordinate Clearwater River Subbasin watershed projects prioritization and planning between the US Forest Service, BLM, BIA, NMFS, NRCS, USFWS, ISCC, IDL, IDFG, IDEQ, conservation districts, private industry, and landowners.
  - b. Coordinate and provide administrative structure for Clearwater Policy Advisory Committee (PAC).
  - c. Provide direction for Ecovista in the development of the Clearwater Subbasin Watershed Assessment, and Monitoring and Evaluation Plan.
  - d. Coordinate Salmon River subbasin watershed projects prioritization and planning between the US Forest Service, BLM, NMFS, USFWS, ISCC, IDL, IDFG, IDEQ, conservation districts, private industry, and landowners.
  - e. Coordinate Imnaha River subbasin watershed projects prioritization and planning between the US Forest Service, BLM, NMFS, USFWS, State of Oregon agencies, private industry, and landowners.
  - f. Coordinate Grande Ronde River subbasin watershed projects prioritization and planning between the US Forest Service, BLM, NMFS, USFWS, State of Oregon agencies, private industry, and landowners.
  - g. Coordinate Wallowa County watershed projects prioritization and planning between the US Forest Service, BLM, NMFS, USFWS, State of Oregon agencies, private industry, and landowners.
  - h. Coordinate Snake Hells Canyon assessment and planning project prioritization and planning between the US Forest Service, Nez Perce Tribe, private business and Federal entities.
  - i. Coordinate Asotin Creek subbasin watershed projects prioritization and planning between the US Forest Service, BLM, NMFS, USFWS, State of Washington agencies, conservation districts, private industry, and landowners.
  - j. Coordinate Tucannon River subbasin watershed projects prioritization and planning between the US Forest Service, BLM, NMFS, USFWS, State of Washington agencies, conservation districts, private industry, and landowners.

- k. Coordinate Lower Snake assessment and planning project prioritization and planning between the States of Idaho and Washington, Nez Perce Tribe, private business and Federal entities.
- 2. Manage development of Clearwater Subbasin Restoration Program, including the assessment, subbasin plan, and monitoring and evaluation plan.
  - a. Provide leadership in the updating of the databases for the Clearwater Subbasin Assessment.
- 3. Manage implementation of assessment, enhancement/restoration, monitoring and evaluation of projects in areas that have been prioritized and planned.
  - a. Supervise engineers, biologists, hydrologists and other project leads who are implementing projects to enhance or restore fisheries habitat in Lolo Creek, Bear to Fishing Creeks, North Lochsa Face, Mill Creek, Newsome Creek, Red River, and Meadow Creek (McComas Meadows).
  - b. Supervise monitoring and evaluation of current fiscal year projects.
- 4. Pursue additional funding sources with other federal and non-federal entities to cost-share in future project implementation.
  - a. Facilitate interagency project funding participation.
  - b. Research private funding opportunities.
- 5. Reporting
  - a. Prepare and submit quarterly reports.
  - b. Prepare and submit an Annual report
  - c. Provide applicable RPA data for the FCRPS Biological Opinion.
  - d. Provide project specific information to BPA on an “as needed” basis for accounting purposes.

## **Results**

### **Clearwater Policy Advisory Committee**

The Clearwater Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) is a group that was organized by the Clearwater Focus coordinators to act as an advisory committee over issues regarding the Clearwater River basin. This committee meets periodically throughout the year. Over the past year, the PAC has been focused on the sub-basin planning process, specifically the Clearwater River Sub-basin Plan.

### **Treaty Territory Coordination/Watershed Projects**

The Northwest Power Planning and Conservation Council (NPCC) hold monthly meetings regarding issues within the Columbia River Basin. The Focus Coordinator attended several meetings throughout the year regarding issues and

concerns related to subbasin planning and watershed projects. Issues of concern include: progress, updates, and adoption of the subbasin plans, decisions of BPA fish & wildlife budgets, tribal relationships, and monitoring & evaluation. The Clearwater Focus co-coordinators presented the Clearwater Subbasin Plan to the NPCC on November 19.

Project coordination and development was initiated in the Oregon territory of the NPT treaty territory in 2002. Ira Jones was appointed to the Natural Resource Advisory Council (NRAC) in Wallowa County and to the Grande Ronde Model Watershed, as a representative of the NPT. In 2003, meetings were attended on a regular basis, as a way to seek out watershed restoration projects, as well as representing the NPT. Discussions revolved around treaty rights and watershed planning. A treaty workshop was held in Enterprise, Oregon for the counties, local citizens, Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife and the US Forest Service.

Coordination and project planning within the Clearwater River subbasin is an on-going effort. Several meetings were held to discuss planning documents initiated by cooperating agencies. Planning efforts that coincide with our treaty territory include the Forest Plan Revision Process, Brick Trout, White White, Meadow Face, American and Crooked River, Rag Station, Red River, and Whiskey South projects. Meetings were held with the outside entities to discuss each of these project areas. Tribal and watershed concerns were expressed. Updates were given to the Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee (NPTEC) at various Natural Resource Subcommittee meetings throughout the year.

Several field tours were scheduled throughout the year to update cooperative agencies and coordinators on project statuses. Therese Lamb of Bonneville Power Administration was taken on a tour of NPT Fisheries projects on June 18-19.

On July 18, a field visit to the upper Lochsa was taken to review implementation activities, such as road obliteration projects. A tour of the Beaver Triangle Timber Sale was taken on July 18 on the Powell Ranger District of the Clearwater National Forest.

A fire briefing meeting was attended regarding the Slims Fire in Elk City, Idaho in August. Issues discussed included effects of the fire within the Clearwater River Subbasin.

Field tour was taken within the Lapwai Creek drainage to discuss Lewiston Orchards Irrigation District withdrawals from this drainage. Ongoing discussion and meetings were held to discuss voluntary flows from the diversion into Sweetwater Creek.

A field tour of the Lolo Creek watershed was taken to view implementation activities of the past as well as proposed projects of the future.



On August 28, a field visit was taken to American and Crooked Rivers to review timber sales and implementation activities proposed by the Forest Service.

A tour and review of fire activity and its effects upon watershed restoration was held within the Lochsa drainage on October 8-9. Project areas include Beaver Complex and Fish Creek.

The Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee filed a lawsuit against the US Forest Service and NOAA Fisheries over the North Lochsa Face project in January 2004. In May, the courts were deciding whether the case would be settled in Oregon or Idaho.

In April, a tour of the Little Salmon River Falls project was taken. During the same trip, a treaty workshop was given to the community citizens, outfitters, Forest Service, and county commissioners in Riggins, Idaho.

The Chief of the Forest Service and his staff attended a tour of the upper Lochsa drainage on May 13, 2004. An overview of the type of work that the watershed division completes in cooperation with the Forest Service was presented.

Staff meetings between division directors within the Department of Fisheries Resource Management were held bi-weekly. Updates of current issues were discussed, and updates on current projects were given.

Meetings were held among project area managers, including those from the Clearwater and Salmon basins in Idaho, Oregon and Washington territory, of the watershed division on a periodic basis, approximately quarterly, to discuss issues, concerns, successes, and road blocks with individual projects, as well as programmatic issues.

#### Subbasin Planning

Subbasin assessment and planning is occurring throughout the Nez Perce Tribe's treaty territory, which is encompassed within the Columbia River Subbasin. The Nez Perce Tribe is the lead for four sub-basin assessments and plans, including Clearwater River, Lower Salmon River, Imnaha River, and Snake Hells Canyon subbasin. The Nez Perce Tribe is also the co-lead on three subbasin plans including, Asotin Creek, Tucannon River, and Lower Snake Subbasin. Involvement in these subbasin plans included attending public meetings, planning and technical meetings. Several meetings were had with the sub-contractor, Ecovista, to work out details of completing the documents. Additionally, the tribe coordinated with tribal Fish and Wildlife Departments and NOAA Fisheries and gave periodic updates to the Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee. ISRP comments were addressed with a revised document.

Pursue Additional Funding Sources

Two proposals were submitted to the NOAA Community Based Restoration Program in September. Notification was received that one grant was funded in the Lapwai Creek watershed to address noxious weed problems.

The EPA Watershed Initiative grant as submitted for funding within the South Fork Clearwater River in December. Notification of award will not be until September 2004.

Attended the North Idaho Resource Advisory Council meeting to present five proposals for funding of watershed restoration projects. Two projects were chosen for funding, within the Lolo Creek watershed, one for the construction of a riparian protection/cattle exclusion fence. An additional project was funded for a culvert replacement project.

A meeting among fisheries managers was held on June 9 to discuss allocation of funds from the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund, through CRITFC and NOAA Fisheries. The watershed division received funding for the Little Salmon Falls passage analysis.