

**Cooperative Monitoring Evaluation and Research Committee
May 26, 2009
DNR/DOC Compound - Tumwater
Notes**

Attendees	Representing
*Baldwin, Todd (ph)	Kalispel Tribe, SAGE Co-Chair
Black, Jenelle	CMER Staff, NWIFC
Cahill, Candice	Rayonier, WETSAG Chair
Cramer, Darin	DNR, Adaptive Management Program Administrator
Ehinger, Bill	WDOE
Hayes, Marc	WDFW, LWAG Co-Chair
*Hicks, Mark	Ecology
*Jackson, Terry	WDFW, CMER Co-Chair
Kroll, A.J.	Weyerhaeuser, LWAG Co-Chair
Kurtenbach, Amy	DNR, Project Manager
*Martin, Doug	WFPA Contractor
*McConnell, Steve (ph)	UCUT
*Mendoza, Chris	Conservation Caucus Contractor, CMER Co-Chair
*Miller, Dick	WFFA Contractor
Moody, Loyd	Governor's Salmon Office
Moon, Teresa	DNR, Project Manager
Osullivan, Alison	Suquamish Tribe
Phillips, Bonnie	Olympic Forest Coalition
Roorbach, Ash	CMER Staff, NWIFC
*Sturhan, Nancy	NWIFC
Sarikhan, Isabelle	DNR
Veldhuisen, Curt	Skagit Systems Cooperative

* Indicates official CMER members and alternates; ph indicates attended via phone & v indicates attended by video conferencing

Agenda

Added agenda item - the Eastside Type F Channel Wood project study design for approval.

Meeting Minutes

Terry asked for comments or recommended revisions to the February CMER meeting notes. Dawn received one correction request. No additional comments or corrections were requested. The minutes were approved with the one revision.

Forest Practices Board meeting May 20th - Darin

The work plan and budget were taken to the Board for approval. The Policy proposed budget was approved by the Board. This budget focuses on finishing existing projects and does not start any new projects until FY 11. CMER staff, project staff, and administrative costs all remain fully funded. The Board will re-visit the budget at the August meeting once they check in with Policy regarding their efforts to find more funding. The Board will have the option at this time to approve a different budget based on the likelihood of finding additional funds. If Policy does not find additional funds for FY 11, then there will be 40-45% reductions in FY 11 and then an additional 20% reduction in FY 12. The question was asked: "if we don't start any new projects in FY 11, would the budget be in the black?" If no new projects start in FY 11, then we are still in the negative. "Then shouldn't we focus on trying to conserve now so we can finish active projects?" The Board was given a budget with this option and did not choose to go that route, but can still choose to do that option if the budget picture worsens. "How much do we need to finish active projects?" We will need at least \$1.5 - \$2.0 million in FY 11 to continue the active projects. If we carry more funds into FY 11, then we will have a better chance of finishing active projects.

DFC – DFC has three alternatives that are proposed for adoption. Alternative three proposes to change the basal area per acre to 325, and would allow the 20 tree/acre in the outer edge of the inner zone to be included in the basal area calculation (not allowed in current rule). The Board decided to delay action on any of the alternatives until CMER looks at the potential management and riparian affects of including the 20 trees/acre in the outer edge of the inner zone. This would be similar to the sensitivity analysis. Chris is working on putting together a sub-group to look at this. The group will meet a minimum of once every two weeks. This exercise needs to be complete by the week before the August Board meeting. The sub-group will put together a report and bring it to the July CMER meeting for CMER approval, and then to the August Board meeting. Currently the sub-group is: Chris Mendoza, Nancy Sturhan, Terry Jackson, Marc Hicks, Steve McConnell, Joe Murray, Ash Roorbach, Dave Schuett-Hames, and possibly Adrian Miller. Dick expressed his concerns that there is a lot of variation in the stands that went into the DFC Validation Study and thinks the study is fatally flawed. He is uncomfortable with the fact that we are using this report for this exercise. Chris mentioned that it was already decided to approve the Desktop Analysis final report and move it up to the Board. The purpose of the sub-group is to look at the potential effects of including the 20 trees/acre in the basal area calculation, not the validity of the Desktop Analysis.

CMER Work plan – Terry

The only change in the latest version is that an executive summary was added and the budget in Table 4 was updated. The work plan will be worked on throughout the year and the CMER co-chairs will update CMER as the changes occur.

Cost reduction measures – Terry/Darin

Policy is requesting that CMER look at reducing the budget of existing projects in FY10 by at least 10%. At the June CMER meeting, we need to discuss the proposed reductions and the possible implications to the projects. It may end up that some projects may not be able to take this full 10% cut without jeopardizing the scientific integrity of the project. Other projects may be able to take more than a 10% cut. The PI's and/or PM's need to prioritize these reductions for

each of their projects and take it to the June SAG meetings for approval. It will then come to the June CMER meeting to discuss and approve prior to going to Policy. Darin proposed, as a cost savings measure, to not renew the technical editor or statistician contracts. The data management budget is currently proposed to remain. Doug thought that it would be counterproductive to cut the technical editor or statistician contracts, because we are not committed to paying them, they are just under contract if we need them. We need to possibly use these contracts to have someone look at all the information from the CMER studies and synthesize it into one report. We need to start synthesizing all the current information from CMER studies now, because the information isn't as useful as separate projects. The synthesis would focus on what we have learned so far, and point out what we still need to work on. We could do this with a relatively small amount of money, maybe \$30,000. Even though it will take money, it needs to be done and will be beneficial. If we couldn't afford to do the entire synthesis, we could prioritize which areas or programs we would focus on. Chris stated that the Stillwater report was supposed to lead to something like this. For the next couple of months, the CMER science session could be used to go through this report and figure out where we could focus our attention. Jenelle mentioned that there are two projects coming up, the Roads Sub-basin and Post-Mortem projects, which will need the science sessions in the next couple of months. Amy provided clarification that the Post Mortem project would not be presented to CMER in the next two months. Chris mentioned that maybe we could split up the science session or use part of the business meeting for the synthesis discussion. Jenelle said that the Roads Sub-basin project update could be moved to the afternoon during the SAG request time. She would only need about an hour. This would free up the science session for going over the Stillwater Synthesis report. Jenelle will know the first week of June if she will be bringing the Roads Sub-basin Project to CMER next month. Dick asked if the Clean Water Act report has a prioritized list of what they are requesting CMER to work on. Mark answered that there is a prioritized list but questions whether CMER will have any funding to work on this. Darin said that if we need to free up funds to work on this, we need to figure out what will be cut in the budget to cover this, maybe the contingency funds, statistician or technical editor contracts. Steve said that the only source of significant funding that he has heard of is the stimulus money. Has CMER looked at trying to pursue this? Darin said that DNR executive management decided which programs in DNR were going to seek stimulus funds, and CMER was not included in this. The opportunity has already passed for CMER to get funds from this source.

Policy Meeting – Darin

There were no decision items. There were updates on the Soft Rock project scoping, Eastside Type F Channel Wood study design, and a publication regarding the Type N Experimental amphibian genetics. They had a brief discussion on the Clean Water Act assurances report. There will be a revised report by July 1. Nancy has put together a series of trainings for the Policy group regarding the AMP, Board Manual, and pertinent WAC's. At the May meeting, she went through section 1 and 2 of the Board Manual. Next month she will be going through section 3. They are discussing and tracking issues that come up during these trainings. They will prioritize them and figure out how to resolve them, which could mean revising the Board Manual, PSM, or WAC's. It will take a few months to get through all the training sessions. Most of the afternoon was spent working on the CMER budget and policy priorities in FY 11. They sent a letter to the Board outlining these priorities which are: funding, Clean Water Act Assurances, Adaptive Management Strategic Plan Implementation, Water Typing, and Type N.

Science Session – Status and Trend Monitoring of Watershed Conditions of the NW Forest Plan, Steve Lanigan

Steve is the team leader of Aquatic-Riparian Effectiveness Monitoring Program (AREMP). AREMP looks at Forest Service and BLM lands. They are looking at management plan affects on 6th-field watersheds, which are 25,000 to 100,000 hectares.

Points of Presentation:

- AREMP is evaluating the status and trends of the watershed. They are looking at physical, biological, and chemical attributes, which include: road density and crossings, riparian and upland vegetation, and stream channel physical and biological attributes. They score each of these attributes which leads to an overall watershed score.
- AREMP uses a decision-support model. Benefits of using this type of model: can be used at any spatial or temporal scale, results are repeatable, the model can be updated using local specialists.
- They randomly selected 250 watersheds with a minimum of 25% federal ownership. 21 watersheds are sampled each year. There is about a 12 year rotation to get through all the watersheds. They randomly select 6 stream reaches in each watershed to monitor.
- They use field data and combine it with GIS and remote sensing to come up with the watershed score. Scores seem to be going up largely due to vegetation growth and road decommissioning. If the score went down, it was usually due to fire.
- Preliminary results of monitoring say that the NW Forest Plan is working. They have been completing program validation. They have found a few attributes that they don't measure anymore because they are not repeatable or found other issues with measuring the attribute. The attributes they no longer measure are: entrenchment (b/c couldn't come up with consistent way to measure), fish (b/c they are monitoring too high in the watershed to have salmon), water chemistry (b/c only a snap shot in time which is not that useful).
- They have expanded the plan to look at 1300 watersheds. They use remote sensing to do most of this. They aggregate results by ESUs, basins, recovery areas, ecoregions, administrative units, plan areas. Have complete stream layer for OR and WA. Have complete vegetation data using Landsat for OR, WA, and CA. This includes tree size distributions, species composition, snag and log densities, forest and non-forest. It is periodically updated. Have incorporated landslides using topographic data.
- They have a roads layer, but it doesn't compare to the other current road layers. BLM seems to have the best roads layer, which under-reports roads 7% of the time. The Forest Service under-reports roads 15% of the time, and other landowners 35%.
- They have a 10-year report out and are currently working on the 15-year report which should be out spring of 2010. Technical and annual reports are on their website: www.reo.gov/monitoring/watershed-overview.shtml

Points of discussion:

- Does Landsat delineate riparian areas?
They don't have a way to do that very well; they basically delineate 30 meters along the stream and call it riparian. How do you know that the stream is where the map says it is? Sometimes the stream isn't always where Landsat says it is. However, they are looking at larger streams, not necessarily small headwater streams, so it's not as big of an issue.

- They are looking at 1300 watersheds, but only 250 have field data collected. Landslides are not mapped in the field because they only visit 6 sites in a watershed. Therefore, this would not be a good representation of the landslides in a watershed. melindamoore@fed.us would be a good one to talk to about Landsat.
- It is possible that there could be higher watershed scores if field data were collected for all watersheds, not just remote sampling.
- Are you looking at the relationship between a high or low watershed score and fish populations?
They are working with PNW on this and are not seeing a great relationship, mainly because this plan was not set up to show that relationship. They are also working with the Columbia Basin Tribal fish data to see if there are any relationships with their data.
- They install temperature sensors in June at the lower end of each reach, and pull them in September.

Science Session – Revision of the Aquatic Conservation Strategy (ACS), Dave Heller and Brian Staab

Points of Presentation:

- They looked at 17 administrative units, 684 watersheds, 25,500 miles of fish bearing streams, and 10,000 miles of anadromous streams.
- They adopted NW Forest Plan (AREMP), Pacfish, and Infish because they generally covered a consistent management plan. This amended forest plans and developed consistent direction across multiple regions and forests. They went from site scale analysis and planning to watershed scale and integrated treatments.
- This strategy was put in place around 1994. After 10 years, they were asked to look at revising the strategy. The approach for the critique was questionnaires and workshops to identify needed improvements. Initial feedback is that it is working pretty well.
- ACS is being implemented and it appears to be effective. Watershed conditions seem to be improving, strategies were addressing things at large scale, and were incorporating key concepts in disturbance ecology.
- The interim management plan for allocations of riparian reserves was not modified over time as expected due to administrative, social, and scientific issues.
- There was an inconsistent use of watershed analysis by decision makers and inconsistent quality of analysis. There needs to be a broader-scale analysis.
- Unified Strategy developed for Forest Plan revisions called “*Aquatic and Riparian Conservation Strategy*”.
- Major findings that are being considered in the revisions: Scale, disturbance, and restoration. They retained status and trends monitoring at the regional-scale, but implementation monitoring was discontinued due to lack of funding.
- They are looking at the effects of thinning on stream shading. Referenced one study on the Rogue River-Siskiyou where they used digital photography of riparian areas before and after thinning. At a 60 foot no-cut buffer, they saw little change before and after thinning.

Points of discussion:

- Is anyone looking at modifying the riparian reserves from the interim plan?

Time and money was better spent looking at what is being done in the riparian area than modifying the riparian reserves, so this is not being looked at. They do have adaptive management areas in the plan which includes the riparian management areas.

- How extensive are projects that are looking at how these strategies are working?
There is site scale monitoring, but it is not very extensive. The BLM is looking at variable width thinning in the riparian areas and this has been incorporated in some of their strategies.
- They had no formal QA/QC process. They did not complete a formal synthesis of the watershed analysis process.
- Is active management in the riparian areas part of the strategy? What activities are being done that are acceptable in riparian areas?
What's acceptable varies on where you are. It's part of the strategy.
- They have not made a big effort to share data. They are still working on getting it to their funding agencies first. It seems like the Board should see this information because they want to know how we are doing on the landscape level. Dick mentioned that we need someone from CMER directly involved with this group.
- Model used to generate a watershed score – Have you looked at the correlation between the road and vegetation data in the uplands vs. near the streams?
They have not seen a real strong correlation, but this monitoring was never set up to look at this correlation. It would be a huge cost and would take resources away from something else. They agree that it would be a good idea to look at though.
- Reference for the riparian temperature study is Chris Parks, cparks@fs.gov .

SAG Request – LWAG request to send RMZ re-sample report to ISPR, Marc Hayes

Marc went through the SAG request that was submitted. Terry asked for agreement from CMER to forward the report to ISPR as is. There were no objections. The project will be forwarded to ISPR. Steve McConnell requested to look at the questions that are going to the ISPR reviewers again. Teresa will e-mail these to him and all of the original CMER reviewers of the final report.

LWAG Co-chair update – Marc Hayes

Jim MacCracken lost his position at Longview Fibre which left LWAG without a co-chair. At the May LWAG meeting, they discussed how to fill the position and Marc and A.J. decided they will share the co-chair duties. They will both attend the next two CMER meetings and then they will alternate attending after that. Dick asked how the deliverables for the Buffer, Shade Integrity project will be finished without Jim. The annual report has been revised and Marc is currently reviewing it. It will be completed by June. LWAG also discussed how the final report deliverable will be completed. Jim has committed to finish the final report by June 2010. If that does not appear to be working, then Julie Tyson at WDFW will finish it, but it may take longer because the Longview Fibre data will have to be incorporated into the report.

RSAG and UPSAG Soft Rock update, Chris

The sub-group is working on the scoping document with Greg Stewart's help. The project has become less urgent to move on the fast track, because there will be no new projects in FY2010.

SAG membership, Nancy

Please send Nancy any updates to the SAG membership spreadsheet in the next couple of weeks. Policy and stakeholders are interested in knowing who is on the SAG's. So far she has gotten feedback to put the PM's into a separate column.

Landowner data sharing memo, Chris

Chris went through the PSM and pulled out all the pertinent information on data sharing. A couple of landowners have requested data, but it has not been put into a formal MOU. The issue is that the landowners are asking for data before it has been QA/QC'd, analyzed, and/or incorporated into a CMER-approved final report. It may be possible to add some language to the access agreement that would include a data disclaimer instead of have it in a separate MOU. Amy suggested that there is language in the DNR contract that speaks to the sharing of information, and there is a potential cost consideration of separating out data per landowner. She also mentioned that she would like to be included in this sub-group since she was part of the group originally.

Any implications and recommendation section should be added to the document. Jenelle asked if we can put a restriction on the use of data between landowners. There is a long period of time between when the data is collected and when the report is finalized and available to the public. Doug felt that the appropriate credit should be given to the source of the data. Mark expressed a concern about sharing data that is raw and not complete. Curt feels that we should share data if it is used for only the landowner's purposes. Using the data for a competing analysis may also cause problems. Jenelle would suggest restrictions that focus on how the information is used. Chris pointed out that the PSM spells out how to handle the dissemination of data. The sharing of data can be addressed on a case-by-case basis, including what the landowners want to do with the information.

Jenelle - A couple of landowners have been waiting a couple months for this decision to occur so there is some urgency to get this wrapped up. Can we make a decision for these two landowners now before the document gets approved? Chris said that Policy needs to approve this before we release the data.

Do we need to specify that landowners don't give this information/data to people outside of their organization? Amy mentioned that the issue is that the landowner's are requesting to get the data before the project is complete. Once the project is complete, the data is available to the public anyway. Since the data has not been QA/QC'd or analyzed, there is a possibility of the data being used for something that it wasn't intended for. We want to avoid someone using the data for their own analysis and causing confusion before our analysis is complete.

Holding back data is potentially not a good policy to get into. It doesn't seem reasonable to hold back data until a final report is through all the review steps, which could take years to complete. They will send out the revised document prior to the June CMER meeting so CMER will have time to review it for the June meeting. Chris will work with Amy, Jenelle, and Julie to finish this. **Please send comments on the memo to Jenelle and Chris by June 9th.**

SAG request – Eastside Type F Channel Wood Project, Todd

Todd is requesting that the study design be approved and moved on to ISPR. The final study design and request was sent out to CMER last Wednesday. Mark said he has not seen it yet but doesn't have an issue sending it to ISPR. He does however want to see the questions that go to the ISPR reviewers. It was questioned that it is not a requirement to bring the ISPR questions to CMER. Mark thinks the PSM should be changed to include that the ISPR questions would come to CMER for review. Chris stated that the PSM does not require the questions to go to CMER for review unless there is a disagreement in the SAG. Chris commented on the historical context of the process. In the past we have had ISPR reviewers that would comment on things that were not related to the project. The cover letter puts some sidebars on how CMER would like to limit the ISPR review. Chris recommended that the CMER reviewers that commented on the study design can look at the questions and reach an agreement on the questions. Todd will send out the questions to the CMER reviewers and cc Terry, Chris, and Darin.

CMER Co-chair, Nancy

The co-chair position held by Chris ends this year. He is willing to stay on for another year. Terry still has another year left, which would mean both co-chairs would be replaced at the same time. The idea of having staggered terms were in place so there would be one experienced co-chair when the new one came on board. Nancy thinks we should pass this on to the Policy members so they can start thinking about who they could put in these positions in the next year. The CMER co-chairs will bring this up at the June Policy meeting.

Independent Scientific Peer Review

There are two documents going to ISPR: Eastside Type F Channel Wood project study design and RMZ re-sample final report. The Desktop Study Analysis and the Forest Hydrology project are back from ISPR and the comments are being reviewed. The sub-committee for the Desktop Study Analysis will get together soon to complete their comment review. Dick would like to be added to the sub-committee.

Dick asked if the Washington Landscape-level Wildlife Assessment Technical working group have any connection to CMER. No, it's a separate group of WDFW that is working with the FP Board.

Items Going to Policy

Items being taken to Policy for its June 4, 2009 meeting:

- ❖ CMER co-chair positions

Meeting was adjourned.

Parking Lot Issues:

CWA revised by July 1st

PSM Revision include ISPR questions to be reviewed by CMER