



REGIONAL TECHNICAL TEAM METHOW PRIORITIZATION WORKSHOP Draft MEETING SUMMARY

Date: Wednesday, September 23, 2020

Time: 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM

Location: Remote

Present: Ryan Niemeyer/UCSRB, Greer Maier/UCSRB, Matt Young, Hannah Coe/Okanogan CD, Tracy Hillman/ BioAnalysts, John Crandall/MSRF, Hans Smith/YN, Justin Yeager/NOAA, Jaime Cleveland/BPA

Major Action Items and Decisions:

Decisions/Recommendations to PWG:

- Delete floodplain connectivity as an action category for wood and side channels

Action Items:

- Run HQ by life stage and look for “mis-matches”
- Update Chewuch reach names and make sure HQ and LF have those (Thirtymile missing)
- WDFW- entrainment issues
- Need to refine “pool” language and reconcile
- Defer adopting high priority barriers until after QAQC

Meeting Summary

Greer Maier/UCSRB convened the meeting at 9 am. She overviewed the prioritization the process and described how the prioritization process has generated priority actions for reaches based on reach assessment data. This included having multiple pathways to generate priority reaches.

Before discussion started about the Habitat Quality Pathway, a participant asked how the prioritization process will integrate the reach assessment projects. Greer and Ryan shared that based on impaired habitat attributes and generated action categories linked to those impaired habitat attributes, the script/tool connects to specific projects in that reach from the reach assessments. One of the participants voiced the issue that some of the projects have been completed, and other projects have been completed that will have addressed or “completed” the action category action. This participant highlighted the need to highlight what the status is of the habitat in the reach right now, since some of the reach assessments are 10 years old, and “move forward” projects that are focused on impaired habitat. Greer mentioned that if the group is unsure what the current habitat condition is, this reach and habitat attribute will fall into the missing data category. This could help allocate resources for monitoring.

Greer overviewed the pathways. She briefly discussed how the three pathways were habitat quality pathway, the limiting factors pathway, and the fish barrier passage pathway. These three pathways will lead to projects based on the action categories tied to the habitat attributes that are impaired, which

are identified in the three pathways. Greer described how the habitat quality pathway generates an overall habitat score for each reach and also identifies if multipole life stages are present. For the limiting factors pathway, the pathway identifies where salmon life stages are present, and identify where habitat attributes that are habitat requirements for that life stage are impaired. Greer mentioned that for the barrier pathway, the barriers were tiered into two tiers which included tier 1 high priority barriers, and tier 2 moderate priority barriers in AUs that are high priority in the prioritization process. Greer mentioned that all barriers in the Methow are Tier 1 – so there are no Tier 2 barriers. She mentioned more detail would be provided for each pathway in the remainder of the meeting.

Action Items:

- **UCSRB:** Identify where restoration work has happened that has address a priority Action Category

Habitat Quality and Limiting Factors Pathway Overview

Greer overviewed the Habitat Quality (HQ) pathway. The HQ pathway included looking at only Tier 1 AUs, filtering for only mostly unconfined reaches. This pathway only pulled reaches with at least 4 of the 7 life stages present.

Greer walked through the “master” spreadsheet with all the input data for the tool. Greer demonstrated how a user can filter out for confinement score, habitat quality score, etc. For the Habitat Quality Score (the score that combined all the habitat attribute data), the PWG group decided that reaches with less than 80% function get a score of 5, 80-90% get a score of 3, and above 90% get a score of 1. These reaches with a score of 1 will in the future likely be highlighted for protection.

For individual habitat attribute scores, there are three: 1, 3, and 5, with 1 being the lowest/most impaired, and 5 being not impaired. The group discussed pulling reaches related to 1s or 3s. Currently the group could decide to only pull actions for 1s, but users could also pull 3s, and have those not be the highest priority, but still a priority.

Ryan shared the python script. Ryan overviewed how the python script reads in the master spreadsheet with all the habitat data. Ryan described how the criteria for each filter is established at the beginning, and change the criteria which subsequently changes the output. Python scripts allow for the pathway to easily re-generate the priority reaches. Ryan shared that this script will be made public, and that individuals can see what criteria were used for each pathway.

Greer shared the Habitat Attribute-Action Category Crosswalk, and how this has been edited and updated by the PWG. This connects individual Habitat Attribute to Action Category and then to Action Types. One participant brought up the issue of if possible, it would be better to establish more detailed Action Categories to be more specific, where possible. This participant voiced that it would be good to have a “clean table” to have the definitions of what Action Categories mean. The participant mentioned this would be especially helpful for sponsors to be able to really well understand and identify what actions are being proposed on the ground. The participant mentioned that EDT had definitions for Action Categories. Greer mentioned “Action Types” has examples, but the participant said it could be more fleshed out so sponsors can have a more clear definition of what actions are being pulled. John Arterburn and John Crandall have reviewed this crosswalk, but additional reviews or updates could be useful. The participant who had brought up the issue said ideally the current excel crosswalk could be summarized in a word document, and clear definitions and examples of action categories could be defined.

Greer overviewed the crosswalk. Greer walked through the Action Categories and how they are connected to Habitat Attributes. Greer made the point that if there are any Action Categories that are missing – ideally participants would provide additional Action Categories where they are missing. A participant mentioned the Crosswalk should be as inclusive as possible – so if there is an Action Category that is missing, the person who identifies this should add the Action Category to our current list.

Review Individual Assessment Units and Reaches

Chewuch River-Pearrygin Creek

Chewuch River-Pearrygin 01 – participants discussed how much of the reaches is in the steep canyons. However the group acknowledged that wood that is impaired. The group decided to remove Floodplain from an Action Category tied to Wood. Greer changed this in the Crosswalk – so no further action needed.

One of the participants said in the Lower Chewuch, if he could say the biggest issues, it is low flow and temperature is too high. He estimated that ~50% of low flow is gone due to diversion. One challenge too, is that low flows will increase temperature, so flow and temperature are linked to each other. Currently in the Lower Chewuch. The group decided to establish flow as an issue in Chewuch River all the way up to Cub Creek (up to Chewuch River-Pearrygin 07).

For Chewuch River – although “Riparian-Canopy” was often ranked “1” (impaired), for the composite Riparian, all reaches were ranked at 2 or above. The group agreed to keep it this way.

For the Chewuch River Steelhead analysis, since it overlapped with Spring Chinook, the group agreed to not provide additional input.

Chewuch River-Doe Creek

For Chewuch River Doe – all the reaches are unconfined. For stream temperature, the group agreed it should be higher in this AU, since the temperature was not indicated as an issue. John Crandall mentioned higher up in this AU (more upstream), since temperature is still quite high, even though in our criteria, based on NorWEST stream temperature data, it was deemed acceptable.

Hans shared the idea of calculating a total habitat function for each life stage and reach. Greer and Ryan said they can generate these outputs, and share this “life stage habitat quality assessment”, and share with the PWG.

Chewuch River-Thirtymile Creek

The group discussed Chewuch River-Thirtymile Creek AU. There were some issues where in some cases Chewuch River-Thirtymile Creek was not named correctly. Hans re-iterated to fix the Chewuch River Thirtymile name.

The group discussed actions in the Chewuch River-Thirtymile Creek AU – since it does not have many actions or reaches being pulled as high priority to focus on. Hans mentioned maybe the lowest downstream section might get pulled.

Methow River Fawn

The group discussed how flow should be rated lower since the creek has subsurface flow. The group discussed how this may have been discussed in previous meetings, but both Greer and Ryan search old meeting notes and could not find specific mentions of this issue.

The Methow group needs to re-evaluate the life stage presence in Methow Fawn based on the habitat. Some participants mentioned there should be some life stages present here.

Methow River Rattlesnake

Temperature should be a major issue in this AU.

Flow is an issue – for the “professional judgement” Habitat attribute, the ranking will set that as a 1 – based on professional judgement from participants that the flow is an issue.

Participants mentioned there may be some life stages present here.

Lower Twisp River

Poorman Creek 01 is confined – so it would not make it through the confinement filter.

The group discussed entertainment – the group did not identify any specific irrigators or irrigation districts that might be an issue. One respondent said that there is reticent to call out any specific irrigator, but the prioritization group needs to understand if and where entrainment might be an issue. Greer mentioned the group may just put entrainment as a three, and Greer will talk with WDFW person about identifying specific irrigators or irrigation projects.

One participant mentioned that changes to wood or channel morphology would likely “solve” some of the icing issues. And the three Action Categories overlap with some of the major

Middle Twisp River

Twisp River Middle 03 area – it listed as confined.

Most habitat attributes are not impaired, there are a couple reaches with wood that are rated “1” in habitat attributes. There are a couple pools.

Side-Channels were often popping out at “At Risk” – but Hans described how there are some impairments to side-channels in those reaches, but are being averaged out. As such, he thinks the “At Risk” ratings should still be included sometimes, since restoration opportunities will be missed.

The group discussed the issue of pools, how there are more high quality pools, and some of the data just counts pools.

Methow River-McFarland

Some reaches are excluded because of confinement – many of these reaches are confined.

Riparian and Cover-Wood and Pools are rated as “1”. One participant mentioned it is challenging since the reach is more confined, and more of the adjacent reaches are Ponderosa Pine or Sagebrush.

Methow River-Alta Coulee

Four reaches are “moving forward” through the filter. There are temperature issues.

Alte-Coulee Reaches (02 – 03) set the confinement to “unconfined. Several of the reaches are actually not passing the filter because of lack of confinement.

Action Items:

- **Ryan/Greer:** Based on discussion, filter out reaches based on individual habitat attributes having a score of 1 or 3.
- **Greer:** Put the action category crosswalk into a word document that clearly outlines definitions and examples of each action categories.
- **Greer:** send out crosswalk out of action categories to send out with definitions, and solicit feedback on refining/updating definitions.
- **Ryan:** Double check all the Watershed Condition ratings (NOTE – for Upper Chewuch – Hans said there was a discussion on temperature, but it was on in the master “Watershed Condition” data)
- **Ryan:** Create a new output that takes all the habitat attributes linked to each Life Stage, then do a cumulative calculation (a habitat function calculation like HQ_score) for each life stage in EACH reach – based. This can be called “life stage habitat quality assessment”
- **Ryan and Greer:** look for mismatches between the “life stage habitat quality assessment” and the existing life stage priorities (I think that is the comparison)
- **Greer/Ryan:** Fix the Chewuch River Thirtymile/Kay reach names – make sure the naming is consistent throughout.
- **Greer:** go back to April meeting notes – go in and over-ride the flow based on the reaches that have subsurface flow coming up
- **Greer:** Fix the temperature score in Methow Fawn – 06-08 – the data shows they should be an issue
- **Ryan/Greer:** for Methow Fawn Creek – re-evaluate life stage presence based on habitat.
- **Ryan:** Look at Temperature for “Methow Rattlesnake 02” (it’s rated a 05, probably should be an 01)
- **Ryan:** Add the life stage to each habitat attribute (i.e. for each habitat attribute – identify which life stages)
- **Ryan:** Double check the Lower Twisp River – it has most of the life stages present – but there are clearly some habitat attributes that are impaired that did not show up in the output.
- **Greer:** talk with WDFW person about entrainment, to potentially identify any specific irrigators.
- **Ryan/Greer:** Twisp River Middle 03 – over ride so reach is listed as “unconfined”
- **(DONE!) Greer:** Twisp River Middle 04 and 05 are missing in the HabitatQuality_Scores – error in the VLOOKUP
- **Ryan/Greer:** Look up why no pools deeper than 3 feet show up in the Middle Twisp River (John Crandall mentioned he has measured pools deeper than 3 feet.
- **Ryan/Greer:** set Methow River Alta Coulee 02 and 03 – set to unconfined
- **Ryan:** Python Script next steps: A) post the data to a public repository – SO the python code can call that data, B) verify individuals can run an ipython notebook with ease, C) post the ipython notebook to GitHub

Fish Passage Barriers Pathway

Fish barrier results has not gone through QA/QC. One issue came up was at site ID 980625 – on the Chewuch River – it appears they were assessing the side of the dam, but there was still passage to the side of the structure.

Greer mentioned it would be a good exercise for participants to look at Tier 1, and bring up with Kristen if there are any issues with the barriers. The fish barrier meeting is in November.

Another issue is the barrier on Little Bridge Creek is not an actual barrier. And it seems maybe the description matches with the barrier on Canyon Creek.

The group agreed to defer adopting the high priority barriers until after the November fish barrier passage meeting.

Action Items:

- **All Participants:** Follow up with WDFW official if individuals have any questions about barriers.

Next Steps

Greer and Ryan will update information based on meeting feedback, including follow-up to pull in Reach Assessment information that was missed. August PWG meeting to review again. In September focus will be on checking action types.