

Pacific Northwest Regional Infrastructure Team Steering Committee Meeting Summary Monday, July 14, 2014

TYPE OF MEETING & LOCATION	In-person Portland, OR, with Conference Call in by Idaho Members	
HOST	Paul Henson for Theresa Rabot, USFWS	
FACILITATION	Laurie Kline, Senior Communications Specialist, Tetra Tech	
SUMMARY PREPARED BY	Susan Hurley, Wildlife Biologist, Tetra Tech	
<p>STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS IN BOLD & OTHER ATTENDEES</p>	<p><u>USDI-Bureau of Land Management (BLM)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tim Murphy, Acting Idaho State Director <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Theresa Hanley, OR/WA Associate State Director <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Robin Estes, OR/WA Program Analyst for Land, Minerals and Energy Resources; Coordinating Staff <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Renee Straub, B2H Project Coordinator Vale District, OR/WA BLM <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tamara Gertsch, B2H National Project Manager, Realty Specialist, WO BLM <input type="checkbox"/> Fred O'Ferrall, OR/WA Branch Chief Land, Mineral, and Energy Resources <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jason Sutter, Wildlife Biologist, National Transmission Support Team, ID BLM <p><u>USDI-Office of the Secretary</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Liz Klein, Associate Deputy Secretary <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Allison O'Brien, Regional Environmental Officer <p><u>USDI-Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Theresa Rabot, Assistant Regional Director for Ecological Service, Region 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Paul Henson, State Supervisor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Shauna Ginger, Fish and Wildlife Biologist <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Joe Zisa, Division Manager for Energy, Infrastructure and Ecosystems Services <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stefanie Stavrakas, Alternative Energy Coordinator 	<p><u>Idaho State Governor's Office</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> John Chatburn, Administrator of Governor's Office of Energy Resources <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Scott Pugrud, Attorney/Project Manager Transmission and Alternative Energy <p><u>Oregon State Governor's Office</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Annette Liebe, Director of Regional Solutions <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Todd Cornett, Siting Division Administrator, ODOE <p><u>Washington State Governor's Office</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jesus Sanchez, Director of the Governor's Office for Regulatory Innovation and Assistance (ORIA) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alan Bogner, Supervisor, ORIA, Coordinating Staff <p><u>Western Governors Association (WGA)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chris Scolari, Policy Advisor for Energy and Waste <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tom Stoops, Director of Energy Services, Tetra Tech <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Laurie Kline, Tetra Tech Communications Specialist and PNWRIT Meeting Facilitator <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Susan Hurley, Tetra Tech Biologist and PNWRIT Note Keeper <p><u>Bonneville Power Administration</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lydia Grimm, Manager Environmental Planning and Analysis <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dave Kennedy, NEPA and Policy Planning Supervisor
	HANDOUTS/ PRESENTATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation: Regional Mitigation: Developing a Mitigation Framework and Incorporating Regional Mitigation, Jason Sutter, BLM, • Presentation: Greater Sage-Grouse Range-Wide Mitigation Framework, Shauna Ginger, USFWS

Meeting Summary

Welcome, Agenda Review, and Introductions

- Paul Henson (filling in for Terry Rabot, USFWS) welcomed the group and conducted introductions.
- Lydia Grimm from BPA introduced herself. She noted that BPA has significant experience in transmission, with over 15,000 circuit miles. She said that while BPA functions like a utility, they are a federal agency. Due to this wide range of experience, Lydia noted that BPA could be a valuable resource for the PNWRIT; offering translation skills, a wide-range of expertise in engineering and permitting, and experience in landscape-scale mitigation.
- Liz Klein introduced herself to the group and expressed her support. Liz noted that her office understands that transmission projects can be difficult and they will do their best to support the PNWRIT's efforts and projects under discussion.

Update on Cooperative Agreement Between the PNWRIT and WGA and Introduction of Tetra Tech Staff

- Robin Estes introduced the Tetra Tech Team, noting that Tetra Tech has been working with the Western Governors' Association's Transmission Siting Task Force. The Tetra Tech Team will provide administrative support to the PNWRIT and can help with other technical reports or white papers. The OR/WA BLM Cooperative Agreement funding WGA and Tetra Tech's work with the PNWRIT is through a three-year (which can be extended to five years) financial assistance grant.
- Chris Scolari from WGA said he hopes this will streamline permitting processes, and looks forward to the working partnership with the PNWRIT.
- Tom Stoops introduced the Tetra Tech Team, outlining experience and technical expertise, and describing work Tetra Tech has conducted with WGA.

Boardman to Hemingway (B2H) Project Update

- Scott Pugrud said that a new/revised schedule had been developed for B2H and that the Idaho Governor's Office is encouraged by that, emphasizing the importance of staying on schedule. He said that the Idaho Governor's Office appreciates actions taken by BLM since the last PNWRIT meeting to increase and improve communications.
- Tamara Gertsch further described increased communications between BLM and Idaho State. She described some key dates that have been developed for B2H, and described how the states (Idaho and Oregon) and federal processes were being addressed within that schedule. She noted the importance of syncing the processes as much as possible in order to stay on schedule, stressing that state and federal agencies will be working together closely.
- Todd Cornett also described the updated schedule, noting that the agencies had worked with the proponent to develop the schedule. He said this is a reasonable approach based on what we know now, but there are elements that are outside of agency control, such as the contested case portion conducted before the Oregon Supreme Court. Todd also brought up the topic of mitigation, noting that detailed mitigation needs to be described in the proponent's (Idaho Power) Habitat Mitigation Plan (HMP) in order for ODOE to deem the proponent's Application for Site Certificate complete, and that ODOE was aware of the implications within the federal decision-making process.
- Theresa Hanley noted that she was pleased to hear that communication between the BLM and the Idaho State Governor's has improved, and believes this is a good demonstration of how the PNWRIT can be utilized.

- The group discussed the importance of syncing the Idaho and Oregon state and federal decision processes and documents, to make sure all regulations are met; stressing the importance of regular communication to ensure strong documents and the ability to stay on schedule.

Vantage to Pomona Heights (Vantage) Project Update

- Robin Estes presented the Project update and noted BLM and the Cooperating Agencies (CAs) had just completed their review and comment on the Administrative Supplemental Draft EIS (ASDEIS). She said that the majority of the CAs had complied with the agreed upon NEPA-SEPA schedule and they were on track to publish the SDEIS on Sept.5, 2014. She said that BLM solicitors and planners in both the OR/WA State Office and the BLM Washington Office had reviewed the document during this period, which she recommended as a best practice that should be continued, to avoid issues later in the process. She talked about the Steering Committee for the Project, which includes all local, state and federal managers who have decisions to make on the Project. The NEPA and SEPA lead agencies (BLM and Washington State Department of Transportation) provided a SEPA/NEPA crosswalk and SEPA checklist to be concurrently reviewed by the CAs as an appendix in the ASDEIS. The environmental documents being produced for this Project will explicitly meet the requirements of both NEPA and Washington State's SEPA. Robin noted this approach is a "streamlining approach" and should be carried on as a best practice on other projects. The Project's Sage-grouse Subgroup (biologist from USFWS, Washington State Department of Fish & Wildlife, US Army Yakima Training Center and BLM are working on and developing a Project-specific framework for sage-grouse compensatory mitigation. Robin noted that BLM continues to work on bringing all tribal, local, state and federal agencies to the table that have jurisdiction or special expertise related to this Project and has executed a number of cooperating agency MOUs and agreements.
- Jesus Sanchez said it's important to make sure the State stakeholders are involved, and to keep everyone moving forward and adhering to the schedule.

PNWRIT Priority 3 – Cross-Agency/Cross-Jurisdictional Mitigation Opportunities: Recently Released DOI Secretarial Policy on Landscape-Scale Mitigation Strategy

- Paul Henson segued into this topic by telling the Steering Committee that, as an example of Priority 3, USFWS is trying to bring all stakeholders to the table to address sage-grouse mitigation.
- Theresa Hanley reminded the Steering Committee of the February 4, 2014 meeting in Portland with Secretary Jewell on the topic of the landscape-scale mitigation strategy proposed by DOI. She said that this is a high priority for Secretary Jewell. She said that PNWRIT could provide leadership and guidance to help implement landscape-scale mitigation, by providing examples and of how it could be done. Theresa said that the PNWRIT could identify resources and promote an environment to move this effort forward at a regional level.
- Paul Henson reminded the PNWRIT that they have identified B2H and Vantage as priority projects, and that these projects have the advantage of using the draft Greater Sage-Grouse Range-Wide Compensatory Mitigation Framework (Sage-Grouse Framework) and the Secretarial Policy on Landscape-Scale Mitigation (Secretarial Policy) as building blocks. Theresa agreed.
- Jesus Sanchez said that makes sense to his Office and they would like to support the Secretary's policy. Jesus said that he thinks it could be valuable to have the Tribes involved in the process as well. He noted that the Tribes have capacity for support and are also in need of protecting resources.
- Tim Murphy also recalled the February meeting with Secretary Jewell, saying that we don't have a lot of examples of interstate work, and that she has challenged PNWRIT to look beyond traditional methods. He brought up the idea of general youth employment, and additionally tribal youth employment, to help in the implementation of mitigation projects.

- Todd Cornett noted that ODOE agrees with the Secretarial Policy but that actions taken also need to comply with Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife's (ODFW's) Habitat Mitigation Policy. He said that the Mitigation Policy is actually written with flexibility of interpretation that may make it easier to comply with.
- Annette Liebe said her office would also be open to evaluating whether policies need to be changed in order to work within the Secretarial Policy.
- Paul Henson said that based on his work with ODFW and the Sage-Grouse Framework, he thinks they can make the ODFW Mitigation Policy work within the Secretarial Policy. He noted that he wasn't sure if Washington State policy would easily fold into the Secretarial Policy though.
- Lydia Grimm mentioned that understanding what each State needs and helping to bridge the gap could be a good thing for the PNWRIT to take on.
- The Steering Committee discussed that the PNWRIT is talking about using a cross-jurisdictional landscape level mitigation approach. That it would not be project-specific, but could be used on any project. The group talked about how the PNWRIT guidance and projects (B2H and Vantage) would interact, with the concern that the projects not be slowed down. The group agreed that the PNWRIT guidance will be informed by methods employed on the priority projects, and those mitigation plans will be developed using current and evolving methods, models, tools, opportunities, etc.
- Jason Sutter brought up the fact that the landscape-scale approach for mitigation is a shift in paradigm, from small mitigation projects sited very close to project impact areas, to larger mitigation projects potentially much further away from project impact areas. There are jurisdictional issues inherent in the new approach, and agencies are trying to identify areas where big mitigation projects could be done. Jason brought up Rapid Ecological Assessments, noting that one had been done for the northern Great Basin, and several habitat connectivity analyses were conducted in Washington, which are all working toward landscape and multispecies mitigation projects.
- Paul Henson agreed that this is a new approach. He said guidance needs to be specific enough to communicate priorities to proponents but not so prescriptive as to limit them. He said we should streamline mitigation planning as opposed to starting from scratch. Based on a question, Paul noted that not all mitigation would occur on federal land, but could also include private and state lands.

Briefing on Status and Substance of USFWS "Greater Sage-Grouse Range-Wide Compensatory Mitigation Framework"

- Shauna Ginger provided the group with a presentation on the Sage-Grouse Mitigation Framework. USFWS noted that this is a species with a range covering 11 states, providing a great example of a multi-jurisdictional approach. PowerPoint attached.

Mitigation Approaches on Vantage to Pomona Heights and B2H Projects

- Briefing discussion led by Jason Sutter, Wildlife Biologist on BLM's National Transmission Support Team assigned to both the Vantage to Pomona and Boardman to Hemingway projects, as to the approach and status of mitigation framework development on the two projects
- Jason Sutter provided the group with a presentation on the project-specific mitigation framework approaches, describing BLM's approach to provide guidance to proponents but allowing them the flexibility to meet their project-specific mitigation requirements through proponent developed "Habitat Mitigation Plans." PowerPoint attached.

Brainstorm Potential Cross-Jurisdictional, Landscape Level Mitigation Opportunities and Tools That Could Be Applied to These Projects as “Pilots” for a Regional Prototype

- Throughout the prior presentations, the group discussed a number of topics, including the concept of additionality of mitigation on federal lands, consistency of mitigation requirements between state and federal processes, and where mitigation should occur in terms of proximity to impact areas.
- Several in the PNWRIT were surprised that federal lands were not considered suitable for mitigation by USFWS.
- The group had a discussion regarding the role of the PNWRIT Steering Committee and potential tools or guidance that the PNWRIT could generate and/or endorse.
- Theresa noted that regional mitigation was one of the three priorities that the PNWRIT was created to address. She said that cross-jurisdictional barriers could also be identified and addressed by the PNWRIT.
- Alan questioned whether it would be useful to include others, such as tribes and third party environmental groups and NGOs.
- Jesus affirmed that one of the Committee’s primary functions is to support landscape mitigation—as the PNWRIT across the states—embracing that as policy, and that the Steering Committee should focus on higher level issues and let the details get hammered out by technical staff. He stressed that he would like to hear more from the implementers (e.g., Jason, Shauna) to help identify where there are questions and concerns. He can then help build support from a policy level around a framework that is reasonable. He cautioned that the PNWRIT cannot shape policy for other agencies on their behalf.
- Robin suggested that it might be time for the PNWRIT to hear from the priority project proponents regarding the three PNWRIT priorities above. The PNWRIT decided that would be very helpful but the next meeting is not the appropriate time.
- Tamara Gertsch mentioned that the PNWRIT might provide insight on an issue likely to arise on B2H - how to move the process forward when groups don’t agree with the regional mitigation approach. She also mentioned issues surrounding budgeting (annual rather than long-term budgets), obtaining easements on federal lands, and clarifying the decision-making process (e.g., identifying the right parties to include in the process, determining how decisions are made, and determining who makes the final decision).

Next Steps, Tasks, and Next Meeting

- Theresa Hanley noted that the PNWRIT has three priorities: (1) identifying regionally significant projects, (2) identifying broad process improvements, and (3) identifying effective mitigation strategies and opportunities across the region. She would like to touch on each of these priorities at every meeting.
- The PNWRIT Steering Committee Members agreed to have an executive session at the next meeting and potentially at all future meetings. They also agreed that all future PNWRIT Steering Committee Meetings would be extended from three hours to six hours to allow for adequate time to deliberate, discuss and decide on future actions.
- PNWRIT Facilitator Laurie Kline, Jesus Sanchez, Theresa Hanley, and Robin Estes will schedule a pre-planning meeting for the next PNWRIT Steering Committee Meeting to be hosted by the Washington State Governor’s Office of Regulatory Innovation & Assistance to develop a draft agenda for the September 3rd meeting. This draft agenda will be circulated to PNWRIT Steering Committee members for their input and approval. Agenda topics may include identifying issues, concerns, and possible solutions related to project-specific mitigation implementation; the use of “strike teams” for PNWRIT priority projects; and an overview of WGA’s RAPID Toolkit and Chat tools.

Best Practices Identified

- Emphasize early communications and input to process from key parties (local, state, federal, tribes, NGOs). For example, on the Vantage to Pomona Heights Project, BLM requested early review of the ASDEIS by BLM solicitors, planners, and Washington Office to identify potential issues with the document.
- Clearly communicate policies, regulations, and other guidance to proponents early in the process.
- Develop cross-walk checklist to integrate applicable requirements from overlapping regulations. For example, the Vantage to Pomona Heights Project provided a draft SEPA/NEPA crosswalk and SEPA checklist to facilitate document review.
- Consider revision to existing policies to incorporate regional perspectives. BLM is currently revising its resource management plans (RMPs), mitigation, and conservation policies. USFWS is developing a pre-listing mitigation policy, using the sage-grouse framework as a pilot.
- Provide detailed mitigation approaches in habitat mitigation plans that incorporate regional perspectives.
- Consider new approaches, such as engaging tribes and youth in the implementation of mitigation programs.
- Encourage flexibility in the mitigation framework to support implementation at a regional scale.
- Ensure the fundamental principles of mitigation are integrated into the framework, including durability, additionality, net conservation gain, and appropriate mitigation sequence (avoid, minimize, mitigate). An example is the sage-grouse framework being developed by USFWS.
- Identify potential or target mitigation areas early in the process; work with land owners to obtain easements and buy-in; select areas providing the best mitigation benefit while considering economic factors.

Potential Barriers Identified

- Policy differences between agencies
- Communication between parties: when, how, what, who; time constraints and other priorities
- Decision-making process: identifying the final decision-maker, determining which parties should be involved, etc.
- Mitigation on federal lands: How can this satisfy USFWS mitigation requirements?
- Measuring the effectiveness of mitigation measures: selecting the right tools, metrics, monitoring practices
- Budgets: obtaining long-term funding for mitigation programs
- Financial: obtaining agreement on how offsets will be measured, how resources can be stacked when developing compensatory mitigation (e.g., mitigation banks, in lieu fee programs)
- Obtaining land owner concurrence for mitigation sites

Action Items

Action Item	Person Responsible	Due Date
Copy Liz Klein communications from the PNWRIT.	All	Ongoing
Plan the next PNWRIT meeting. This meeting will be held September 3, 2014 in Olympia at the Washington Governor's office.	Laurie Kline with Jesus Sanchez, Theresa Hanley and Robin Estes	ASAP in August 2014
Develop presentation on WGA tools and methods applicable to landscape-level mitigation.	WGA	TBD