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Sent: Friday, September 28, 2001 2:40 PM
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Subject: Summary of September 17 conference call



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Fellow trustees - attached is the final summary of the September 17 conference call on ERDF mitigation.

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Summary

Hanford Natural Resource Trustee Council Conference Call ERDF Mitigation Proposal

September 17, 2001

Participants: Tom O'Brien, Tom Zeilman, Lauri Vigue, Jamie Zeisloft, John Sands, Kevin Clarke, Connie Smith, Larry Goldstein

ERDF

The trustees expressed support for the objectives stated in the September 19 Dan Landeen and Larry Goldstein emails. The trustees agree that an objective for mitigation should include a diversity of plants to help restore shrub steppe habitat and minimize encroachment of invasive species. Tom Zeilman reminded the trustees that the Yakama Nation believes the natural climax habitat for the region is actually grassland, and not shrub steppe as commonly believed.

Jamie Zeisloft reported RL in general supports the objective of planting a diversity of species, but it is important to look at factors such as cost, availability of seed or seedlings, schedule for planting, and desired outcomes. Historically RL has replanted at a 3:1 ratio in fire damaged areas where the grasses and forbes are still intact but the shrub component is missing. Planting native grasses would involve going into areas of low quality habitat with the intent of reestablishing grasses. Grasses can be planted either mechanically or by hand, but hand planting is more costly.

Two options are being considered by RL and USFWS:

1) The existing Scope of Work, e.g., plant sagebrush only
Planting the majority of the 510 acres with shrub (e.g. sagebrush, bitterbrush, rabbit brush) and planting a small portion of the acreage with native grasses. A proposal for this option is being prepared by the USFWS Richland Office.

RL supports Option (2), although it may result in reduced coverage. RL also stated that the project budget is fixed and the cost impact of the second option needs to be assessed. RL and USFWS will assess seed inventories, and nursery stocks for a variety of plants, e.g., bitter brush, rabbit brush, grass plugs, and forbs.

Jamie will distribute new information to the Council when it is available and another conference call will be scheduled.

Lauri Vigue expressed concern that the existing Scope of Work doesn't have many components required by WDFW in a mitigation plan, including baseline data, a monitoring plan, criteria for evaluating success, and a contingency plan. Other trustees also asked for baseline data in order to help assess possible site locations and optimal planting for those sites. Jamie responded that the short-term contract with USFWS does not lend itself to that kind of information, and those

would be found in the (Bechtal) Environmental Restoration Contractor Revegetation Monitoring Report. Site selection will be coordinated with the trustees, as it was with past revegetation projects.

A field trip to ALE is planned for next year, perhaps May.

Peer Review

Time allowed a short discussion on peer review. Jamie summarized the Battelle and USDOE internal review processes for technical documents which require management and peer review. Management review for the chromium studies integration report would require approval by a technical group manager for the senior author. A colleague would conduct peer review. Battelle is open to the external review proposed by the trustees, and suggest that as many as three knowledgeable individuals, (e.g., from universities), in addition to the trustees, could peer review technical documents. The trustees were in agreement with this approach, Jamie will send out a message to the full council addressing this issue and asking for support or other suggestions.

Other Business

Tom Zeilman reported that the upcoming State and Tribal Government Working Group (STGWG) has been cancelled.

There was a discussion about the Horseshoe Landfill Sampling and Analysis Plan (SAP). In addition to the initial biota sampling that is in the sampling plan, additional recurring bio-monitoring is to be performed (Option B). A DQO Process is needed for the recurring monitoring to address issues such as what and where to sample and for how long. USDOE wants an "exit strategy," i.e., final cleanup determinations, for the site.