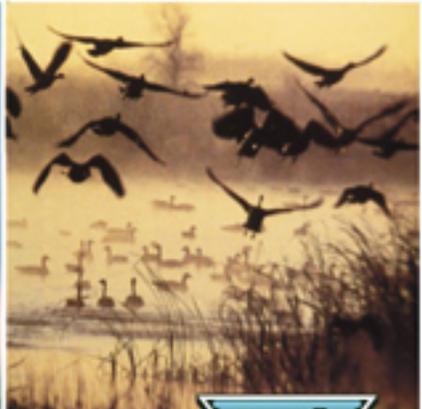
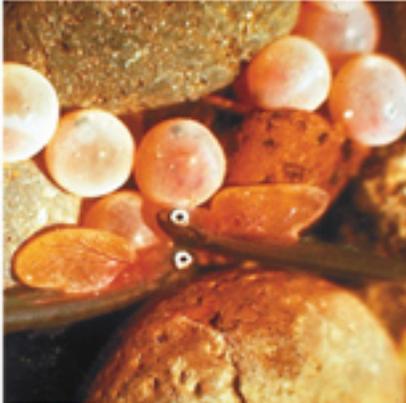


# Clearwater Focus Program

Annual Report 2005 - 2006

July 2006

DOE/BP-00023412-1



This Document should be cited as follows:

*Hohle, Janet, "Clearwater Focus Program", 2005-2006 Annual Report, Project No. 199608600, 7 electronic pages, (BPA Report DOE/BP-00023412-1)*

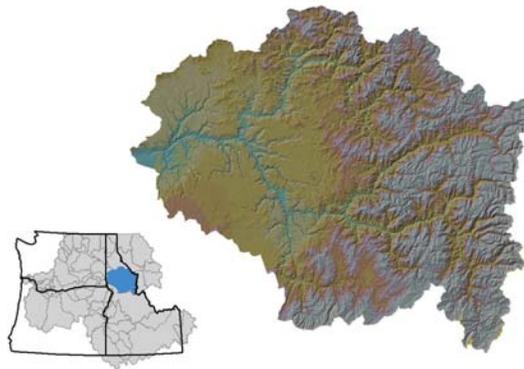
Bonneville Power Administration  
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This report was funded by the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), U.S. Department of Energy, as part of BPA's program to protect, mitigate, and enhance fish and wildlife affected by the development and operation of hydroelectric facilities on the Columbia River and its tributaries. The views in this report are the author's and do not necessarily represent the views of BPA.

# Clearwater Focus Program

Final Report

July 1, 2005 – June 30, 2006



Clearwater River Subbasin in the Columbia River Basin

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Funded by

U.S. Department of Energy  
Bonneville Power Administration  
Division of Fish and Wildlife  
Portland, OR 97208-3621

Project No. 1996-086-00  
Contract No. 00023412

## **Introduction**

The Clearwater River subbasin was designated a coordination program under the 1994 Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program by the Northwest Power and Conservation Council (Council) in November 1996. The Clearwater Focus Program is co-coordinated by Idaho State and the Nez Perce Tribe. This Bonneville Power Administration (Bonneville) funded contract is sponsored by the Idaho Soil Conservation Commission (ISCC) on behalf of Idaho State. The contract term for this program has been synchronized with the state fiscal year, which is operates from July 1 to June 30, to facilitate contract administration and accounting. This report presents a narrative summary of work conducted from July 1, 2005 to June 30, 2006. Coordination for the Clearwater Focus Program funded under this contract is operating as recommended by the Council for the Mountain Snake Provincial Review that occurred in late 2001 and in subsequent Fiscal Year funding approval processes.

## **Clearwater Subbasin-wide Activities**

A review of legal documents used by various soil and water conservation districts to implement habitat restoration activities showed that there was a wide range in quality and substance. The co-coordinator retained an attorney to work with to develop updated documents for district use. A document to cover activities when a district subcontracts for construction directly was developed and another agreement was prepared to use for agreements between the district landowners who may be participating in a conservation program managed by the district. These documents were distributed for final review in June 2006.

The co-coordinator conducted a review of the insurance policy held by the ISCC on behalf of districts for errors and omissions (liability) determined that the coverage was deficient. The review included analyzing the insurance contract and conducting interviews with the insurance underwriter to determine exactly what the depth and breadth of the policy was. Because non-Farm Bill programs that districts access for conservation efforts often use standards and specifications other than the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service the co-coordinator recommended to ISCC central staff that the insurance should be expanded to incorporate use of standards and specifications from other entities, for example, NOAA Fisheries, Bonneville Power Administration, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, etc.

Coordination meetings continued in the Fiscal Year 2005 contract in preparation for the call for Fiscal Year 2007-2009 proposals. Work focused on coordinating district and Nez Perce Tribe Watershed Division (NPT) projects where they were being developed in the same watersheds, including Big Canyon Creek, Lapwai Creek, lower Salmon River, and Little Salmon River. The group also discussed developing a proposal for fish population and distribution surveys in the lower Clearwater tributaries where work had not been done since the mid-1980s. It was decided that the NPT would take the lead on this project because the remaining tributaries were located within the exterior boundaries of the Nez Perce Tribe Indian Reservation. The survey protocols would be coordinated with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game.

The Idaho Governor's Office of Species Conservation (Idaho OSC) assumed coordination for project proposal recommendations from the state to the Northwest Power and Conservation Council (Council). This was a variance from the Clearwater Subbasin Management Plan that provides for the Clearwater PAC to make recommendations on subbasin proposals. However, as the Council intends to initiate a Provincial Review or similar review process again as early as 2007, it is anticipated that the Clearwater PAC at that juncture may implement their subbasin plan role.

The Idaho Office of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) in coordination with the Idaho Office of Species Conservation has recovery planning in the state during the contract term. Subbasin technical contacts to use for information distribution were provided for that process. The Clearwater Policy Advisory Committee (Clearwater PAC) was used to initiate recovery planning document distribution in a workshop held in April 2006. In the presentation Idaho NMFS reported that the Interior Columbia River Technical Recovery Team determined that the lower Clearwater River A-run, Lolo Creek A and B-run, and Lochsa B-run steelhead in the Clearwater subbasin are Snake River Steelhead Designated Population Segments. These populations must be recovered to achieve recovery of what was previously identified as the Snake River Steelhead Evolutionarily Significant Unit. A-run steelhead are located in the western portion of the subbasin where agricultural land uses dominate the landscape. Restoration in these watersheds has thus far being more limited than upper subbasin drainages.

### **Conservation District Support**

The co-coordinator was one of a four-person team to conduct a program review of the Nez Perce Soil and Water Conservation District (Nez Perce SWCD) in spring 2005. The co-coordinator recommended that the district should develop formal policy to manage the various programs and funding sources they use in conservation work. Funding sources were and continue to be Bonneville, ISCC, and USDA Farm Bill programs. The Nez Perce SWCD appointed a committee comprised of district supervisors and district staff to develop the policy. The co-coordinator developed a draft manual compiling materials from some policy the district already had in place and model documents from other states. The co-coordinator met throughout the Fiscal Year with the committee and the draft manual is now in the final stages of review.

The Idaho Soil and Water Conservation District (Idaho SWCD) initiated several irrigation construction projects in late summer 2005, the funding for which had been secured earlier in the year. This was the first experience for managing irrigation construction projects for the Idaho SWCD. The co-coordinator assisted by drafting a contracting policy for the district to review, adopt, and use; provided construction contract language from the legal framework project mentioned previously; prepared the call for bid packets; prepared a spreadsheet to compare bids, contacted contractor references; and assisted the Idaho SWCD Board with the bid review process. Engineering design and inspection for these projects came primarily from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation with the IDFG providing assistance in fish salvage activities and

by expanding their fish population and distribution survey work to include the project waterways.

The co-coordinator participated as a member of the Potlatch River project sponsored by the Latah Soil and Water Conservation District (Latah SWCD) in the review of the various phases of the Potlatch River Watershed Management Plan.

Professional engineering assistance has long been a bottleneck for project implementation by districts in the Clearwater subbasin. Two applications have been submitted to the PCSRF for assistance, but both were rejected.

The co-coordinator worked with three districts to develop project proposals for the Fiscal Year 2006-2009 solicitation. Eventually two new watershed project proposals were developed. Unfortunately, because they were new projects they were prioritized in the third tier of proposals from the Mountain Snake Province. The documentation from the two proposals will be used to pursue other funding sources.

### **Program Information and Administrative Activities**

Four individual meetings were held with new representatives to the Clearwater Policy Advisory Committee to provide orientation materials prior to reconvening the group. New members and alternates were from the Clearwater and Nez Perce National Forests, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Idaho Board of County Commissioners.

Program updates were presented to the five districts in Division II and five county commissions. Quarterly program status reports were presented to the Idaho Soil Conservation Commission during the Fiscal Year 2005 contract. At the request of staff from the Idaho Congressional Delegation a report was prepared that identified habitat projects and associated funding for restoration work in the Clearwater subbasin.

Available funding opportunities were announced to conservation partners throughout the year. Funding availability is found through a federal grant notification service, state agency announcements, and private foundation funding research.

### **Special Projects**

An application for Idaho Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery Fund (PCSRF) financial support was prepared for the Idaho Board of County Commissioners for a culvert replacement project. Two other proposals were prepared for this project including one to NOAA Fisheries for the Community-based Restoration Program and the Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation (IFWF). The first two have been approved while the IFWF proposal is pending. Contracting assistance will also be provided to the county in the future.

The co-coordinator was part of the Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Authority testing of their web-based proposal development project in preparation for the Fiscal Year 2007-2009 solicitation.

As mentioned above the Idaho OSC coordinated the state review and prioritization of project proposals submitted to the Council for Bonneville funding. The co-coordinator participated on the state committee for that review and assembled proposal information for the review including information from sponsors and the materials submitted January 10, 2006. Several conferences were held with district sponsors from throughout the state in preparation for the five meetings held to develop the state list finally submitted to the Council's central office.

The inventory of habitat project implementation and monitoring was updated. A bibliography of reports and plans will be updated in the Fiscal Year 2006 contract year. A comprehensive compilation has not been done for seven years.

The co-coordinator participated in a three person team to conduct a programmatic review of the Upper Salmon Basin Watershed Project. As follow-up to that work and one of the team's recommendations, a memorandum of agreement was drafted to assist management of the programs in the upper Salmon. Unfortunately one of the conservation partners declined to pursue formalizing the agreement and the effort was terminated. The project was suspended, but could be easily continued.