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THE PACIFIC RIVERS COUNCIL

formerly THE OREGON RIVERS COUNCIL

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* Will Stelle & Tom Tschmann
to take up w/ Pipkin &
Thomas

MEMO

DRAFT

DRAFT

TO: Interested Officials
FROM: Bob Doppelt, Executive Director
RE: Addressing Private Land River Systems in the Northwest
DATE: May 8, 1993

This memo discusses a potential framework to respond to the growing need and unique opportunity to initiate recovery actions for private land river systems with endangered fish in No. California, Oregon and Washington. The proposal is the result of a scoping meeting held by the Pacific Rivers Council (PRC) on May 7, attended by individuals from various state and federal agencies and private organizations. As such, this proposal does not represent any official agency positions.

Scoping Meeting Participants: Paula Burgess, Governor's Forest Planning Team, Salem, Oregon; Tom Wilson, US Environmental Protection Agency, Region 10, Seattle, WA; Roger Wood and Dennis Hayes, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, Portland; Vaughn Brown and Shari Schneider, USDA Soil Conservation Service, Portland, Oregon; Jeff Curtis, Waterwatch of Oregon; Mary Lou Soscia, Columbia River Intertribal Fish Commission, Portland, Oregon; Mary Scurlock, Pacific Rivers Council, Portland, Oregon; Jim Martin and David McAllister, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Portland; Bob Doppelt, Pacific Rivers Council, Eugene, Oregon.

THE NEED AND OPPORTUNITY: The need to begin rapid recovery actions stems from the knowledge that a regionwide legal and political crisis of significant proportions is just months away. At the same time, the group believed that a unique opportunity may exist to connect private land river recovery to whatever watershed and at-risk fish resolution may be provided on the federal lands, thus providing watershed level recovery potential.

BACKGROUND (provided by PRC, not group members): Over 750 of 1100 native fish populations (anadromous salmonids [trout, steelhead, char, salmon], resident, estuarine fish) have been found to be at-risk within the range of the Northern Spotted Owl. Over 130 riparian associated species were also found to be at-risk (Appendix D, Draft Northern Spotted Owl Recovery Plan). Water quality and quantity are also at risk. The east-side (upper Columbia basin) has similar problems. Almost all fish populations are affected by the conditions of streams on private lands. A regionwide coho salmon ESA petition is certain to be filed in the summer of 1993. Coho inhabit the vast majority of coastal private land streams regionwide. If effective federal land watershed protection and restoration actions are

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established on the west-side, the emphasis for recovery will shift downstream to the private lands that must be strategically recovered to maintain or recover the majority of fish. Again, similar actions are needed on the east-side.

The discussion centered around five questions posed by the Pacific Rivers Council. The questions and recommendations are stated below:

1) Is there an effective mechanism available, or can a mechanism be rapidly designed, to identify key non-federal land watersheds regionwide for priority recovery efforts?

ANSWER: Yes. A number of options exist. Key private land watersheds can be targeted in association with key watersheds on federal lands. Water quality limited stream designations could also be used. The overlap between the two is extremely high.

2) Is it possible to develop an effective mechanism to rapidly integrate and coordinate local, state and federal agency scientists to assess the priority watersheds, determine priority problems and develop a framework for proposed recovery actions?

ANSWER: Yes, within limits. Data will be limited and vary between watersheds and varies between fish species and populations. However, the framework for a recovery strategy could be developed rather quickly if an intensive scientific "swot" team approach were used (similar to the "Gang of 4", and current Portland scientific team approach).

The group recommended that the President, Governors and/or Congress designate a top level scientific team to outline the key criteria for recovery strategies within a specified short time frame. These people would need to be freed from other duties and given sufficient resources to complete their tasks. With overall criteria and guidance in hand, scientific teams would then be deployed to each key watershed to create a recovery framework, again within a specified short time frame. The best use of resources will be for the watershed analysis that may occur for the federal land watersheds to be integrated with private land recovery strategies, thus providing a system level strategy. Gaps in information will emerge within specific strategies that may help clarify further research needs, which should occur simultaneously. However, simply applying the best science know today will help develop the basic framework for recovery actions.

3) Is there enough consensus in support of an effective approach?

ANSWER: Yes, again within limits. See above.

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4) Is it possible to develop effective, cooperative mechanisms to catalyze local community and citizen involvement in developing and implementing a recovery strategy?

ANSWER: Yes, the information and strategies exists, though in scattered domains. A pure regulatory approach will fail, as will a purely volunteer approach. The best strategy would be a new approach that combines both, while utilizing and building upon existing state and local approaches. The basic framework would be to initiate bottom-up citizen driven watershed recovery efforts through local task forces (watershed councils). Each task force would be provided with the recovery framework established by the science team, along with effective incentives and technical assistance. (The local watershed councils would need flexibility to

develop locally tailored strategies, and flexibility in the way funds, technical assistance and incentives are used). At the same time, clear federal and state criteria, minimum standards and guidance will be needed, along with effective utilization of existing authorities. Sufficient, stable, long term funding will also be needed as recovery will be a long term process.

The group recommended a two-part intensive "swot" team approach, again designated by key elected officials with specific missions and short time frames. One team would be charged to pull together all available information about effective incentives (tax, grants, political, other) and funding options (cost sharing mechanisms, trust funds, others), along with the identification of existing local, state and federal authorities. A second team would pull together information on effective administrative mechanisms: bottom-up citizen organizing and implementation strategies.

The information developed from the two teams would be combined into a regional strategy. Many of the basic elements of this approach may have already been laid out in the Oregon Benchmark Watershed Program, the State of Oregon Watershed Management Approach, the Washington State Timber, Fish, Wildlife approach, efforts in California and elsewhere. The need is to build upon, elevate and integrate the approaches, and to prioritize and target existing resources using effective incentives, coordinated local, state and federal agency support, and existing local, state and federal authorities.

Once the final approach(es) is designed, it would be shopped to the appropriate local, state and federal authorities for discussion and integration into their legislative and administrative processes.

5) Is it possible to design an effective, cooperative and coordinated interagency technical support and funding mechanism to help local watershed councils implement recovery strategies?

ANSWER: Yes, see above. A "one stop shopping" agency funding and technical support mechanism could be developed. With clear and specific guidance from the Administration, Governors and/or Congress, the agencies can begin to redesign their programs for more effective and targeted applications. This could provide funds from already existing accounts, and help avoid overlap and contradictions in agency actions.

SUMMARY: The group believes that a unique opportunity exists to design and initiate an effective new approach to private land watershed recovery efforts in conjunction with the resolution of the federal land issues. One group member felt that the approach described above provided an opportunity to "redesign government". All group members felt that strong leadership will be needed and all acknowledge that this will not be an easy task.

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MEMORANDUM

DATE May 11, 1993

TO Katie McGinty
White House Office on
Environmental Policy

FROM Bob Doppelt

RE May 8, 1993 Memo on Addressing Private Land River
Systems in the Northwest

Katie,

Thank you for meeting with myself and the other environmentalists yesterday regarding the Northwest forest issues. At that time I gave you a memo titled "Addressing Private Land River Systems in the Northwest." As you know, the scientific team working now in Portland is addressing watershed and salmon components of the ancient forest system which occur on public lands. This memo addresses actions that will be needed on private lands in the region to further assure that the threatened salmon stocks will survive.

I would like to urge you to forward the private land river systems memo to the scientific team in Portland for their review and comment. I think it would be beneficial to have them comment on this aspect as well as they move toward completion on their work. If I may assist in any way, please call.

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