Habitat Restoration Program Project Review Criteria

Project Review Criteria Timeline

- 2001 – EP hosted a workshop, with > 100 participants, to develop project evaluation criteria;
- 2004 – Criteria first used
  - 16 total criteria
    - Ecosystem (6 criteria)
    - Implementation (7 criteria)
    - Monitoring (3 criteria)
- 2007 – Criteria incorporated into Biological Assessment for FCRPS

Criteria Timeline Continued

- 2008 – Wording changed to make the criteria more focused on salmonids
  - Point values changed from 1-3 for all criteria to 0-5 for some criteria and 0-10 for others
- 2009 – Guidance questions were added for each criterion
- 2011 – Monitoring criteria were simplified
  - Current criteria include only 1 monitoring criterion

Why Revise the Existing Criteria?

- Criteria have not been updated, other than minor modifications, since they were originally developed in 2004

- Current criteria do not adequately allow for reviewers to use their best professional judgment when scoring projects

- Current criteria are more principles than true evaluation criteria

- Some criteria are difficult to use when scoring different types of projects (i.e., acquisition)

- Some overlap in criteria

Proposed Criteria

- 3 General Categories – 100 total points
    - Ecological Benefit – 60 points
    - Implementation – 30 points
    - Cost – 10 points
- Categorization and point values are designed to allow reviewers flexibility when scoring projects
    - Allows reviewers to use their knowledge and experience of restoration techniques and projects
- Explicitly recognize cost

Revision Process to Date

- Examination of other entities' criteria
  - Expert Regional Technical Group
  - Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board
  - Ecotrust
  - Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board
- Feedback from current members of the Project Review Committee

Key Questions to Answer Today

1) Does using general categories make sense?

2) Are these three categories appropriate?

3) Are the elements within each category appropriate?

4) Are there other elements that should be included within a category, or are there redundancies between or within categories?

5) Is the weighting system for the three categories appropriate?

6) Is the guidance for each element clear?

Current Project Review Criteria

- Habitat Connectivity (0-10)
- Areas of Historic Habitat Type Loss (0-10)
- Improvement in Ecosystem Function (0-10)
- Adequate Size and Shape (0-10)
- Level of Complexity (0-5)
- Accessibility For Target Species (0-10)
- Use Natural Processes over Habitat Creation (0-5)
- Community Support & Participation (0-5)
- Potential for Self Maintenance & Success (0-10)
- Potential for Improving Ecosystem Function while
-    Avoiding Impacts to Healthy & Functioning Ecosystems (0-5)
- Avoid Sites Where Irreversible Change has occurred (0-5)
- Capacity of Sponsor/Partnership (0-5)
- Project Context within Broader Management and
-    Planning Objectives (0-5)
- Monitoring and Evaluation (0-5)

Proposed Review Criteria

- Ecological Benefit (60 points)
  - Linkage to recovery plans, FCRPS BiOp, or other plans
  - Location
  - Habitat Restored
  - Connectivity
  - Threats and Limiting Factors
  - Natural Processes and Ecosystem Function
  - Adequate Size and Scale
  - Species

Proposed Criteria Continued

- Implementation (30 points)
  - Approach
  - Timeline
  - Scope
  - Long Term Management
  - Support
  - Capacity
  - Monitoring

- Cost (10 points)

# Crosswalk – 'Old' Criteria Included in 'New' Criteria

- ✓ Habitat Connectivity
- ✓ Historic Habitat Loss
- ✓ Improvement in Ecosystem Function
- ✓ Adequate Size and Shape
- ✓ Accessibility for Target Species
- ✓ Use of Natural Processes
   -In both Ecological Benefit and Implementation
- ✓ Community Support

Crosswalk Continued

✓ Self Maintenance and Certainty of Success

✓ Improving Ecosystem Function and Avoiding Impacts to Healthy Ecosystems

✓ Avoid Sites Where Irreversible Change has Occurred

✓ Capacity of Sponsor

✓ Project Context w/in Broader Management and Planning Objectives

✓ Monitoring and Evaluation

Criterion Not Included

- Level of Complexity
  – though not explicitly included in the new criteria, 'project complexity' is addressed in the Implementation category
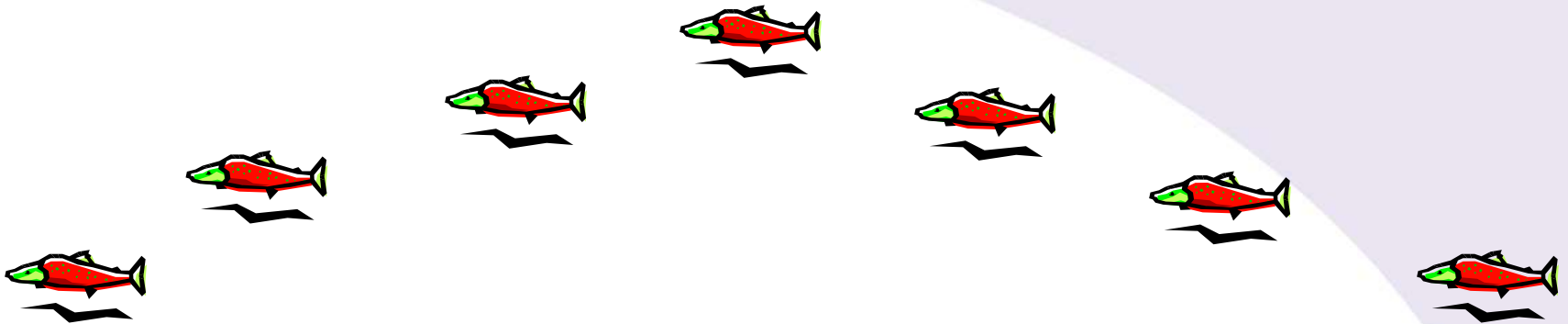
Crosswalk - New Elements

- Ecological Benefit
  - Threats and Limiting Factors
- Implementation
  - Approach
  - Timeline
  - Scope
  - Long Term Management
- Cost

Evaluating Different Project Types

- Design Projects
  - Focus on potential resulting ecosystem benefits and how the site resulting from the design will function
  - Analyze the proposed design and evaluate what the outcomes of the design will be
  - Can these be improved by other considerations?

Evaluating Different Project Types

- Acquisition Projects
  - If an acquisition project contains a restoration component, the project will be evaluated similarly to other restoration projects
  - If there is no restoration component, the necessity of the acquisition should be evaluated
  - What would happen to the site if it was not acquired?

Evaluating the Success of Project Actions

- Proposals should include clear objectives and goals for each action

- Monitoring is necessary to evaluate whether actions met the objectives and goals or whether future actions are needed

- Focus on whether project sponsor has clearly defined methods of assessing the success of meeting objectives and goals for each action

Critical Flaws

- Reviewers do have the option to identify what they believe are *critical flaws* to a project
- Critical flaws may need addressed before the sponsor moves ahead with the project

Questions, Feedback, and Discussion