

Entiat Watershed Plan Began as Successful CRM



Stakeholders in the Entiat River watershed in Chelan County have a strong vision for the future... a future that provides for the coexistence of people, fish and wildlife. Enforcement actions in 1991 and 1992 and forecasts of increased regulation with the coming of ESA listings had landowners and agency personnel on edge.

Seizing the opportunity to control their own destiny, in 1993 a small group of local landowners, representatives of the Chelan County Conservation District, Natural Resources Conservation Service and U.S. Forest Service met to outline a planning process, craft a preliminary mission statement with goals, and identify stakeholders (including orchardists, logging, grazing and environmental interests, federal & state agency's and tribal representatives). The decision was then made to organize using the Coordinated Resource Management (CRM) planning model.

Between 1993 and 1998 the Entiat CRM group pooled local resource knowledge and existing data about the watershed. In doing so they identified data gaps, created a foundation to build upon, and then collected new information to help address priority issues. "Our goal has always been to produce a plan that reflects a balance between existing natural resources and human needs, and

allows us to adapt to changing laws and circumstances," says Conard Petersen, an Entiat landowner.

CRM Group Becomes 2514 Planning Unit:

The Entiat CRM group made significant progress accomplishing its work on a shoestring budget, largely supported by donated time and effort. However, unresolved issues, such as instream flow, were beyond their financial means. The Washington State Watershed Planning Act relieved this funding dilemma in 1998. The Entiat CRM group then reorganized to become the Entiat Planning Unit, taking on the tasks of addressing water quality, water quantity, instream flow and habitat.

Members of the Planning Unit continued to compile information and analyze data between 1998 and 2004. In addition, they implemented pilot restoration projects. These resulted in a holistic, comprehensive watershed plan that balances ecological and community needs. This plan was formally approved by Chelan County last September, making it the 3rd plan approved in the state, and the first to contain instream flow recommendations.

The true beauty of this overall effort lies in the fact that stakeholders have worked voluntarily, proactively and collaboratively with numerous entities and agencies for over a decade to produce a science-based document based on mutual trust.

"The Entiat 2514 is successful because it got a great head-start with CRM. The locally led, community-initiated CRM forum provided the communication and trust needed to take on and resolve even the most difficult natural resource issues," says John Monahan, Watershed Lead, WA Dept. of Ecology

The emphasis of the Planning Unit has now shifted to implementation of all the conservation and restoration actions it has proposed. Restoring instream and riparian habitat in an entire reach of the lower Entiat River will be the first field project initiated this Summer, with strong support from the local community.

For more information contact Sarah M. Walker at the Chelan County Conservation District, 509/664-0271 or email sarah-walker@wa.nacdnet.org.



Washington State Coordinated Resource Management
Website: www.crmwashington.org Email: crmwashington.org