



Full Stream Ahead

September/October 2007

News and Highlights of Creeks and Communities: A Continuing Strategy for Accelerating Cooperative Riparian Restoration

Lentic Riparian-Wetland Area Prioritization Guide

By Steve Smith, Idaho State Riparian Coordinator

The management and restoration of lentic riparian-wetland areas is an important challenge. There is little question that the condition and values associated with each of these systems can vary tremendously across the landscape and it is not possible to address management and/or restoration issues on all lentic systems simultaneously. As a result, it is essential to utilize a strategic prioritization process to ensure that the most important sites are being addressed first.

In order to provide a consistent process for prioritizing work in lentic areas, the Idaho BLM state office has developed a "Lentic Riparian-Wetland Area Prioritization Guide" to use for evaluating management and restoration priorities. This guide is a refinement/modification of the prioritization process outlined in TR 1737-17 (A Guide to Managing, Restoring, and Conserving Springs in the Western United States). This prioritization guide is in the form of an Idaho BLM Technical Bulletin and is available (with the downloadable access database) at:

http://www.blm.gov/id/st/en/info/publications/technical_bulletins/TB_07-2.html

This evaluation is intended to be used following the completion of condition assessments to help implement the most efficient management and restoration actions, in the most appropriate areas, and to assist in establishing budget priorities.

The database is not a centralized product at this point – users should download the database from the website, populate it as needed, and store it on their local files. The database provides a simple template to store data (including summary data, raw data, and photos) and create GIS maps and reports. For questions using this prioritization guide, you may contact Steve Smith, BLM Idaho State Office Riparian/Range Specialist, at (208) 373-3810, or Tim Burton, BLM Idaho State Office Fisheries Biologist at (208) 373-3819.

2008 Creeks & Communities Network Conference

The 2008 biennial Creeks & Communities Network Meeting is planned for **March 4-6, 2008** at the Silver Legacy Hotel in Reno, NV. Reservations can be made by calling the group reservation department at 1-800-687-8733 and request group code NRST308 for a special \$59 per night rate. This will be a working meeting designed to increase and enhance the ability of the Creeks & Communities Network to effectively implement the Creeks & Communities strategy. A portion of the meeting will be set aside for finalizing FY2008-2009 state work plans. For more information, contact Carol Connolly at carol_connolly@or.blm.gov or (541) 416-6892.

Training course: 1737-12 Using Aerial Photography to Assess Proper Functioning Condition

August 7-9, 2007, Fairbanks, Alaska

Course objective: Upon completion of this session, trainees will understand the basic functions of riparian-wetland areas, the use of aerial photographs to initiate assessing their function, and how to assess their function using the Proper Functioning Condition (PFC) tool.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Alaska State Office and Fairbanks District Office requested and sponsored the BLM National Training Center (NTC) training course 1737-12 Using Aerial Photography to Assess PFC August 7-9, 2007 in Fairbanks. Kelly Sparks, BLM NTC (Range Weeds Wild Horses) coordinated the training, and instructors were a mix of remote sensing and riparian specialists including Pam Clemmer (GIS/Remote Sensing Consultant), Gretchen Meyer (BLM WY State Office Remote Sensing Specialist), Don Prichard (BLM National Operation Center/Division of Resource Services Fisheries Biologist & Riparian Specialist), Mark Gorges (BLM WY State Office Fisheries Biologist), and Janice Staats (National Riparian Service Team Hydrologist). The course would not have been successful without the help of local coordinators Carl Kretsinger and Lee Koss. Acquiring equipment and aerial photographs for the training site requires a great amount of prework from the remote sensing specialists, and because of their hard work everything was ready to go when the instructors arrived. The schedule for this particular training included the following:

- Day 1 – Classroom – Riparian PFC assessment, both lotic and lentic attributes/processes.
- Day 2 – Classroom – Photo interpretation procedures and assessing PFC using aerial photographs. Teams filled out PFC assessment checklist and final rating on Nome Creek after looking at aerial photographs in stereo.
- Day 3 – Field trip to Nome Creek, and back to the classroom to use equipment to look at aerial photographs in stereo and calibrate eye after seeing conditions on-the-ground.

Prior to the session, the instructors worked with Carl and Lee to put Alaska photographs into the PowerPoint presentations. The audience appreciated seeing photos that they could relate to – something to think about when working in different In addition, participants included a great mix of interagency/interdisciplinary BLM, Natural Resources Conservation Service, US Fish & Wildlife Service, Alaska Game & Fish, Fairbanks Soil & Water Conservation District, The Nature Conservancy, Tanana Valley Watershed Association, and Chickaloon Village –soil scientists, biologists, hydrologists, vegetation specialists, and remote sensing specialists.

If you would like to sponsor 1737-12 Using Aerial Photographs to Assess PFC in your community, contact Jim Fogg who is now the BLM NTC coordinator for this course (jim_fogg@blm.gov).



Instructors Gretchen, Pam, and Mark looking at floodplain attributes on Nome Creek (White Mountains National Recreation Area, BLM Fairbanks District, AK)
areas of your States.

PFC Workshop for Sierra-Nevada Framework Forests

August 28-30, 2007, Truckee, CA

US Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region (5) Rangeland Management Staff sponsored a Proper Functioning Condition (PFC) assessment method training session, August 28-30, 2007, near Truckee, CA on the Tahoe National Forest. Interdisciplinary teams on National Forests within the area covered by the Sierra-Nevada Forest Plan Amendment (Framework) are using PFC as part of range allotment analysis. The course was designed to support this effort and facilitate the appropriate use of the methodology. (for more information on the Framework go to <http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/snfpa>.) Instructors were from the National Riparian Service Team and California State Riparian Team. The PFC workshop participants were from California Forests and BLM Field Offices, with expertise in hydrology, rangeland management, botany, soil, wildlife, and fisheries. A special thank-you goes to the local coordinators Crispin Holland and Dave Weixelman for all of their efforts in making the session successful.

The outdoor classroom set up at Sagehen Experimental Station made for an enjoyable experience. A series of tarps moderated the daylight in order to see the PowerPoint projections onto a screen. A 4:00 pm thunderstorm was so loud between the thunder and the pounding rain on the tarps that we ended for the day, and made up the missed presentations the next morning before going to the field. Both lotic and lentic PFC information was presented, as well as the latest on Region 5's draft *User Guide to Assessing Proper Functioning Condition for Fen Areas in the Sierra Nevada and Southern Cascade Ranges, CA* (Weixelman, D. 2007), which highlights the attributes and processes specific to fens. Fens are lentic areas of groundwater upwelling where there is at least 40 centimeters of organic soils (commonly referred to as peat) in the upper 80 centimeters of the soil profile, and this peat consists of at least 12-18% organic-carbon content by weight. Fens form where the rate of plant growth exceeds the rate of carbon decomposition of litter. Both saturated soils and cool temperatures slow decomposition to the point that productivity exceeds decomposition, resulting in an accumulation of peat.

There were several discussions focusing on the application of PFC and the context for its use. A clear desire to do more interdisciplinary PFC assessments was expressed, yet managers and decision makers do not always support the associated time commitment and cost. To address this, each of us needs to communicate within our own sphere of influence about the benefits. This could include sharing success stories of how using PFC assessments helped establish an important foundation for understanding riparian-wetland areas, set objectives, and identify next steps in adaptive management and monitoring, that were supported by a whole community.

Finally, a call was put out to the group for new California Riparian Team members, and two Forest Service employees volunteered to join! If you are interested in joining the California Riparian Team, contact the National Riparian Service Team at (541) 416-6700.



Dave Weixelman, Forest Service Riparian Ecologist, explaining fen attributes & processes during PFC workshop fen field day.



Dick McCleery (NRCS RC&D Coordinator/CA Riparian Team) and Wayne Elmore (Riparian Specialist/National Riparian Service Team) take a break from providing assistance to interdisciplinary teams during the field portion of the workshop.

Full Stream Ahead

Is there something you would like to see in a future issue of *Full Stream Ahead*? If so, send an email to nrst@or.blm.gov. The NRST utilizes this newsletter to share highlights, news and hot topics that pertain to the Creeks and Communities Strategy. This newsletter is for the entire network and we encourage you to send in ideas, questions and articles for us to publicize. The deadline for submission for the November/December issue is Tuesday, January 8, 2008.

The National Riparian Service Team can be contacted at:



NRST
3050 NE 3rd Street
Prineville, Oregon 97754
(541) 416-6700
Email: nrst@or.blm.gov
<http://www.blm.gov/or/programs/nrst/>