Nez Perce Tribe

Wetland Program Plan

2020-2025

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Acknowledgement

The Nez Perce Tribe would like to acknowledge the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Region 10 for funding the development of this Wetland Program Plan. We greatly appreciate the support provided by Region 10 EPA staff in the continued development of a holistic wetland plan for the Nez Perce Tribe and Reservation.

Nez Perce Tribe Wetland Program Plan Qualification

This plan identifies activities necessary to protect, enhance, restore, and manage wetlands within the Nez Perce Reservation. These activities are modeled after the Core Elements Framework (US EPA, 2013). Certain activities identified within this plan must occur sequentially, while others can occur concurrently or independently. Many of the actions and activities proposed in this plan are not currently funded. Successful completion of these activities depends upon securing necessary financial support. This document was prepared using funding from an EPA FY17 and FY18 Region 10 Wetland Program Development Grant (WPDG).

Mission Statements

Nez Perce Tribe's Mission

The Tribe's mission is together we will protect and advance Nez Perce culture and sovereignty:

- To improve social, cultural and economic prosperity of the Nez Perce people.
- To preserve and maintain the land and water rights of the Nez Perce people.
- To provide services and opportunities to the Nez Perce people.

Nez Perce Tribe's Department of Natural Resources Mission

To preserve the natural resources that have always provided for the Nimiipuu people.

Nez Perce Tribe's Water Resources Division Mission

To manage, protect, develop, and restore the Nez Perce Tribe's surface and groundwater resources and watershed environments in the treaty-reserved homelands for the benefit, health, culture, and welfare of the tribal public.

Nez Perce Tribe's Wetland Program Mission

To preserve, protect, enhance, restore, and manage wetlands and their associated ecological services both on the Nez Perce Reservation and within the larger traditional use areas, for the

benefit of the Nez Perce Tribe now and into the future.

Introduction and Background

Nez Perce Tribe

The Nez Perce Tribe, known as the *Nimiipuu* ("we, the people") originally occupied a vast territory of approximately 13 million acres in the present day states of Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. Their fishing, food gathering, and trading activities extended westward down the Columbia River and eastward into Montana. Recorded history indicates the Nez Perce inhabited the area for more than 13,000 years. The Tribe is recognized in the journals of Lewis and Clark as having served the Expedition with food, horses and sincere hospitality. As a result of treaties with the federal government, the Nez Perce ceded millions of acres of land to the United States government and established its Reservation. Following the signing of the first treaty in 1855, the Reservation included 7.5 million acres. Further reduced by another treaty in 1863, the current Nez Perce Reservation now encompasses 770,453 acres or 1,208 square miles spread across north central Idaho – an area the size of Rhode Island (Figure 1). Reservation land is rugged and remote, recognized as a frontier territory of extreme temperatures, steep mountains, precipitous canyons, scenic rivers and narrow winding roads. There are isolated areas on the reservation with towns at least an hour's driving time apart where encounters with another vehicle are infrequent.

Figure 1. Nez Perce ICC Territory and Current Reservation

There are currently 3,508 enrolled Nez Perce Tribe members. There are 18,650 persons living on the reservation including tribal members, non-tribal Indians, and non-Indians. The Reservation encompasses five expansive counties, all with communities having populations of less than 3,100. The Tribe's governmental seat of Lapwai (pop. 1,215) is the incorporated community on the reservation with the highest Indian population, at 92%. Lewiston (pop. 31,849), located 15 miles west of the reservation, comprises the only populated city in the region.[1] Lapwai is renowned for its pivotal location along the 1,170-mile Nez Perce National Historic Trail, extending from northeast Oregon through Idaho and Montana to 40 miles south of the Canadian border.

[1] 2014 U.S. Census data.

Today the reservation consists primarily of non-Indian, privately-owned land that is interspersed with public and tribal-owned lands (Figure 2). Just over 140,000 largely noncontiguous acres (19%) within the Reservation boundaries are owned by the Tribe or tribal members.[2] This greatly divided land ownership has resulted in a checkerboard reservation (see figure to the right), adding complexity to implementation of Tribal programs and balancing Tribal interests. The Nez Perce are a place-based people who traditionally have sought to live and work among their cultural base and to have available to their children the chance to live fulfilling lives and the ability to celebrate their unique Plateau heritage with loved ones in a stable environment. The Tribe's overall vision for the Reservation is to provide a safe, secure setting to enhance the health and welfare of its residents, to fulfill economic development strategies of a strong, well-diversified economy, and to secure the Nez Perce heritage for cultural, educational, economic and environmental success.

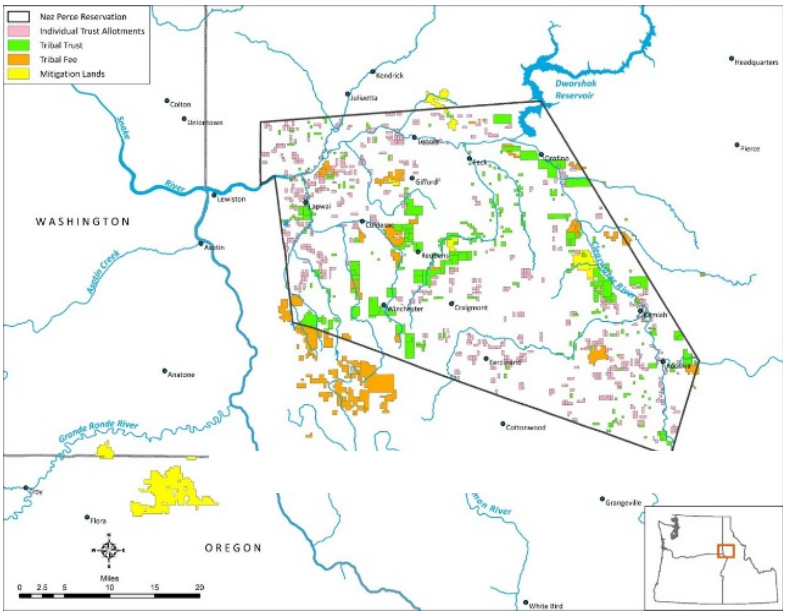

Figure2. Nez Perce Reservation Land Ownership

Figure 3. Location of Nez Perce Reservation

The Nez Perce Reservation is located in the Columbia-Snake River Plateau east of Lewiston, Idaho (Figure 3). The Clearwater River runs through the north and east side of the reservation. The river and its tributaries form deep canyons with drought-tolerant grasses and forbs on south- facing slopes and shrubs and trees on north-facing slopes. Cropland is located on the plateaus above the canyons and on the Camas Prairie in the south-central part of the reservation. Forests cover the eastern edge and the southwestern corner of the reservation. Annual precipitation varies from 20 to 28 inches per year. Though the land is mostly semi-arid, scattered wetlands are found in the headwaters and riparian zones of streams and rivers and in depressions in the farmland.

[2] 2016 data: Nez Perce Tribe Land Services Database.

Nez Perce Reservation and Wetlands

The Nez Perce people place a high value on their wetlands. They have traditionally derived much of their food, fiber, and medicines from wetland plants such as camas, Labrador tea, hardstem bulrush (tule), Indian hemp, wild mint, and willow. Salmon, steelhead, and lamprey— important food sources for the Nez Perce people—depend on wetlands for spawning and rearing habitat and food supply. Wetlands increase habitat quality for fish by filtering out fine sediment that would smother fish eggs, by reducing nutrients and biological oxygen demand (BOD) that would lower oxygen levels in the water, and by storing spring runoff for release during the dry season to enhance stream flow. Wetlands also supply forage and cover for mammals such as deer, elk, and moose, which are hunted for food by the Nez Perce people. For all those reasons, the protection and restoration of wetlands are a high priority for the Nez Perce Tribe.

Over 300 wetlands were inventoried and assessed during the early 2000's (Figure 4). Wetlands on the Reservation are most often found in low-lying areas near streams. About a third of inventoried wetlands are adjacent to a perennial stream as a floodplain or riparian area, almost a quarter are adjacent to an intermittent stream, and over a fifth form the headwaters of an intermittent stream or draw. The majority of the wetlands are classified as the palustrine emergent wetland type according to the Cowardin classification and as riverine according to the hydrogeomorphic (HGM) classification (Table 1). The most commonly occurring hydrology regimes are seasonally flooded, temporarily flooded, and saturated.

Table 1. HGM wetland classes found on tribally owned land on the Nez Perce Reservation, sorted by frequency of occurrence.

HGM Wetland Class*	No. of Wetlands
Riverine (nonperennial)	99
Riverine (upper perennial)	63
Riverine (lower perennial)	63
Depression (closed)	26
Slope	24
Depression (open, surface water)	23
Depression (open, groundwater)	19
Organic soil flats	13
Lacustrine fringe	5

*Some wetlands are comprised of more than one wetland type.

Over a third (44%) of the wetlands assessed on the Reservation were classified according to Cowardin (1989) as Palustrine Emergent, Seasonally Flooded (PEMC); 19% were Palustrine Emergent, Saturated (PEMB); 14% Palustrine Forested, Temporarily Flooded (PFOA); 7% Palustrine Scrub-Shrub, Temporarily Flooded (PSSA); and 4% Riverine Upper Perennial, Unconsolidated Shore, Seasonally Flooded (R3USC). Several other palustrine and riverine wetland types occurred in smaller numbers. Many headwater wetlands have been lost to agricultural conversion, resulting in flashier hydrology, loss of water storage, and decreased water quality as well as loss of wildlife habitat and native vegetation.

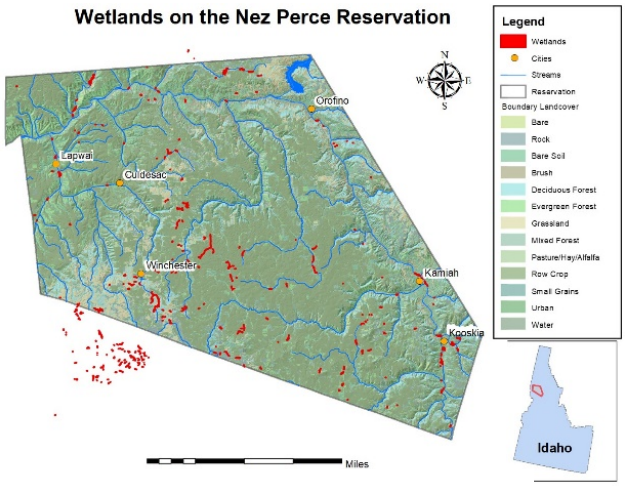

Figure 4. Assessed Wetlands On or Near Reservation

When previously inventoried wetlands are broken down by watershed, Lapwai Creek watershed accounts for 22.4% percent of Tribal wetlands (Table 2). Many of the wetlands are small; over a third are less than 1.25 acres (Table 3).

Table 2. Number of wetlands assessed in each watershed.

Name of Watershed	No. of Wetlands
Lapwai Creek	56
Lawyer Creek	34
Clearwater River	29
Deer Creek	26
Maloney Creek	24
Big Canyon Creek	14
Cottonwood Creek (Idaho Co.)	13
South Fork Clearwater River	13
Potlatch River	12
Bedrock Creek	7
Little Canyon Creek	5
Cottonwood Creek (Nez Perce Co.)	3
Sixmile Creek	3
Browns Creek	2
Jim Ford Creek	2
Middle Fork Clearwater River	2
China Creek	1
Clear Creek	1
Hatway Creek	1
Lolo Creek	1
Pine Creek	1
Catholic Creek	0
Jacks Creek	0

Table 3. Size distribution of 248 assessed wetlands (in hectares). Wetlands ranged in size from 0.06 ha to 20.11 ha.

Size Range (ha)	(acres)	No. of Wetlands
0 – 0.5	0 – 1.24	95
> 0.5 – 1.0	1.24 – 2.47	47
>1.0 – 1.5	2.47 – 3.71	35
> 1.5 – 3.0	3.71 – 7.41	41
> 3.0 – 5.0	7.41 – 12.36	21
> 5.0 – 10.0	12.36 – 24.71	7
> 10.0	> 24.71	2

Program Plan

This Nez Perce Wetland Program Plan (WPP) describes the goals of the wetlands program and summarizes how the program will work to promote effective wetland protection and restoration. The plan also provides a brief history of the program, as well as current status and future goals and priorities. This plan takes a framework approach with goals, objectives and activities organized under the EPA's Core Elements and an additional Nez Perce Wetland Program core element: 1) Monitoring and Assessment, 2) Voluntary Protection and Restoration, 3) Water Quality Standards, 4) Regulation, and 5) Education and Outreach (Nez Perce core element). Each Core Element contains goals, objectives, and activities to provide the best available estimate of priority needs for the wetland program over the six-year period of this plan. The activities identified in the plan are meant to be used as guidance and are subject to revision and/or redirection depending upon priorities, funding availability, and staffing constraints. Goals, objectives and timelines for the completion of identified tasks/activities for each of the core elements are provided in the specific core element sections below and in Appendix A.

History of the Wetland Program

The following is a brief summary of the history and development of the Nez Perce Wetland Program. It is helpful to know and understand what has been done in order to see where the program is and what needs to be done in order to continue to develop the program.

- 1994 – 1995: Water Resources Division first applied for EPA wetland funding; conducted preliminary work on developing integrated wetlands protection program.

- 2000 – 2002: Developed a functional assessment methodology; tested it in two pilot watersheds; National Fish and Wildlife (NFWF) grant used to restore 11-acre meadow near Winchester Lake; staff turnover.

- 2003 – 2007: Inventoried and assessed wetlands on Tribal land in all watersheds on the Reservation:

- 2003 –Wetland Program Development Grant (WPDG) funded inventory of all wetlands on tribal land in Lapwai Creek Watershed.

- 2004 - WPDG funded inventory of all tribal wetlands in the Cottonwood Creek, Jacks Creek, and Big Canyon Creek Watersheds.

- 2005 - WPDG funded inventory of wetlands on Lawyer Creek and Cottonwood Creek.

- 2008: Assessed off-reservation fee lands and former BLM parcels; total of 250 wetlands on tribal land completed to date.

- 2009: Inventoried and assessed 44 wetlands in private ownership on the reservation.

- 2010 – 2011: Monitored water quality and macroinvertebrates at 40 sites in 14 wetlands.

- 2012: Wrote a 5-year Wetland Program Plan (WPP) for the Tribe; Reassessed 40 wetlands to detect changes due to climate change (BIA grant).

- 2013: Reassessed 23 wetlands in effort to find both reference sites and restoration targets.

- 2014: Wrote a draft guidance document, *Approaches to Wetland Restoration*; compiled a list of all wetlands grouped by wetland type and ranked by condition; listed suggestions for restoration of impacted wetlands.

- 2015: Staff turnover; not funded by EPA WPDG.

- 2016 – 2017: No EPA funding; received educational and outreach funding from other sources; started the Lapwai Nature Trail for educational purposes and developed the Interwet Program for high school students; WPP expired.

- 2018 – 2019: Awarded EPA Region 10 WPDG to develop new WPP and to adapt Wetland Ecosystem Services Protocol (WESP) to the Reservation and incorporate a cultural component; awarded National Tribal Wetland Grant to adapt and develop a climate-smart wetland restoration toolkit for use on the Reservation, the Restoration Toolkit for Cultural and Ecological Resilience (RTCER).

Impacts and Threats to Reservation Wetlands

Wetlands on the Reservation are affected by various land use practices, such as grazing, logging, agriculture, development, and recreation. Different departments within the Tribe are responsible for these types of land uses on Tribal lands. Protection of wetlands is not always a priority when managing land for economic benefit. By compiling information on the status

of tribal wetlands and suggesting best management practices that will benefit wetlands, natural resource professionals within the Tribe can work together to improve the health of wetlands on the Reservation. Threats and impacts to the region's wetlands include:

- Grazing: Damage to wetlands from grazing animals is ubiquitous. In an area where vegetation is generally limited by the lack of water, riparian vegetation and the availability of water inevitably draw and concentrate cattle.

- Logging: Slash piles are often placed in wet meadows next to the forest. Logging roads built in or too close to wetlands, or crossing riparian zones, and soil compression from heavy equipment are other logging impacts.

- Agriculture: Wetlands have been drained or encroached upon during dry years to increase farmed acreage. Runoff from agricultural fields adds excess nutrients as well as herbicides and pesticides to wetlands.

- Roads: Roads are the single largest source of sediment deposited in streams and wetlands. Sediment from roads and storm water runoff contain pollutants (heavy metals, oil) that degrade wetlands, resulting in a loss of continuity and changes in hydrology.

- Water control structures: Dikes and dams change hydrology and hydrograph and result in changes of plant species composition.

- Waste disposal sites: Wetlands are still considered by some as wastelands, and therefore tend to be misused for disposal of water materials, old cars and appliances, and animal carcasses. This is a problem in several wetlands on the reservation.

- Off road vehicles (ORVs): The use of ORVs has increased dramatically in recent years, and a few irresponsible users have cause considerable damage to wet meadows. Driving through wetlands creates deep ruts that take decades or longer to heal and compacts the wet soil, making reestablishment of native plants difficult. The areas of bare soil created by mud-bogging are vulnerable to invasion by noxious weeds adapted to disturbed conditions.

- Impervious surfaces: Paving wetlands obviously destroys them directly, but even adjacent impervious surfaces such as roads, driveways, and buildings affect wetlands negatively by limiting infiltration of precipitation into the soil and causing increased storm water runoff into the wetland. Stormwater is usually high in pollutants such as petrochemicals, excess nutrients, and heavy metals.

- Mining: Mining can also have a negative effect on wetlands by disturbing the land surface, altering the hydrology, and potentially creating acid drainage and other pollution.

This impact has not been noted in any assessed wetlands on the Reservation.

The most frequently occurring impacts on Reservation wetlands that have been assessed in the past are agriculture, roads, livestock grazing, and timber harvest (Table 4). Most of the damage to wetland plants, soils, and streambanks appears to be caused by grazing.

Table 4. Number of inventoried wetlands and buffers impacted by certain land use activities.

Type of Impact	No. of Wetlands Affected
Evidence of livestock grazing	124
Roads	122
Agricultural fields	92
Presence of livestock*	51
Timber harvest	42
Dikes/dams	38
Waste disposal sites	28
Other land disturbing activities	27
Off Road Vehicle (ORV) use; ruts	21
Water control structures	12
No impacts	8
Impervious surfaces	2
Mining	0

* Wetlands in this category are also included in the category "Evidence of livestock grazing" (e.g., 62 wetlands showed evidence of livestock grazing, and in 32 of them livestock was present at the time of the site visit).

The most recent threat to the future of wetlands on the Reservation is the proposed change to the definition of Waters of the United States (WOTUS). The revised WOTUS rule as it stands would mean that EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers (ACE) will no longer have federal jurisdiction over many waters that are necessary to protect tribal lands, assets, resources and communities. This includes many wetlands. Although the new definition did not change the definition of wetlands, it did change the definition of adjacent, which will impact which wetlands will still have protection under the EPA and ACE.

Importance of Wetlands to the Nez Perce Tribe

As mentioned earlier, the Nez Perce people place a high value on their wetlands for cultural reasons and for continuation of their way of life. Wetland plants have provided many traditional food and medicines, as well as materials for weaving and making nets. Wetlands provide spawning and rearing habitat for fish species that are traditional foods for the tribe as well as food and cover for the wildlife that are also traditional Tribal food sources. Some wetlands are also of historical cultural importance as sites used for traditional camps and sweats.
In addition to the cultural importance of Reservation wetlands to the Tribe, these wetlands also provide the standard ecosystem services (functions and values) that wetlands provide everywhere, which are also of great importance to the Tribe and the sustainability of its natural resources. These functions and values include: water storage and delay; sediment retention and stabilization; phosphorous retention; nitrate removal and retention; thermoregulation; carbon sequestration; organic matter export; aquatic invertebrate habitat; anadromous fish habitat; non-anadromous fish habitat; amphibian and reptile habitat; waterbird feeding habitat; waterbird nesting habitat; songbird, raptor and mammal habitat; pollinator habitat; and native plant diversity. The assessment and evaluation of these ecosystem services will be a big part of the Tribe's wetland program going forward. Wetlands need to be identified, and then assessed in terms of their values and functions to aid managers in making decisions regarding wetlands on the reservation.

The Wetland program has been funded to adapt the Wetland Ecosystem Services Protocol (WESP), developed by Dr. Paul Adamus (Adamus, 2011), to the Reservation and incorporate a cultural component, thus providing the program with a tool to evaluate and prioritize wetlands in a meaningful way for the Nimiipuu people and improve the Tribe's management of its wetlands. Some of the anticipated uses for this tool include:

- identifying functions, benefits, and values of individual wetlands,
- prioritizing wetlands for restoration and protection,
- evaluating restoration results,
- monitoring the long-term effects of wetland restoration,
- predicting and evaluating impacts from climate change, and
- regulating and addressing mitigation for wetland damage.

In recognition of the changing weather patterns and need for restoration planting that will survive and thrive in future conditions, the Wetland Program is also in the process of developing a Tribal Wetland Restoration Toolkit for Cultural and Ecological Resilience (RTCER) to assist local decision makers with integrating wetland protection into watershed planning with regards to hazard mitigation/flood/drought planning and resiliency planning. This toolkit is funded by an EPA Tribal WPDG and is expected to be completed and available for use in late 2020. This tool is based on a restoration toolkit developed by Point Blue Conservation Science, a California-based wildlife conservation and research non-profit organization. The Tribe is collaborating with Point Blue to adapt the tool for use in this eco-region and to include culturally significant plants as well. RTCER, will be a valuable user-friendly tool that will help wetland restoration practitioners build redundancy, resilience, and tribal cultural values into wetland and riparian

restoration planning. It will provide a roadmap for using and improving modeling data of potential hydrological change, ecosystem/biogeographic shifts, and wetland losses and gains in the future, and enable the Tribe's Wetlands Program and others to plan restoration projects consistent with expected future conditions.

Partnering

In 2018-2019, the Wetland Program formed a Wetland Work Group (WWG) to foster relationships and collaborate on the development of this WPP to ensure that wetland management and planning is integrated within Nez Perce Tribal Departments and Divisions. The WWG includes members from the Department of Natural Resources Divisions: Water Resources Division Wetland and Nonpoint Source Pollution (319) Programs; Wildlife, Forestry and Cultural Divisions; and the Fisheries Department Watershed Division. Integration and collaboration will continue to be an important part of the Wetlands Program, and it is anticipated that the WWG will expand to include other programs and agencies in the future. The WWG met quarterly for the first two years and will continue to meet biannually or as needed.

Moving forward, the Wetland Program plans to use the WWG to work collaboratively with other programs, divisions and agencies to provide baseline assessments on wetlands in areas being restored or otherwise worked on so that functions and benefits can be determined and values provided prior to starting work. Once there is a baseline assessment, later assessments can provide information on restoration success, changes due to land use, changes due to climate change, values and functions that need to be mitigated for, etc.

The goal of partnering is to enable the program to work on a watershed basis to establish wetlands condition and function that will enable prioritization of wetlands and provide a method to detect changes and characterize trends over time using the WESP tool. By collaborating with WWG members on program projects and incorporating WESP into projects are projected for restoration or other projects affecting wetlands, the Wetland Program will build capacity, efficiency, and resilience into projects. Some of the monitoring and/or restoration programs and projects that will incorporate WESP assessment and monitoring and potentially RTCER planting designs over the 2020-2025 period include, but are not limited to:

Tribal Projects Identified by the WWG:

- Wildlife
    - Dworshak projects
    - Prairie remnant projects

- Fisheries
    - Lolo Creek Watershed projects (Bonneville Power Administration funding)
    - Musselshell assessment (tribal grant application)
    - Lapwai Creek watershed (with Army Corps)

- Water Resources

- 319 restoration projects including Lolo Creek and Maloney Reserve

- Land Commission
  - Anticipated - newly acquired land to be assessed

- Land services
  - Leases - grazing issues, BMP development and evaluation

- Cultural
  - Identifying important wetland areas for cultural uses or values

- Forestry
  - Any projects that involve work in wetlands

- Outside Partnering Opportunities
  - Opportunities to branch out using WESP and RTCER to work with other agencies such as the Army Corps of Engineers, EPA, and County Soil and Water Conservation Districts need to be explored.

Core Elements

Monitoring and Assessment

Goals and Objectives

The principal goals of monitoring and assessment work are to establish a baseline for wetlands' extent, condition and function, to detect changes, and to characterize trends over time. Monitoring and assessment of Reservation wetlands going forward will be done in collaboration with other programs working on the Reservation, with both ongoing projects and new projects in individual watersheds. This approach of working to evaluate wetlands for projects and programs prior to restoration work, and as part of the ongoing wetland program work, will provide more benefit through partnerships and collaboration, as well as shared information. Nez Perce Tribe environmental regulatory programs will come to rely on monitoring to detect unauthorized actions, evaluate alternatives, determine compliance with Tribal permits, and evaluate cumulative impacts. Eventually, such work will evaluate progress toward meeting EPA and Tribal goals of no net loss and overall increase in wetlands extent, function and quality. In general, objectives include the following:

- Refinement of a monitoring and assessment strategy consistent with using the WESP tool to supporting wetlands management accomplishing NPT objectives.
- With the Wetland Work Group, design a wetland monitoring strategy with upcoming projects and sites.
- Implementation of a sustainable monitoring program consistent with the wetlands monitoring strategy.

- Incorporation of monitoring data into tribal, state and federal agency decision-making.
- Utilization of monitoring results to evaluate effectiveness of wetland regulatory protections and restoration performance.

Status

The Tribe's Wetlands Program has completed wetland assessment and characterization of many wetlands on tribal land, and will have adapted and calibrated the WESP tool for the Reservation's ecoregions and included cultural components so that tribal cultural values and Traditional Ecological Knowledge are also used in evaluating wetlands. So many wetlands have been lost or impacted on the Reservation that a regionally-calibrated functional assessment tool will be extremely valuable in helping the Wetlands Program make sound restoration and management decisions.

Program Development: Monitoring and Assessment Activities 2020-2025

Wetlands program development required an improved approach for identifying wetlands of exceptional value and other important traditional and cultural aspects associated with wetlands, as well as for tracking changes in wetlands, comparing wetlands to reference standards, prioritizing restoration targets, and interpreting trends. The current rapid and intensive wetland assessment methods available and used in the region were not developed to address issues such as prioritizing wetlands based on values and benefits, traditional and cultural aspects, or climate change prioritization. The Wetland Program will be working to develop a more comprehensive monitoring strategy to address these specific matters of concern. The new assessment and monitoring tool will be used during the FY 2020-2025 period. These efforts will allow for conducting more rigorous wetland assessments that can also support cultural and traditional utilization, planning processes and restoration targets. The Wetland Program will use the WESP tool in watershed-based planning based on projects to identify "wetlands of exceptional value" to the Tribe within each watershed and identify data gaps that need to be filled in order to protect, enhance, restore, and manage wetlands on the reservation and traditional territories. Timeline charts for Monitoring and Assessment Core Element are located in Appendix A.

Voluntary Restoration and Protection

Goals and Objectives

The principal goal of wetland restoration and protection work is to increase the quantity, condition, and function of wetlands and their ecosystems through voluntary restoration and protection using a watershed-based approach. Protection and restoration of aquatic and riparian habitat is an integral element in the preservation of Tribal sovereignty.

In general, objectives include the following:

- Use the WESP tool to assess wetlands within each watershed for traditional cultural values and functions as well as ecosystem services.
- Develop a prioritization strategy for restoration and protection using the assessment information.
- Share and use the RTCER tool to build resiliency into restoration programs and projects.
- Grow internal and external partnerships to support wetland restoration and protection.
- Actively protect wetlands from degradation or destruction and restore wetland acres, resulting in high-quality condition and function.
- Initiate a tracking system to assess progress over time, evaluate and document results, and modify practices as appropriate.
- Seek out funding sources to implement restoration and protection priorities.

Status

Due to funding limitations for wetland restoration implementation, much of the restoration work that has been done on the Reservation in the past has been by other programs within the Tribe and other agencies or programs within the Reservation. During this restoration work, there has been a lack of coordination and collaboration with the Wetland Program on wetland-specific issues. It is anticipated that with the formation of the Tribe's Wetland Work Group and the development of the WESP and RTCER tools, all Tribal programs involved in working with wetlands will begin to collaborate with the Wetland Program and use the WESP and RTCER tools to make better informed decisions on restoration and protection of Reservation wetlands.

Program Development: Restoration and Protection Activities 2020-2025

Wetland Program development for restoration and protection will include working with the WWG to develop an action plan and prioritized map of wetland restoration/enhancement and protection areas within individual watersheds on the reservation. The program will need to develop and update GIS materials to include tracking of "restoration opportunities" and protected wetlands within a wetlands geodatabase framework using the WESP functions and values. To protect wetlands, the WWG also plans to design and construct signage and other wetland learning materials to identify and describe Reservation waters and wetlands. An outcome of forming the WWG was the realization that many people working in wetlands on the reservation lack any knowledge of cultural plants and their importance to the Tribe, so the program will seek funds to create a wetland cultural plant identification guide for the Reservation's wetlands. (see also – Core Element: Education and Outreach). The biggest benefit to the Wetland Program and the Tribe of working as a WWG is that the Wetland Program will partner with other Tribal programs and departments to target immediate enhancement and restoration opportunities for reservation wetland and riparian areas which support other natural resource management objectives. It is anticipated that the RTCER toolkit for climate smart restoration will be available in late 2020 for the WWG and others in the region to use in planning restoration planting. The program plans to prioritize wetlands within each watershed using WESP, create a geodatabase

with maps for wetland functions and values, and develop a restoration guidance document (a map of functions and values of wetlands within a project area or watershed) to assist the WWG and others with using WESP and RTCER to plan and assess restoration projects. Timeline charts for the Voluntary Restoration and Protection Core Element are located in Appendix A.

Water Quality Standards for Wetlands

Goals and Objectives

The principal goal of the Wetland Program for Water Quality Standards (WQS) for wetlands is to utilize wetland monitoring and assessment to provide a rigorous foundation for decisions regarding protection and enhancement of Reservation wetland resources.

Status

Currently, the Water Resources Division has draft Nez Perce Tribe Water Quality Standards for Surface Waters of the Nez Perce Tribe Reservation and draft Ground Water Tribal Code. These WQS are on hold for now. Since the standards are in draft form but not adopted, the program can work toward developing tribal code for wetland WQS. Using the monitoring data and the WESP tool, the program can prioritize wetlands and categorize them for standards that need to be met on the reservation with code specific to wetlands.

Program Development: Wetland Water Quality Standards Activities 2020-2025

Wetland Program development for WQS for wetlands will occur later in the timeframe of this plan after much of the assessment and monitoring. The Wetland Program plans to create a Narrative Standard for the Nez Perce WQS. The program also plans to assist in updating the NPT surface water monitoring strategy to include wetland water quality monitoring and assist in updating program QAPPs. Later work will include developing methodology and processes to determine compliance with WQS for wetlands. Timeline charts for the Water Quality Standard for Wetlands Core Element are located in Appendix A.

Regulatory

Goals and Objectives

The principal goal for regulatory efforts is to develop regulatory authority and a program that allows Tribal control over the management of the Tribe's aquatic resources and to ensure that overarching wetland and watershed goals are met. This will be accomplished through coordination with agencies for compliance monitoring and administration of Tribal Permits and Codes for wetland protection.

Status

Currently, there are no codes or regulation for wetlands on the Reservation other than the Army Corp of Engineers regulations. The Wetland program would develop code to have select parameters used with any mitigation or restoration project on the Reservation and insure the use of WESP as the monitoring option, rather than other less inclusive rapid assessment methods, such as the Montana Wetland Assessment Method, a very basic method that was developed for

putting in roads, not for valuing wetlands functions. In addition, while the set of activities regulated through Tribal Code is extensive, one major activity affecting wetlands on the Reservation, grazing, is not currently addressed through regulations. Based on grazing impacts recorded during wetland assessments, grazing needs to be addressed further, likely through a combination of regulatory and non-regulatory means. Grazing permits and leases are administered by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Land Operations and Leasing programs. These departments conduct permit application review, distribute permits to reviewers, manage review and decision deadlines, perform compliance inspections, and carry out any appropriate enforcement. However, actual enforcement does not appear to occur based on recent wetland assessments.

The Program Development: Regulatory Activities 2020-2025

The principal goal of the wetland program's regulatory activities is to coordinate with BIA Land Operations, Leasing and other NPT departments to analyze grazing practices, wetland impacts, and the regulatory basis for improved grazing practices, wetland and riparian protections. The program intends to require the use of WESP on all projects associated with wetlands, particularly leasing of Tribal lands for grazing. During the timeframe of this WPP, the program plans to create new wetland protocols for lessees' management of cattle grazing, with development of Best Management Practices (BMPs) and education and outreach through creating a landowner booklet about wetlands and their importance to the ecosystems where this grazing takes place. The program would use WESP to evaluate the effectiveness of BMPS that are implemented. The program would like to create codes requiring any wetland project proposed or summited on the Reservation to be delineated and requiring the use of WESP to assess and evaluate the wetlands before any further action can occur.

Timeline charts for the Regulatory Core Element are located in Appendix A.

Education and Outreach

Goals and Objectives

The principal goal for wetland education and outreach is to develop a strong education and outreach component as a core element for the wetland program to help increase awareness and knowledge of the presence and importance of wetlands among Tribal members, Tribal employees, and the community at large.

Status

Over the last ten years this component has been supported in an informal manner, primarily with occasional working group meetings. The Wetland Program has also supported involvement in the Region 10 Tribal Wetland Working Group (TWIG) and involvement of summer youth and interns in seasonal field work and other shared activities. On separate projects, Tribal staff have had positive outcomes in working with the community to complete riparian planting and other

education and outreach activities, which led to including education and outreach activities formally within the current WPP. Over the last two years, the Wetland Program created the Interwet wetland educational program which has gotten youth interested and involved in the Natural Resource fields through working with the local high schools. The Wetland Program has now created the Lapwai Nature Trail, a local outdoor classroom pavilion and educational trail, that extends through a wetland/riparian ecosystem.

Program Development: Education and Outreach Activities 2020-2025

Over the course of this six-year WPP, the Wetland Program plans to continue working with the Lapwai High School classes in outdoor activities, exposing students to Natural Resources fields of study, particularly wetlands. The Wetland Program also plans to expand this Interwet program to incorporate other ages for wetland education and cultural connection to the environment. The Lapwai Nature Trail will continue to be used as an outdoor education facility for outreach activities, many of which also improve the trail. The program also plans to coordinate regular lunch events to encourage sharing technical knowledge related to wetlands and restoration with Tribal government staff and BIA staff. The program plans to design, construct and install identification and educational interpretive signs for Tribal water and wetlands across the Reservation, create educational pamphlets for landowners and other parties about the importance of wetlands, and create a wetland plant guide that can be used for identifying culturally significant plants. Other planned capacity-building activities include doing outreach to increase the knowledge of cultural plants found in wetlands and work toward creating a cultural plant greenhouse with plants that cannot be found in nurseries, plants such as dogbane and tule. Cultural planting day events are planned for the public and students to get people closer to nature and build an appreciation for traditional ways. Timeline charts for the Education and Outreach Core Element are located in Appendix A.

Program Evaluation

This WPP should be evaluated every three years to ensure that the plan is achieving the actions and activities as outlined. Program evaluation should include comment from the WWG members who represent several programs and divisions within the Tribe. The evaluation process should include the following considerations:

- Has funding been adequate to support the accomplishment of program goals and objectives?
- What additional sources of funding should be pursued?
- Do the goals, objectives, milestones, or schedule need revision?
- What is the state of NPT wetlands?
- Are the conditions or quantity of wetlands changing?
- Are activities on the Reservation contributing to a decline in wetland condition?
- Has any specific wetland restoration occurred? If so, what, where, and how much total acreage?
- Was it effective?

- Are wetland regulatory protections effective?

Comprehensive review of this WPP should be conducted beginning in 2023 to facilitate application for renewal if so desired.

References

Adamus, Paul, Ph.D. 2011. Manual for the Wetland Ecosystem Services Protocol for the United States (WESPUS), beta test version 1.0 *DRAFT.* Adamus Resource Assessment, Inc. Corvallis, OR United States Environmental Protection Agency. 2006. Elements of a State Water Monitoring and Assessment Program for Wetlands. Retrieved from: http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/monitor/ on November 10, 2014.United States

Environmental Protection Agency. 2013. Core Elements of an Effective State and Tribal Wetlands Program Framework. Retrieved from: http://water.epa.gov/grants_funding/wetlands/cefintro.cfm on November 14, 2014

Appendix A

Core Element Timeframes

Core Element: Monitoring and Assessment

Goal 1: To guide and coordinate monitoring and assessment efforts of the NPT in order to holistically manage and conserve wetlands on the Reservation.

Objective: Develop a monitoring and assessment strategy consistent with Elements of a State Water Monitoring and Assessment Program for Wetlands (EPA 2006)

Action (a) Identify program decisions relying on monitoring data and desired long-term environmental outcomes						
Activity	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**
1. Identify all programs' data needs, applications, and ongoing monitoring work	X	X	X	X	X	X
2. Document comprehensive long-term goals for wetlands and key associated species		X	X	X	X	X
3. Identify how wetlands data can be used in watershed planning				X	X	X
Action (b) Define wetlands monitoring objectives and strategies						
Activity	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**
1. Work across NPT Programs to define monitoring objectives and integrate efforts	X					
2. Examine other sources within and outside NPT for monitoring information		X				
3. Document the wetlands and key species monitoring strategy			X			
4. Determine classification scheme in order to logically group wetlands			X	X		
5. Describe site selection process			X			
6. Revise indicators/methods as needed			X	X	X	X

G**oal 2:** From a watershed perspective, establish a baseline in wetlands extent, condition and function, to detect changes and characterize trends over time. This will be done on a project specific basis in collaboration with work being done by other Tribal and/or agency projects.

Objective: Implementation of a sustainable monitoring program consistent with the wetlands monitoring strategy.

Action (a) Monitor wetlands as specific to monitoring program using the WESP.						
Activity	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**
1. Develop a schedule for monitoring wetlands by watershed based management.	X					
2. Track sites that need to be monitored.		X	X	X	X	X
Action (b) Establish reference conditions using the WESP tool.						
Activity	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**
1. Define reference conditions for each watershed after WESP has been accessed.	X					
2. Define reference standard condition using the WESP tool			X	X		
3. Determine process for measuring reference standard condition using the WESP			X	X	X	
4. Select reference sites using a systematic approach for each watershed					X	X
Action (c) Tracking monitoring data.						
Activity	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**
1. Design a data management system that supports programs objectives.	X					
Action (d) Analyze data to evaluate condition/function to inform decision making.						
Activity	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**
1. Document data analysis and assessment procedures to create a restoration and management plan for each watershed.	X					
2. Establish baseline wetland condition.			X	X		
3. Analyze changes in wetland extent or condition relative to reference wetland				X	X	
4. Analyze changes in wetland extent or condition in response to climate change			X	X	X	X
5. Revise QAPP for WESP and RTCER tool as needed	X	X	X	X	X	X

Core Element: Voluntary Restoration and Protection

Goal: From a watershed project perspective, increase the quantity, condition, and function of wetlands and their ecosystems through voluntary restoration and protection.

Objective: Working with the Wetland Work Group, develop an action plan and prioritized map of wetland restoration/enhancement on reservation

Action (a): Establish and develop strong working relationships among Wetland Work Group and local agencies and the community						
Activity	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**
1. Coordinate with partners; work to outline wetland restoration and protection goals, opportunities and timeframes (when and where projects are being done and where we should target planning)	X					
Action (b): Consider watershed planning, wildlife habitat, and other objectives when selecting restoration/protection sites						
Activity	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**
1. Integrate restoration /protection efforts on a watershed scale for upcoming projects.	X					
Action (c): Track restoration opportunities for wetlands across the reservation by watershed						
Activity	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**
1. Using the WESP results refine a GIS framework to include tracking of “restoration opportunities”, traditional and cultural information, as well as protected wetlands, utilizing the functions and condition within a watershed where projects are being restored.	X					
2. Share priorities with other organizations involved with wetland protection and restoration						X
Action (d) Provide clear guidance on appropriated restoration and management techniques and success measures.						
Activity	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**
1. Develop restoration and management guidance specific to wetland types and functions using the WESP tool for values and guidance for restoration projects within each different watershed	X	X				
2. Establish measures for restoration success, e.g., adopt functional and condition indicator and field methods for each project site; include use of RTCER tool			X	X		
3. Verify restoration techniques with site visits and adapt as necessary				X	X	X

Action (e): Write a wetland cultural plant identification guidebook including wetland plants of significance.						
Activity	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**
1. Gather all the native plants and documentation with the help of WWG.	X					
2. Draft text and collate pictures and/or drawings	X					
3. Coordinate with Tribal elders and cultural program on gathering plants and review of draft book	X	X				

Action (f:) Publish a first edition Nez Perce Tribe wetland cultural plant identification guidebook including wetland plants of significance.						
Activity	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**
1. Create a finalization of the gathering ID cultural gathering plant book.	X	X				

Core Element: Water Quality Standards for Wetlands

Goal: Obtain approval of Reservation water quality standards (WQS), including standards for wetlands.

Objective 1: Utilize WQS monitoring to provide a rigorous foundation for decisions regarding protection and enhancement of Reservation wetland resources.

Action (a): Coordination with WQS Monitoring group in completing new WQS						
Activity	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**
1. Coordinate with partners; assist in working through review and processing.					X	X
Action (b): Assist in updating the NPT surface water monitoring strategy to refine wetland water quality monitoring, using an approach combining surface water quality measurements with WESP wetland condition assessment.						
Activity	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**
1. Provide information regarding wetland monitoring and assessment data to be utilized for wetland WQS.				X	X	X
2. Ensure inclusion in all future NPT policies and regulations authorizing WQS program.	X	X	X	X	X	X
Action (c): Review and assist in updating the NPT surface water monitoring strategy and QAPP as needed, in order to address quality assurance in wetland water quality monitoring.						
Activity	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**
1. QAPP revision and reporting updated for the WESP and the RTCER tools.					X	X
Action (d): Develop methodology and process as needed to determine compliance with WQS for wetlands. This may simply be included within the NPT WQS, or be a separate document if additional clarification of the WQS is needed.						
Activity	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**
1. Review WQ standards and determine if additional conditions are needed for compliance applying it to tribal code.					X	X

Core Element: Regulation

Goal: Develop regulatory authority and program that allows Tribal control over the management of its aquatic resources and to ensure that overarching wetland and watershed goals are met.

Objective 1: Coordination and compliance monitoring for administration of Tribal Permits and Codes.

Action (a): Work to identify and provide monitoring compliance throughout.						
Activity	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**
1. Coordination and compliance monitoring for administration of Tribal Permits and Codes that require wetland protection						X
Action (b): Continue to close remaining gaps in wetland protection that can be accomplished through regulatory approaches.						
Activity	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**
1. Coordinate with BIA, Land Services and other NPT departments, and with WWG identify additional wetland protection that can be accomplished through regulatory approaches.			X			
2. Pay special attention to improved grazing practices, and associated wetland and riparian protection opportunities.	X	X	X	X	X	X

Core Element: Education and Outreach

Goal: Develop a strong education and outreach component as a core element of the wetland program, to help increase awareness and knowledge of the presence and importance of wetlands among Tribal members and the community at large.

Objective 1: Continue to develop the education and outreach programs that have been started.

Action (a): Continue the Interwet Program educational program for getting youth involved with Natural Resource careers and opportunities.						
Activity	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**
1. Work with WWG to develop more calibrate wetlands-related educational outreach.	X	X	X	X	X	X
2. Seek funding for wetlands outreach with native youth.	X	X	X	X	X	X
Action (b): Lapwai Nature Trail outreach to get the community and others involved.						
Activity	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**
1. Develop an annual schedule for in-school educational outreach activities, involving the Tribal College, K-8 schools on reservation and others.	X	X	X	X	X	X
2. Arrange and conduct a spring wetlands educational event each year.		X	X	X	X	X
3. Seek funding for expanding and improving Lapwai Nature Trail.	X	X	X	X	X	X
Action (c): Design, construct and install identification and educational signs for Tribal waters and wetlands across the Reservation.						
Activity	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**
1. Create more signage with the help of the WWG.	X					
2. Seek funding for interpretive signs and/or kiosks.	X	X	X	X	X	X
Action (d): Provide wetland assessment and restoration training to Tribal staff.						
Activity	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**
1. Work with WWG to train staff in using wetland assessment tool (WESP) and also the RTCER restoration planting toolkit for climate resiliency.	X	X	X	X	X	X