April 1, 2009

To: FF Policy

From: Darin Cramer, AMPA

Subject: CMER/SAG Response to Preliminary Policy Reprioritization of FY10 CMER Projects

At the February 19 special meeting Policy made some preliminary reprioritization decisions regarding FY10 CMER projects. This reprioritization is intended to accelerate work on CMER projects important to maintaining CWA assurances. Projects proposed for acceleration include:

- Type N Effectiveness in Incompetent Lithologies
- Type N Effectiveness Eastside
- Mass Wasting Landscape Scale Effectiveness
- Accuracy of Unstable Landform ID

In order to accelerate work on these projects and recognize anticipated capacity limits, Policy is considering delaying initiation of the following projects:

- Eastside Type N Characterization Forest Hydrology
- Amphibians in Intermittent Streams Phase III
- Eastside Type F Channel Wood Characterization
- Extensive Riparian Monitoring - Vegetation Component
- Accuracy of Unstable Landform ID

Policy requested feedback from CMER and the SAGs regarding the proposed reprioritization; specifically in the areas of: 1) potential resource implications; 2) inter-project implications; 3) alternative ways to obtain information Policy needs; 4) estimated costs and timelines for the possible alternatives; and 5) different approaches for proceeding with the "new" projects. The projects proposed for delay are distributed amongst SAGE, RSAG and LWAG; the projects proposed for acceleration are distributed amongst SAGE, RSAG and UPSAG. The following is a summary of responses from these SAGs.

SAGE: Since Eastern Washington lacks quantitative performance targets, SAGE believes the approach of characterizing eastside conditions is a necessary first step to initiate effectiveness monitoring. The current and proposed Type F projects are intended to estimate riparian conditions resilient to disturbance events through time, and link those conditions with in-stream habitat. These data can then be used to develop performance targets and identify future data gaps. Half the study sites for the Type F in-stream wood project have already been established through the Type F riparian current condition project. Delaying the in-stream wood project would inhibit the ability to relate riparian conditions to in-stream habitat conditions, and potentially result in losing access to these sites.

The proposed Type N Forest Hydrology project (study design currently in ISPR) will develop a tool to characterize flow conditions in Eastern Washington Type N streams. SAGE believes streams in Eastern Washington have varying flow conditions which may function differently, and therefore must be identified prior to initiating effectiveness monitoring. If Type N streams do exhibit different flow conditions and function differently, it will be difficult to initiate effectiveness monitoring without knowing where and how often they occur on the landscape.

SAGE would prefer to stay on course with their proposed approach of completing the characterization projects per the draft study designs prior to initiating effectiveness monitoring. However, a potential alternate course of action for the Type F In-stream wood project would be to sample the 103 sites already established through the Type F riparian current condition project; use those along with the riparian condition data to begin performance target development. Under this alternative target development could possibly begin in FY11. The drawback of this alternative is the draft in-stream wood study design calls for a sample size of 200 in order to meet statistical power objectives.

An alternate course of action for the Type N Forest Hydrology project is to proceed with phase I during FY10 and use data from however many sites could be surveyed that year (~100-150) to inform an effectiveness monitoring study design. The following field season SAGE would continue with site surveying for the forest hydrology project to acquire the sample size requirement while also working on implementing an effectiveness monitoring project. A second alternative is to scale back the forest hydrology project to a total of 100-150 sites rather than the 300 called for in the draft study design, and use those data to inform an effectiveness monitoring study design. In either case SAGE believes they can begin work on an effectiveness monitoring study design in FY11.

In either case SAGE indicates work on a Type N effectiveness monitoring study design can begin in FY10/11, with implementation in FY11 and completion by FY15. SAGE does not have a cost estimate for an effectiveness project. The cost estimate to continue the forest hydrology project is $400,000 per year for either approach with a total of $800,000 if the full project is implemented.

The alternative approach for the Type F in-stream wood project can begin in FY10 and be completed in FY11. SAGE suggested the cost for this approach could be reduced from $400,000 to approximately $200,000 if SAGE members conducted the work.

Not all CMER members were in concurrence with SAGE's proposal. There was concern that SAGE's Type N proposal may contain technical assumptions that are without basis, and the in-stream wood study design is still in CMER review. CMER decided to forward the proposals to Policy nonetheless since neither study design has received final CMER approval yet. In all cases, the suggested schedule for the proposals is extremely optimistic.

RSAG: The Extensive Riparian Monitoring - Vegetation Component project is intended to provide information to assess data collected under the temperature component (currently

active). The vegetation component will provide information about riparian conditions, including wood recruitment and nutrient input potential. This information may help explain channel wood data (being collected as part of the temperature component) and aid in determining sediment storage/routing and other in-stream characteristics that affect water quality. Since both components of this project were designed to be done together, delaying the vegetation component would inhibit our ability to relate in-stream conditions to adjacent riparian stand conditions over time.

An alternative way to proceed would be to finish the protocol development for the vegetation component, purchase project specific aerial photography (assuming currently available 2006 photography will be inadequate) and collect some ground-truth data, but delay assessment until budget and capacity allows.

RSAG does not have a cost estimate for this alternative

UPSAG UPSAG is involved in three of the four projects proposed for acceleration. Therefore, Policy will likely need to choose which two projects will be the priority for UPSAG in FY10. The project furthest along in development is the Accuracy of Unstable Landform ID. This project will be entering ISPR very soon and likely be ready to implement in FY10. If this project proceeds, UPSAG is proposing a pilot (test facility and small stratified sample of FPAs) in FY10. The pilot will be helpful for better estimating partial and full implementation costs, as well as provide Policy with information to determine if partial or full implementation will be useful.

The Mass Wasting Landscape Scale Effectiveness project is next in line on UPSAGs list. Scoping on this project is planned to begin once the post-mortem and Roads Sub-basin Scale Effectiveness projects begin winding down. If it's feasible to sample natural background rates of land sliding in the Hood Canal area, which was also impacted by the December 2-3, 2007 Storm, then implementation of this work in the FY10 field season will be urgent. If Policy decides this project is high priority, UPSAG will need to make the determination relative to Hood Canal immediately. If the Hood Canal area can be used, scoping and study design for this project will need to pre-empt the unstable landform ID project in FY10.

UPSAG is discussing small, secondary investigations for the post-mortem project because the preliminary results are creating important questions. The FY10 budget reflects completion of the final report through the CMER and ISPR reviews and funds for these secondary investigations.

The information described above assumes the Type N Incompetent Lithologies project will proceed in FY10 and reflects UPSAGs continued involvement in the project.

LWAG: LWAG is neutral on proceeding with the Amphibians in Intermittent Streams project in FY 10 and did not provide a specific response.