CBWP Critical Issue + Strategy Suggestion Form - Surface Water
Ecological Working Group - Rivers and Streams

Place-based Planning requires that the Collaborative come up with a list of issues, based on the Step 2 and 3 work, that can be addressed with strategies in the surface water plan. When appropriate, Working Groups will fill out this form with the issues that have been identified during their research, explain why it should be addressed with the surface water plan, propose a possible strategy or solution to the issue, and provide expectations on the outcome of strategy implementation. Then, the project manager will compile the information in a spreadsheet and review with the Collaborative.

Definition of a Critical Issue: A significant concern regarding instream or out-of-stream surface water flows/management/resources that is impacting the Harney basin ecology, economy, and/or community.

Proposed Issue:
Riparian habitat conditions need to be improved in some places.

Source of the Issue:
Has this information been developed in a Step 2 or 3 document? If so, which one?
Yes, Rivers and Streams Step 2.

Does the issue impact the ecology, economy, or community?:
Yes, this impacts all three. It directly impacts ecology, with benefits to the economy and community from having healthier rivers and potentially delisting 303(d) water quality impaired streams. It also helps potentially avoid an Endangered Species Act listing of the redband trout.

Why should this issue be addressed with the CBWP surface water plan?:
Riparian conditions affect instream flows amounts, water temperature and the food web that many aquatic and terrestrial species rely upon. Restoring riparian areas, and reconnecting those areas with the floodplain, can help mitigate reduced summer flows and high stream temperatures, including those stemming from the impacts of climate change.

If issue is not addressed, what will the situation be?:

Continued and increasingly high stream temperatures, missed opportunity to naturally store spring water in the watershed for later release to the streams, continued low summer and later season flows, worsening with climate change.

Suggestions for strategies to address issue:
(Note many of these would also need to include securing funding, or capacity, to accomplish the task)

1. Robust assessment identifying riparian habitat conditions across the basin.

2. Prioritize areas for restoration (e.g. applying criteria such as importance of stream for redband trout, fresh water mussels, and other species; areas of water quality violations; ability of riparian restoration at the site to impact stream temperatures (list to be developed by task force/work group?)

3. Design and implement a plan that translates the assessment into action.

Expected outcome once strategy is implemented:
Cooler streams with higher summer and dry season flows that are better able to support fish, wildlife and invertebrates that rely on Harney Basin rivers and streams. Greater resilience for stream ecosystems as the climate changes. Better habitat for species that rely on the riparian areas.

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