

**CBWP Critical Issue + Strategy Suggestion Form - Surface Water
Ecological Working Group - Wetlands**

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:

Lack of information about current distribution of persistent wetlands, by type, throughout the Harney Basin.

Source of the Issue:

Has this information been developed in a Step 2 or 3 document? If so, which one?

This data gap was identified in the Wetlands Step 2 document.

Does the issue impact the ecology, economy, or community?:

This issue impacts ecology, but if wetland loss continues could impact economy if people stop traveling to the basin to see wetland birds.

Why should this issue be addressed with the CBWP surface water plan?:

Information about distribution of different types of wetlands, and where various types of wetlands persisted during drought, will create a better understanding of how to irrigate to provide habitat for a suite of birds throughout their life cycle.

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

It is possible that a focus on a few wetland types (i.e. wet meadows) will create a situation where the wetland type becomes more homogeneously wet meadow, rather than a diverse suite necessary to support birds beyond migrating waterfowl.

Suggestions for strategies to address issue:

Malheur NWR has done some work with Open Range Consulting (ORC) to map the refuge by select habitat types. With the IWJV Wetland Evaluation Tool (WET), these vegetation information could provide information about wetland types and persistence. WET data exists for the entire Harney Basin, but the ORC data currently only exists at Malheur NWR. Expanding the

ORC mapping off Refuge will allow for a fuller understanding of on-the-ground conditions, which will allow for better climate resiliency planning.

Expected outcome once strategy is implemented:

An understanding of how surface water irrigation can be used to benefit diverse wetland types in the Harney Basin, particularly as water availability becomes increasingly uncertain.

DRAFT