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May 1, 2008

DECISION MEMORANDUM

TO: Council members

FROM: Mark Fritsch, project implementation manager

SUBJECT: Follow-up action for the *Mainstem, Middle Fork, John Day Rivers Fish Habitat Enhancement Project*, Project 1984-021-00

PROPOSED ACTION: Council staff recommends that this project transition in Fiscal Year 2008 to close out in 2009.

SIGNIFICANCE: The proposed action will address the conditions placed on this project as part of the Fiscal Year 2007 - 2009 funding recommendations.

BUDGETARY/ECONOMIC IMPACTS

The Council confirms the recommended expense budgets in the current planning budget of \$540,000 in Fiscal Year 2008. Staff recommends closing out the project and recognizes that the planning budget for Fiscal Year 2009 is \$474,000, though BPA contracting will determine a final close-out figure.

BACKGROUND

The purpose of the John Day Fish Habitat Enhancement Program is to enhance production of indigenous wild stocks of spring Chinook and summer steelhead within the subbasin through habitat protection, enhancement and fish passage improvement. This project has been in the Program since 1984.

As part of the fish and wildlife project funding recommendations for Fiscal Years 2007 through 2009, the Council conditioned funding on a favorable review by the ISRP and Council of the project's accomplishment report, as called for in the ISRP final review (ISRP document 2006-6). In addition, as part of the project-specific recommendation, the Council referred the project sponsor to the programmatic recommendation associated with habitat monitoring and evaluation.

On March 6, 2007 the Council received a submittal from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife intended to address the funding condition placed on the project as part of the Council's funding recommendation associated with Fiscal Years 2007 - 2009.

On April 19, 2007 the ISRP provided its initial review of the submittal and recommended that the sponsor prepare a comprehensive summary of habitat restoration accomplished since 1984. The ISRP recommended the summary include:

- the locations where restoration has occurred;
- the location of these sites relative to spawning and rearing areas for the focal species;
- what monitoring data exists for these sites;
- an analysis and interpretation of the data; and
- an outline for monitoring in the future (this is the place to report the Before After Control Influence study (BACI) design for effectiveness monitoring identified by the sponsor).

Based on the information received from the sponsor and the initial review that the ISRP provided the Council staff requested, on May 9, 2007, that ODFW respond to the “conditions” raised by the ISRP. The Council staff stated that the sponsor should address responses to the first three bullets above and hoped that a GIS map and overlays with the necessary details could be provided. Regarding the final two bullets, staff determined that the Council's programmatic issue associated with habitat monitoring and evaluation addressed those points (i.e., *Fish and Wildlife Project Funding Recommendations to the Bonneville Power Administration for Fiscal Years 2007 through 2009 - Part 2: Programmatic and Broad Policy Issues; 2. Monitoring and Evaluation; Habitat improvement projects and monitoring and evaluation*). Staff understood that the ISRP might want to understand the current level and intent of monitoring and evaluation funded in the project. Therefore staff requested that the sponsors address, to the best of their ability, the concerns raised in the remaining two bullets regarding additional monitoring and evaluation information needs. In addition, Council staff thought it would be helpful to provide better links to the ongoing status and trend project (Project 1998-016-00¹) and the Integrated Status and Effectiveness Monitoring Program (ISEMP) work (Project 2003-017-00²).

On February 21, 2008 the ODFW submitted a response addressing the additional information needs as requested in April 2007, and on April 22, 2008 the Council received the ISRP's final review (ISRP document 2008-5).

ANALYSIS

ISRP provided a “Does Not Meet Scientific Criteria” recommendation, based on the lack of results reporting and data, and inadequate monitoring. The ISRP members qualified this recommendation by their understanding that the project has not received adequate funds to conduct monitoring for the John Day subbasin and that the Council did not request them to fully respond to those items (bullets four and five). They were disappointed that the sponsor did not

¹ Project 1998-016-00, *Salmonid Productivity, Escapement, Trend, and Habitat Monitoring in the John Day River Subbasin* - this project focuses on research monitoring and evaluation project that monitors anadromous salmonid status and trends in life-stage abundance, survival, and distribution and status and trend in their habitats

² Project 2003-017-00, *Integrated Status and Effectiveness Monitoring Program (ISEMP): The design and evaluation of monitoring tools for salmon populations and habitat in the Interior Columbia River Basin* - this project is a collaborative effort to design, implement and evaluate Status and Trends Monitoring for salmon and steelhead populations and habitat and watershed-scale Effectiveness Monitoring for restoration actions impacting salmon habitat in the CRB

provide a more complete response with the available information at hand as suggested by the Council staff.

Council staff shares ISRP's disappointment that the submittal was not complete or adequate for an ISRP favorable review. This is especially the case considering that ODFW was provided a certain degree of coverage regarding the final two bullets (i.e., data analysis and monitoring), and that the response time for the submittal was a little over nine months. It would seem that over that extended period of time ODFW would be able to adequately compile the requested information and/or utilize information from other fundable projects in the subbasin.

Based on this review and the lack of attention to the project requirements the Council staff recommends that this project transition to close-out in Fiscal Year 2009. Due to the proximity of the 2008 field season and the arrangements and agreements made with landowners and cost-sharing collaborators, the Fiscal Year 2008 budget will remain as defined in the planning budget. As for the funding necessary to transition the project in Fiscal Year 2009 to close-out, those details will be addressed through Bonneville contracting.

Staff notes that the Action Agencies' 2007- 2009 Proposed Action for Tributary Habitat Actions includes this project as a tributary action the agencies intend to implement for offsite habitat mitigation. (*Appendix B-2 Tributary Habitat Actions, Proposed Action*). Bonneville will have to determine its need to conduct this project in light of the ISRP report. Staff, however, believes that a close-out recommendation remains warranted.