

W. Bill Booth
Chair
Idaho

James A. Yost
Idaho

Tom Karier
Washington

Dick Wallace
Washington



Bruce A. Measure
Vice-Chair
Montana

Rhonda Whiting
Montana

Melinda S. Eden
Oregon

Joan M. Dukes
Oregon

September 4, 2008

DECISION MEMORANDUM

TO: Council members

FROM: Mark Fritsch, project implementation manager

SUBJECT: Follow-up action for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife habitat projects in the Grande Ronde and John Day rivers.

PROPOSED ACTION: Mainstem, Middle Fork, John Day Rivers Fish Habitat Enhancement Project, Project 1984-021-00: Based on the review by the ISRP, Council staff recommends that the earlier biological data reporting and analysis conditions placed on this project be considered as met. This project, however, must address the “qualifications” identified in the final ISRP review in the next review process.

ODFW Blue Mountain Oregon Fish Habitat Improvement, Project 1984-025-00: Based on the review by the ISRP, Council staff recommends that the conditions placed on this project be considered as addressed.

SIGNIFICANCE: The proposed actions will address the conditions placed on these projects during the Fiscal Year 2007 - 2009 funding recommendations. The Council confirms the recommended expense budgets for these two projects.

BUDGETARY/ECONOMIC IMPACTS

The Council provides the confirmed recommended expense budgets in the table below.

Project #	Project Title	Sponsor	Budget ¹		
			FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009
1984-021-00	<i>Mainstem, Middle Fork, John Day Rivers Fish Habitat Enhancement Project</i>	ODFW	\$540,000	\$540,000	\$474,000
1984-025-00	<i>ODFW Blue Mountain Oregon Fish Habitat Improvement</i>	ODFW	\$365,000	\$365,000	\$365,000

¹ Bonneville’s Implementation Planning Budgets (July 2, 2007 and July 1, 2008).

BACKGROUND

These projects address habitat needs in the John Day, Grande Ronde, and Imnaha subbasins of Oregon. These projects have been part of the Program since 1984. Both projects have as their goal to protect and restore fish habitat through the use of passive and active restoration treatment techniques. Passive treatment, the preferred method, focuses on riparian fencing to protect functional stream/riparian habitats. Active treatment, used in more severely degraded situations, includes bioengineering, instream structures, native vegetative plantings, and engineered channels.

As part of the fish and wildlife project funding recommendations for Fiscal Years 2007 through 2009, the Council conditionally approved funding for both projects to develop an accomplishments report in response to a request from the ISRP in their final review report (ISRP document 2006-6). Based on a favorable review by the ISRP and Council of the project's accomplishment report, the Council would approve implementation funding. 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.

Sponsor should complete accomplishments report as called for in ISRP recommendation. Funding in FY08 and 09 contingent upon favorable review by ISRP and Council. See also programmatic recommendation on habitat m&e.

John Day Subbasin

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

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 following five items.

1. the locations where restoration has occurred;
2. the location of these sites relative to spawning and rearing areas for the focal species;
3. what monitoring data exists for these sites;
4. an analysis and interpretation of the data; and
5. 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 items above and hoped that sponsors could provide a GIS map and overlays with the necessary details. 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*). Despite staff's

belief that the programmatic issue addressed the final two ISRP conditions, staff felt 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 help to provide better links to the ongoing ODFW John Day status and trend project (Project 1998-016-00²) and the Integrated Status and Effectiveness Monitoring Program (ISEMP) work (Project 2003-017-00³).

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). 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 stating they understood the project has not received adequate funds to conduct monitoring for the John Day subbasin and that the Council did not request the sponsor to fully respond to those items (conditions four and five). They were disappointed that the sponsor did not provide a more complete response with the available information at hand as suggested by the Council staff.

Based on this review, the Council staff recommended to the Council 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, Council staff conditioned its recommendation. Staff stated that the Fiscal Year 2008 budget should 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 would be addressed through Bonneville contracting.

Based on the staff presentation on May 14, 2008, the Council recommended, that ODFW be provided 60 days to respond, including time for the ISRP to provide its review.

On June 20, 2008, the Council received the response from ODFW. The response included a cover letter and an electronic version of a comprehensive report titled "*Mainstem, Middle Fork, John Day Rivers Fish Habitat Enhancement Project (BPA Project ID 1984-021-00), COMPREHENSIVE PROJECT REVIEW (1984-2007)*". These were transmitted to the ISRP, which submitted its review to the Council on July 22, 2008 (ISRP document 2008-8). The ISRP found that the project "*Meets Scientific Criteria (Qualified)*". The qualification is based on the need of the project to clearly state objectives for the following:

- The amount of improvement in physical habitat that it will achieve on private lands

² 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 of anadromous salmonid status and trends in life-stage abundance, survival, and distribution, and status and trend in their habitats

³ 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 Columbia River Basin.

- Improvement in aquatic habitat conditions (increasing spawning capacity, increasing juvenile rearing habitat, etc)
- Improving the status of the steelhead and spring Chinook focal species

In addition the ISRP requested that ODFW develop a more rigorous, statistical sampling design for both current and future projects in an attempt to ensure that results can be generalized to other unmonitored sites within the basin and to obtain more data on juvenile fish abundance.

Grande Ronde Subbasin

On May 27, 2008, the Council received a submittal from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife intended to address the condition placed on the project as part of the Council's Fiscal Years 2007 -2009 funding recommendation.

The submittal included a cover letter and an electronic version of a comprehensive report titled "*Grand Ronde Basin Fish Habitat Project Summary Report, 1984-2007*". The information was transmitted to the ISRP and on August 8, 2008 the Council received the science review (ISRP document 2008-9). The ISRP found that the project "*Meets Scientific Review Criteria*".

ANALYSIS

John Day

On July 22, 2008, the Council on July 22, 2008 received the ISRP review formatted to address the five items that had been identified in their initial review.

Generally, the ISRP found that ODFW had adequately addressed items 1 and 2. These two items dealt with restoration sites and the location of these sites in relation to spawning and rearing areas in the subbasin. The ISRP did provide helpful comments to improve future reviews for these items.

The ISRP found that the additional data presented to address monitoring data (item #3) for the John Day subbasin was an improvement over the previous submittal. The ISRP, however, noted concerns regarding site selection, sampling design limitations and the difficulty in compiling the information that had been collected in the John Day Subbasin.

Though ODFW was not required to address items 4 and 5 regarding analysis and interpretation of the data and future monitoring, ODFW attempted to provide a more comprehensive presentation. ODFW also reconfirmed that it will continue with the limited monitoring and evaluation approach. The ISRP provided extensive comments pertaining to the inadequacies of the analysis and interpretation of the data. ISRP also provided extensive comments regarding the existing design and the need for coordination and consolidation of all monitoring in the basin. The Panel took excerpts from the ODFW's submittal and produced a summary of the possible ramifications based on these excerpts. The conclusions raised by the ISRP build upon the

limitations of the existing monitoring and evaluation for this project and the inability that ODFW has to demonstrate benefit in context to the 1996 amendment⁴ to the Power Act.

It is apparent to the Council staff that the ISRP directed its comments not only on the information received from ODFW, but also at the program and limits placed on this project for the monitoring and evaluation of habitat actions. In part this relates to the approach that the Council took in the Fiscal Year 2007 - 2009 funding recommendations. The recommended approach de-emphasized the need to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of each individual habitat project, due to the high expense and absence of satisfactory results. Hence, the Council instructed project sponsors to limit the monitoring and evaluation elements of habitat projects to no more than five percent of the project budget as a general rule. This programmatic recommendation formed the basis for staff recommending that ODFW address only three of the five items requested by the ISRP from its initial April 2007 review.

In addition, as highlighted in the ISRP review, there is a need to coordinate and consolidate the monitoring work in the John Day basin. Part of the difficulty in compiling the monitoring information might be an artifact of the project-centric implementation that has occurred in the basin. This project-centric implementation approach may warrant a comprehensive review similar to the review conducted in the Umatilla basin as part of the Fiscal Year 2007 - 2009 funding recommendations. A comprehensive program review may assist ISRP in better understanding the larger perspective unavailable through review of individual proposals.

Overall, the ISRP found that the project did meet review criteria (i.e., “*Meets Scientific Criteria (Qualified)*”). Though the ISRP review of the John Day project was qualified, the ISRP stated the following.

Because the John Day subbasin is critically important to Columbia River basin salmon and steelhead resources, and because habitat conditions on private lands are critical to the overall functioning of this subbasin, continuing the project while refining it may be warranted. The sponsors appear to understand the required designs and methods for monitoring the projects but are unable to obtain support through the Fish and Wildlife Program/BPA. An adequate fish and fish habitat monitoring program that would serve both the Council and other program projects (OWEB, Pacific Salmon Fund) within the subbasin is needed.

Based on the review and implications from past funding actions, the Council staff feels that the issues that conditioned the project as part of the Fiscal Year 2007 - 2009 funding recommendations have been met. The project’s approach to addressing the habitat related qualifications needs to be aligned with the Council’s regional habitat monitoring and evaluation approach, once adopted.

Grande Ronde

⁴ The ISRP was created by the Council in response to section [4\(h\)\(10\)\(D\)](#) of the Northwest Power Act as amended in 1996. Under the amended Act, the ISRP provides the Council with independent scientific review of projects proposed for funding by the Bonneville Power Administration through the Council’s program.

The ISRP found the Grande Ronde submittal to be complete in summarizing a large amount of work in a straightforward and candid manner. The summary states the following.

The report is excellent and is the sort of results reporting that the ISRP has been requesting to substantiate scientific merit. The report should be a good resource for other sponsors in the Columbia Basin and perhaps could serve as a model for reporting and analyzing results. The ISRP appreciates the tremendous amount of work the sponsors did in preparing the report

The plan to begin developing an integrated monitoring plan for the subbasin should lead to a significant improvement in monitoring efficiency and provide a more complete evaluation of incremental and overall project effectiveness. The sponsors and other cooperators in the subbasin are to be commended for recognizing the value of such an approach and for pursuing it to improve their monitoring efforts as an integral element to scientifically defensible project management.

It is important to note that the ISRP recognized that an extensive amount of time was necessary to compile the information for the review and that implementation of at least two project actions did not occur as scheduled during the draft of the summary report. The Grande Ronde report demonstrated that some acceptable M&E is being conducted, but that a significant amount of time is required to catalogue, compile, analyze and report on those restoration projects. In addition, active restoration project design has become an integral part of the Grande Ronde Fish Habitat project when compared to the John Day project which primarily implements passive designs for riparian fencing and associated structures. Active restoration has more measurable results in the short term particularly with physical parameters. Both of the fish habitat projects have separately funded research, monitoring and evaluation projects in the basins, however, coordinated proposals to design habitat project monitoring for changes in fish abundance, as requested by the ISRP, were not funded during the 2007-2009 Funding Recommendation process.

Based on the ISRP and staff review of the summary report, the Council staff feels that the issues that conditioned the project as part of the Fiscal Year 2007 - 2009 funding recommendations have been met. The Council staff feels that the summary report is one of the better habitat implementation summaries to date for a program project and recommends that interested parties review its format and content.

<http://www.nwcouncil.org/dropbox/GrandeRondeSummaryReport.pdf>

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