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January 29, 2009

## DECISION MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Council members

**FROM:** Mark Fritsch, project implementation manager

**SUBJECT:** Follow-up action for the *UPA Wenatchee Subbasin Complexity Proposal*, Project 2007-325-00.

**PROPOSED ACTION:** Council staff recommends that the Council support a sequenced site review. This recommendation is conditioned on the understanding that if the reviews are favorable from the ISRP that site implementation can proceed.

**SIGNIFICANCE:** If the sequenced site reviews are favorable, the proposed actions will address the conditions placed on this project during the Fiscal Year 2007 - 2009 funding recommendations.

## BUDGETARY/ECONOMIC IMPACTS

The Council confirms the recommended expense budgets for the project as defined in Bonneville's implementation plan for Fiscal Years 2008 and 2009.<sup>1</sup>

## BACKGROUND

As part of the Fiscal Year 2007 - 2009 review, Chelan County Natural Resources Department (CCNRD) proposed five complexity projects to recover watershed processes and functions in the Wenatchee River subbasin. Implementation actions associated with the project focused on reconnecting floodplain habitat, and addressing instream structures (i.e., large wood, rock, or other natural materials) to enhance salmonid habitat diversity, habitat quality and quantity, and channel integrity.

As part of the fish and wildlife project funding recommendations for Fiscal Years 2007 through 2009, the Council conditionally approved funding for the project. The conditional funding recommendation was based on the "fundable-in-part" review that the project received from the ISRP (ISRP document 2006-6). Funding was provided for securing landowner agreements and implementation plans; out year funds for implementation were contingent on favorable ISRP and

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<sup>1</sup> Bonneville's Funding decision (July 1, 2008) reflects \$1,684,900 in FY 2008, and \$216,100 in FY 2009.

Council review of implementation plans. In addition, Bonneville placed conditions on the contract for this project that reflected the need for the Council review and recommendation prior to initiation of the ground action.

As part of the review, the ISRP stated that the objectives of the project to reconnect potential floodplain habitats was definitely worthwhile, but this proposal did not provide enough information to enable a technical evaluation of the merits of each project individually. Therefore, the ISRP recommended a partial funding for this project until the plans for each site are more fully developed and landowner agreements are finalized.

On September 8, 2008 the Council received a submittal from the CCNRD intended to address the issues and concerns raised by the ISRP (ISRP Document 2006 - 6) as part of its review of proposals submitted for Fiscal Years 2007 - 2009.

On October 24, 2008 the ISRP provided its review of the submittal (ISRP Document 2008-13). The ISRP asked for a response (*Response Requested*) before making a final determination on the scientific justification of the project or various components of the project.

## **ANALYSIS**

The primary concern that the ISRP raised was the need to have a sufficient level of detail to assess the value of the project on scientific merit. Therefore, the ISRP requested that the sponsor submit a complete summary of the implementation plan, anticipated focal species benefits, ecological justification, landowner agreement, and monitoring plan for each of the sites.

On January 6, 2009 the Council received a response from CCNRD addressing the ISRP review. The County valued the review and commented that it will assist in the implementation of biologically sound projects. The County is proposing to provide a detailed response to the ISRP and implementation plans for the sites. The submittals will occur in the near future for CMZ11, CMZ N4, and CMZ 6. The remaining two sites (CMZ 17 and CMZ 20) will be submitted to the ISRP in the fall of 2009. The staggered submittals will allow for implementation planning development to the level to meet scientific review criteria and will allow implementation to occur during the instream work window during 2009. The ISRP also supports this approach and stated that each site should be treated separately and that ISRP reviews should be sequential and site-specific. Therefore, staff requests that the sponsor submit a complete summary of the implementation plan, anticipated focal species benefits, ecological justification, landowner agreement, and monitoring plan for each site as soon as possible.

Council staff supports this sequenced review as it would allow the sponsor to develop the level of detail of the project as it is designed and coordinated. This approach would recognize the interrelated but separate nature of the sites and the associated time sensitivity for implementation. Council staff recommends that upon favorable review from the ISRP the projects proceed to implementation.