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April 29, 2010

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Council Members

**FROM:** Patty O'Toole, Program Implementation Manager  
Laura Robinson, Fish and Wildlife Division Intern

**SUBJECT:** Update on Multi-year action plans

At the May Council meeting staff will provide an update on the multi-year action plans.

The 2009 Fish and Wildlife Program (Program) calls for the development of multi-year action plans as follows:

*[T]he Council will work with recommending entities, Bonneville and others to shape the measures recommended for all areas of the Program into multi-year action plans similar to those implementation plans in the 2008 Biological Opinion and the Accords. The Council will then work with Bonneville and relevant entities to estimate multi-year implementation budgets and secure funding commitments that ensure adequate funding for these action plans.*

The objective of this effort is to develop long-term (10 year) plans for each subbasin that include actions recommended to the Council during the 2009 Program amendment process. The Program provides guidance as to what the action plans should include: ongoing and new proposed actions, expected benefits, sequence of work, priority of work, monitoring and evaluation as appropriate and estimated budget.

The action plans will provide for long-term Program planning in describing a road map for work to be implemented in subbasins and in developing fiscal estimates for what funding would be necessary to complete that work. In general, action plans represent the best current estimate of future work that should and could be done within a subbasin. Action plans can provide transparency in long term planning and assist in keeping expectations for program investment consistent with available funds.

### ***Challenges***

Information on expected benefits is not readily available for most of the actions recommended to the Council during the recent Program amendment process. While FCRPS BiOp actions and some recovery plan actions estimate benefits for listed species, most of the recommended actions did not come to the Council with quantified estimates of benefits. Until benefit estimates can be developed more comprehensively for all the recommended actions, subbasin plan information should be used to link the recommended actions with limiting factors. This linkage will describe which actions can address known problems in the subbasins.

As the subbasin plans currently exist in the Program, limiting factors are described in many different ways. The Status of the Resource (CBFWA) online information now includes limiting factors for aquatic focal species for each subbasin, which were identified through a cross-walk of subbasin plan and recovery plan limiting factors with a set of standardized, habitat based limiting factors. The SOTR provides a consistent base to work from. As staff works through each subbasin, the information is reviewed and revised as necessary to ensure it is comprehensive and accurate. Also, the Program recommendations came in all shapes and sizes. Frequently, detail about the actions being recommended was not included in the recommendations (note we did not provide any guidance about actions on the outset of the amendment process) so wherever possible, staff is using other sources such as Taurus, Pisces, subbasin plans and project proposal information to develop the multi-year action plans.

Action plans are not intended to be detailed project descriptions; they contain high-level information about *possible* subbasin actions intended to benefit fish and wildlife over a ten year period. Action plans will evolve and change over the ten year period due to scientific as well as policy changes. The high level information in the action plans provides the Council with significant flexibility to adaptively manage the Program in the future.

### ***Wildlife actions***

Although subbasin plans contain limiting factor information for wildlife implementation of wildlife mitigation actions is currently tied to the wildlife loss assessments and the remaining habitat units to be acquired and not to limiting factors. It may be important for the Council to consider how wildlife mitigation actions are linked to limiting factors in the future, but in the interim, wildlife mitigation actions will be described in the actions plans, but not linked to limiting factors.

### ***RM&E actions***

The link between limiting factors and RM&E actions recommended to the Council are not explicitly made in the action plans, because most RM&E actions do not directly address limiting factors but instead measure progress of individual projects or groups of projects towards Program objectives, the status of a population or the effectiveness of particular actions. Separately, RM&E actions recommended to the Council will most appropriately be linked to strategies within the Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Reporting (MERR) plan (currently under development/review).

### ***Development of reports (future action plans)***

Staff is working now to populate a database with actions, limiting factor information (in lieu of expected benefits), budget estimates and other necessary details. Because of the dynamic, real-time nature of the online database, reports of this information can be as detailed or as concise as needed. Some examples of reports are available for your viewing at <http://www.nwcouncil.org/fw/lf/Overview.asp?Report=Overview&SubbasinID=58>. In the upper right corner of the page, you can select from three different reports for the example subbasin: 1) a subbasin overview; 2) an assessment of how limiting factors and recommended actions are linked; 3) a list of actions with long term budget estimates. These reports may eventually comprise the action plans.

### ***Obtaining feedback from the region and prioritization***

Actions are based on the information recommended to the Council during the amendment process. We realize that some of this may be outdated, or incorrectly described in the reports. The intent is for staff to complete the initial legwork for this effort, and then seek public review and comment from the region. At the initiation of the subbasin management plan update process, staff intends to provide the draft plans for local review, revision and to the extent possible, prioritization of actions. As part of the update process, subbasin planners will then have the option to include the revised action plans as implementation plans for their subbasin management plan.

### ***Subbasin management plan updates***

As described in the Program, the subbasin management plan update process will be voluntary, with no planning funds available. The subbasin planners will have one year from the date of the Council's request to submit any updates. Staff anticipates initiating this process during the fall or early winter.

### ***Timeframe***

Staff is currently just over halfway through assembling the data for the subbasins. The goal is to have the information assembled and ready for public review for fall of 2010. Staff will provide the most updated information on progress at the May Council meeting.