

**Bruce A. Measure**  
Chair  
Montana

**Rhonda Whiting**  
Montana

**W. Bill Booth**  
Idaho

**James A. Yost**  
Idaho



**Dick Wallace**  
Vice-Chair  
Washington

**Tom Karier**  
Washington

**Melinda S. Eden**  
Oregon

**Joan M. Dukes**  
Oregon

May 27, 2010

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Council Members

**FROM:** Staff

**SUBJECT:** Update on RM&E/Artificial Production Category Review

Staff will give an update on the progress of the RM&E/Artificial Production Category Review after the process launches on June 1, 2010.

Attachment 1: Cover letter from the Council that will accompany the sponsor information packet that will be sent out on June 1.

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June 1, 2010

**Categorical Review of Research, Monitoring, Evaluation, Artificial Production, Enforcement, Predation, Regional Coordination and other system wide projects for Fiscal Years 2011-2014.**

Dear Project Proponent,

The Northwest Power and Conservation Council (Council) and the Bonneville Power Administration (Bonneville) will soon be starting a categorical review of all research, monitoring, and evaluation (RM&E), artificial production, and basin-wide projects in the Council's Fish and Wildlife Program (Program), consistent with the Council's responsibilities under Section 4(h)(10)(D) of the Northwest Power Act. As provided for in the Act, the categorical review will involve reviews by the Independent Scientific Review Panel (ISRP), the public, and the Council and will culminate in recommendations from the Council to Bonneville. The categorical review will have some unique features, however, as described in the attached project-review information package.

**Categorical Review**

Categorical reviews will enable the Council, the ISRP and Bonneville to review all similar projects (such as fish tagging projects or lamprey projects) funded or proposed for funding through the Program. The advantage of such a broad review is that it can highlight issues common to similar projects such as relevancy, duplication, coordination, scope, and consistency with the broad basin-wide objectives and provisions in the Fish and Wildlife Program. Past project reviews did not compare similar project types in context with one another. The RM&E and artificial production categorical review will include over 190 projects and encompass the largest percentage of Program projects in terms of both funding and diversity.

The Council's 2009 Fish and Wildlife Program focused on performance and committed to developing a monitoring and evaluation framework to improve reporting of Program progress and to inform Council decisions. From this commitment, the Council developed and recently completed accepting comments about a draft Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Reporting (MERR) Plan. The Council views the concepts in the draft MERR as important to this categorical review and will continue to refine the MERR during the review. For example, the draft MERR proposes placing priority on monitoring higher-risk projects rather than tried-and-tested projects that are generally considered lower risk (such as riparian fencing, riparian planting and culvert replacements.) The Council may consider this and other aspects of the MERR, as the Council and the region work to develop the MERR further over the next several

months. This should not be interpreted as diminishing the Council's commitment to such lower risk projects, rather recognition that differing levels of RM & E may be appropriate.

In furtherance of more coordination, efficiency and effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation within the Columbia Basin, the Council believes that in conducting this categorical review, these key questions should be addressed by all project sponsors:

- 1) What question does your project answer, at what spatial scales over what time period, and for what priority species, limiting factors or habitats?
- 2) How does your project inform a high-level indicator, provide data required to implement the Biological Opinion, or answer a management question?
- 3) What have you learned from the project and how will on-the-ground activities be adapted as a result?
- 4) How your data are made accessible to others and who will likely be the primary users of the data? Can you describe the level of confidence or uncertainty associated with these data?
- 5) How have you communicated the major lessons learned? What have been the major accomplishments of your project to date? Sponsors of all ongoing projects are asked to provide a summary table of their data that illustrates the value of the data collected.
- 6) What have your costs been to date, what do you expect to need in the future and what have you done to coordinate with other monitoring efforts?
- 7) Has the effectiveness of similar projects been measured in the region or is the effectiveness being measured now?
- 8) To what extent is monitoring data provided by a broader monitoring project, perhaps making individual project monitoring unnecessary?

During the science review phase of this categorical review, the Council will be asking the ISRP to report on these aspects specifically, in addition to the other usual components considered by the ISRP.

Program funding for hatcheries and hatchery-related activities accounts for approximately 25 percent of the Program. The Council seeks to improve the effectiveness of Program-funded hatcheries and reduce the negative effects on wild populations. The region continues to conduct in-depth reviews of hatchery operations and effectiveness. These reviews include the Hatchery and Genetic Management Plans (HGMPs) and the Hatchery Science Review Group's (HSRG) report. While the Council has not yet considered the HSRG report for possible adoption into the Fish and Wildlife Program, the Council supports the general principles and scientific analysis of the HSRG to the extent to which they are consistent with the Program. The Council wants to know whether projects meet these principles or contain adequate alternative strategies for

achieving them. The Council will ask the ISRP to consider the results of these in-depth reviews during the science review in an effort to understand the potential effectiveness of hatchery programs.

Thank you for your efforts to implement the Fish and Wildlife Program. We look forward to working with you during the review process.

Sincerely,

Bruce A. Measure  
Chairman