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June 28, 2012

MEMORANDUM

TO: Council Members

FROM: John Harrison, Information Officer
Peter Paquet, Manager, Wildlife and Resident Fish
John Shurts, General Counsel

SUBJECT: Update on work projects with the Columbia Basin Trust and recommendation for next meeting of the Council and the Columbia Basin Trust Board of Directors

1. Creating a website with transboundary mapping and data-sharing

Status: Done

The Council and CBT staff created, with input from geophysical mapping experts in the Northwestern states and British Columbia, a data-sharing and general information website (see www.nwcouncil.org/treaty). The intent is to improve public access to information about the international aspects of the Columbia River. The site includes links to environmental data from both sides of the border, Columbia River history in British Columbia and the United States, hydropower generation at Columbia River dams in both countries, and the history and future of the Columbia River Treaty. The site can be updated and new links added as necessary.

2. Summary of potential hydrologic changes due to climate change

Status: Delayed start but now under way

Canadian and American scientists have been studying the potential impacts of global climate changes on the Columbia River Basin. Climate models used by Canadian researchers differ from those used by American researchers in that the Canadian models incorporate the potential effects to glaciers in the upper Columbia River Basin, effects that could be more important in local areas of the upper basin than to the basin as a whole. A key question is whether incorporating glaciers yields different results regarding, for example, Columbia River flows at the international border compared to the American models. If so, it would be useful for the Council and staff of the Power Planning and Fish and Wildlife divisions to understand the differences as we work on the next fish and wildlife program and power plan.

Last fall the Council and CBT provided \$44,000 (\$22,000 from each agency) to the Climate Impacts Group (University of Washington) and the Pacific Climate Impacts Consortium (University of Victoria) to develop a report comparing the American and Canadian models and their outputs.

Recently the contact person for CIG, Alan Hamlet, reported that the work was delayed by contracting paperwork at the University of Washington but now is under way. He expects the work to be completed by the end of August (the original deadline was the end of June).

3. Joint funding of a transboundary fish and wildlife project

Status: Under way

Council and CBT staff focused on the geographic area of the Kootenai reservoir to explore joint funding of a transboundary fish and wildlife project. Staff of the Council and the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks worked with a consultant hired by CBT, Peter Corbett, to identify five potential projects that could be funded partly through the Council's Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program and partly with a cost-share provided by CBT.

After further consultation with the Canadian Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fisheries Commission, the Ministry of Environment, and other Canadian interests it was determined there was support for a research project that would focus on burbot in Lake Kootenai to identify limiting factors, enumerate fish, and assess habitat. In the United States, this research is now an element of the Libby Mitigation Project.

Staff of the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks met with their Canadian counterparts at Lake Kootenai in April. The Montanans explained their sampling protocol and also how to operate the sampling gear. Burbot sampling should occur this fall and winter in B.C. in parallel with Montana's work in the reservoir at the same time.

The CBT and Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks are pleased with the cooperation and progress to date and are interested in co-funding more projects in the future.

4. Transboundary Columbia River ecosystem management conference, Spring 2014

Status: Needs further discussion by Council and CBT

Beginning in the 1990s, a series of conferences every four years through 2006 explored fish and wildlife science and management in the transboundary Columbia River Basin. The Council and CBT participated in these conferences by providing speakers, planning assistance, and financial contributions. The Council and CBT tried to initiate planning for a fifth conference that would have been in 2010, but there was not enough interest outside of our two agencies.

Late 2013 and early 2014 will be a critical time for decisions about the future of fish, wildlife, and energy in the Columbia River Basin (new BiOp; draft Council Fish and Wildlife Program; proposal/decision by the U.S. Entity on the future of the Columbia River Treaty; recommendations on treaty future by the Universities Consortium on Columbia River Governance). As with past conferences, the policy component of the conference would be balanced by a science component that would highlight the latest results of projects and research.

5. Universities Consortium on Columbia River Governance October symposium

Status: Under way.

The Council and CBT each contributed \$10,000 to the Consortium's Fourth Annual Symposium on Columbia River Governance, to be held in Polson, Montana, October 10-12, and co-hosted by the Confederated Salish-Kootenai Tribes. The Consortium is made up of representatives from the University of Montana, University of Idaho, University of Washington, Oregon State University, and the University of British Columbia and has hosted three transboundary symposia on Columbia River Basin governance and the Columbia River Treaty, all with financial and planning support of the Council and CBT. The first three symposia provided a basic understanding of the Columbia River Basin and the Treaty, identified key

interests and concerns throughout the Basin, and enabled a discussion of alternative future scenarios related to flood control, power production, ecosystem services, and governance.

The Consortium hopes that the Fourth Symposium will build on the progress of the first three, including further transboundary discussion of the suite of alternatives, benefits, and costs involved in the consideration of the future of the Treaty relationship between the two countries. The annual symposia are unofficial and separate from the formal Columbia River Treaty reviews in each country but have provided for the exchange of information, development of cross-boundary relationships, and exploration of complex Treaty and international river governance issues to help shape the future of the Treaty.

6. Annual meeting of the CBT and Council

Status: Meeting proposed for September

We last met in November 2011 in conjunction with the Council's meeting in Coeur d'Alene. The CBT has proposed to meet Monday, Sept. 10, in Astoria, the day before the September Council meeting. CBT also proposed two agenda items: 1) discuss developing a framework for future transboundary fish and wildlife projects, and 2) discuss joint sponsorship of the proposed 2014 transboundary conference, including a funding commitment.