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Washington

September 29, 2011

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Fish and Wildlife Committee Members

**FROM:** Patty O'Toole, Program Implementation Managers

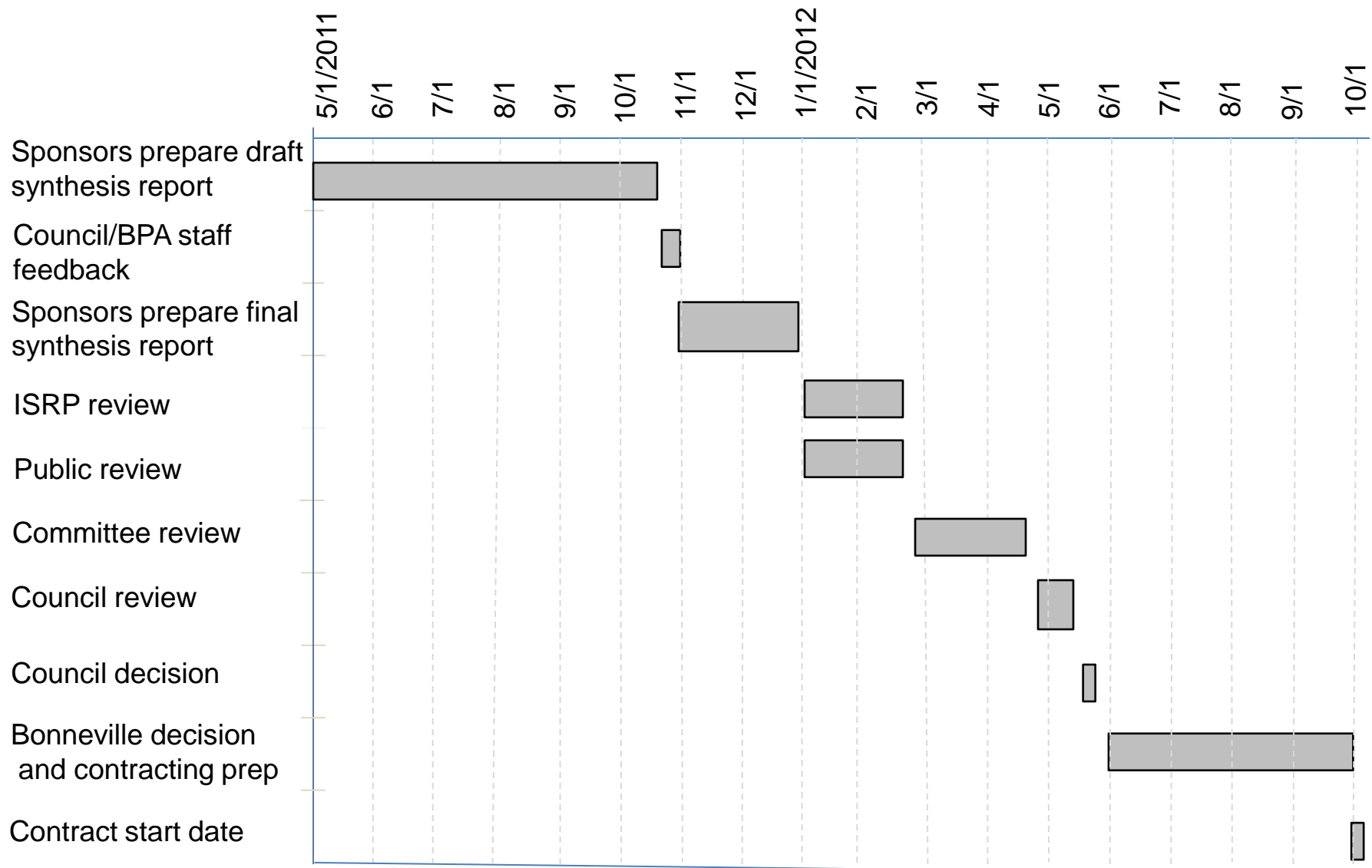
**SUBJECT:** Follow-up on RM&E category review, Ocean research projects

As part of the Council's RM&E and AP+ project category review process, the Council recommended funding for two ocean research projects (NOAA survival study, Canada Shelf study) for one year through FY 2012, and for the phasing out of the third project (Kintama) by the end of FY 2011 as it has completed its research purpose. Council funding recommendations post FY2012 for ocean research projects will rely on a comprehensive synthesis report for ocean research to be collaboratively compiled by the proponents of these three projects as called by the Council in its May 2011 decision. The Council expects the synthesis report to detail what has been learned and what conclusions can be drawn at this time, the expected time frame for the research to yield further conclusions, and consideration of potential salmon management implications. Once completed, the synthesis would undergo ISRP review and inform future Council recommendations.

Subsequent to the May 2011 decision, the Council asked staff to contact the proponents of the three ocean projects to learn about how this request for the synthesis was being addressed. A memo from the project proponents addressing this request is attached to this briefing memo. Staff also prepared a timeline for the synthesis development and its review by the ISRP and the Council as requested by the chair of the Fish and Wildlife Committee.

The final synthesis report of ocean research is expected from the project sponsors by the end of 2011. As shown on the attached timeline, an ISRP review of the report can be initiated soon after receiving the synthesis report with a concurrent public review period. These reviews should be complete in mid-February 2012. At the March 2012 Committee meeting, staff suggest having a policy level discussion that could review the conclusions of the synthesis report, as well as the outcome of the ISRP review and public comments. This policy discussion would also provide the opportunity to discuss how the ocean projects relate to the Council's Fish and Wildlife Program and the FCRPS Biological Opinion. Staff anticipates that Committee and Council decisions related to post-FY2012 funding of the two projects would follow in April and May, respectively. This timeline will allow Bonneville to meet the contract start date of October 1, 2012 for the two projects (note: Bonneville has recently decided to realign the NOAA ocean project contract start date to match that of the Canada shelf study- October 1).

# Draft ocean research synthesis review timeline





15 September, 2011

Northwest Power and Conservation Council  
851 S.W. Sixth Avenue  
Portland, Oregon 97204

To Council members,

NOAA Fisheries, the Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans (CFDO), and Kintama Research are coordinating efforts to produce a two-part Synthesis Report for the Council, BPA, and the ISRP on the Ocean Research, Monitoring, and Evaluation (RM&E) projects currently funded by BPA. The primary objectives of this report are to:

- 1) demonstrate the relevance and significance of ocean projects to the Fish and Wildlife Program objectives and the BiOp Strategies and RPAs,
- 2) highlight the key results and conclusions obtained by the ocean projects to date and identify key information gaps that need to be filled,
- 3) describe existing and future coordination amongst the 3 ocean projects, as well as with other research efforts in the ocean and estuary, and
- 4) illustrate how our ongoing observations of ocean conditions advances the sustainable management of salmon and steelhead in the Columbia River hydropower system.

In addition to an Executive Summary that will provide a high-level review of the contents of the entire report, the two specific documents produced for the Synthesis Report will be:

- 1) Management Implications of Ocean Research: a 5-10 page document, intended primarily for the Council and BPA, and
- 2) Scientific Synthesis of Ocean Research: a 25-30 page scientific document intended primarily to address ISRP concerns.

A draft report is expected to be completed by mid-October 2011. Following the completion of the draft report, the sponsors will solicit comments from the Council and BPA staff over a two-week period. Documents will be finalized by the end of December 2011 and will be followed by a presentation from the ocean project sponsors at a Council meeting soon after.

Sincerely,

Dr. Marc Trudel, Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Cc Dr. John Ferguson (NOAA), Dr. Kym Jacobson (NOAA)  
Cc Dr. David Welch (Kintama Research)

