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January 8, 2013

MEMORANDUM

TO: Fish and Wildlife Committee Members

FROM: Stacy Horton, Washington Fish and Wildlife Policy Analyst

SUBJECT: Tracking Document of Council Recommendations from the Categorical Reviews

INTRODUCTION

The Council has conducted a series of project categorical reviews, starting with a Wildlife Review that was completed in July 2009. To date the Council has completed reviews for BiOp Fast Track Projects, Research, Monitoring, Evaluation and Artificial Production, and Resident Fish, Data Management, and Coordination. Each categorical review has resulted in both programmatic and project-specific issues requiring additional attention and follow-up. Programmatic issues needing additional attention during the January Fish and Wildlife Committee meeting are identified below, and an updated schedule is attached. [See Attachment 1]

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Habitat Effectiveness Monitoring and Evaluation

In July 2011, the Council recommended that the federal agencies re-shape CHaMP; provide an update on the ISEMP Lessons Learned Report; and move away from monitoring individual work elements to a cost-effective, independent third party, standardized, and statistically valid method for evaluating project-level effectiveness.

The ISRP noted that the most pressing need is to figure out the relationship between habitat improvement- or - degradation, and fish responses.

Council Follow-up Action:

- At the January 2013 Fish and Wildlife Committee meeting, BPA is expected to submit for Council and ISRP Review a 2 year CHaMP update; an update on ISEMP, and a programmatic strategy for independent, third party monitoring of habitat projects.

2. The Estuary Synthesis Report -- Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of habitat actions in the estuary

In order to inform the Geographic Reviews, and because of concerns about action effectiveness, estimates of survival unit benefits, and the interactions between upstream areas and the estuary/ocean, the Council called for a synthesis plan. A plan to develop a regional monitoring framework for the estuary was developed. In November 2012, a draft synthesis report, strategy report and action plan were submitted to the ISAB and went out for public comment.

Council Follow-up Action:

- At the January 2013 Fish and Wildlife Committee meeting, Patty O'Toole will provide the Council with an update on public comments received and potential next steps.

3. Program Evaluation & Reporting Committee (PERC) Requirement on the Habitat Evaluation Project (HEP)

As part of their decision regarding the PERC at the Nov 2012 Council meeting, the Council wanted Wildlife Crediting Forum to convene and develop recommendations about the future need for HEP surveys, develop a succession plan for the retirement of the current HEP Team leader; and provide recommendations on how to archive the existing vegetation transect data into a central repository.

Council Follow-up Action:

- For the January 2013 Council meeting, Peter Paquet will provide the full Council with the recommendations from the WCF regarding the HEP. The full Council is slated to make a Decision at the January Council meeting on the WCF recommendations.

4. Technical Service Work Plan -- Council Recommendation Regarding the Status of the Resources Report (SOTR)

The Council recommended the Status of the Resources Report (SOTR) be discontinued but wanted to preserve the work, or identify any gaps that might be created by ending the report. In November, the Council requested that a steering committee develop a one-year (2013) scope of work for technical services to support reporting needs based on identified gaps that must be filled resulting from the absence of the SOTR (work, products, technical services, or reports), and that the steering committee recommend the most economic and efficient means to satisfy the scope of work no later than January 2013.

Council Follow-up Action:

- At the January 2013 Fish and Wildlife Committee meeting, Nancy Leonard will present the Council with an updated Technical Services Work Plan.

5. White Sturgeon

The ISRP was concerned that white sturgeon research, management, and restoration are at a crossroads in the Columbia Basin, and that difficult issues exist regarding sturgeon recruitment, habitat restoration, and hatcheries. The ISRP noted that a clear vision was needed, and recommended a collaborative effort to develop a comprehensive management plan for white sturgeon. A team has been working to develop a document, now referred to as the *Columbia*

River Basin White Sturgeon Framework. Lynn reported that the team believes the Framework will be ready for ISRP and public review after the January 2013 Council meeting and asks that the request for comments come from the Council.

Council Follow-up Action:

- At the January 2013 Fish and Wildlife Committee meeting, the primary team developing the sturgeon document is expected to present the plan, and request that the Council make the *Columbia River Basin White Sturgeon Framework* available for concurrent ISRP and public review.

6. Willamette River Basin Memorandum of Agreement Regarding Wildlife Protection and Enhancement: Project #2011-003-00, Willamette Wildlife Mitigation Program (WWMP)

- On November 9, 2010, Bonneville and the State of Oregon presented to the Council the agreement elements. A key aspect of this agreement was the need to develop criteria to review, prioritize, and select proposed projects. It also stated the requirement to have the criteria reviewed by the ISRP. Staffer Mark Fritsch will provide an overview of the recently completed ISRP review.
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Attachment 1. Draft schedule for Follow-up review of Programmatic Recommendations, 2013.

Fish Committee	Programmatic Issue for Follow-up	Contact
January	SOTR Technical Services Workplan	Nancy Leonard
	Sturgeon Synthesis Report	Lynn Palensky
	Estuary Synthesis Report	Patty O'Toole
	Willamette River Basin Memorandum of Agreement	Mark Fritsch
	CHaMP Progress Report; ISEMP Update; programmatic strategy for independent, third party monitoring of habitat projects.	Jason Sweet, BPA
	HEP Update ¹	Peter Paquet
February	Lamprey Synthesis Report	Lynn Palensky
	BPA SOY Budgets	Bill Maslen, BPA
	Future Review of Wildlife Projects	Tony Grover
	Ocean Research Update	Bill Maslen, Patty O Toole
March	CHREET Update	Bill Maslen, NOAA Rep(?)
	CHaMP Update post ISRP Review of January Submittals	Tony Grover, Erik Merrill, Bill Maslen, NOAA Rep (?)
April	CHaMP Quarterly Check-in	Bill Maslen, NOAA Rep(?)
	Template Development for Annual Reports and Research Projects	Russell Scranton, BPA
May	NPCC Annual Implementation Report	Tony Grover
June		
July		
August	CHaMP Quarterly Check-in	Bill Maslen, NOAA Rep(?)
	Review Status of Pit-tag Projects	Jim Ruff
	Fish Tagging Forum Report	Jim Ruff
September		
October		
November		
December	CHaMP Quarterly Check-in	Bill Maslen, NOAA Rep(?)

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¹ Presentation to Council on January 15th.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Tracking Document of Council Recommendations from the Categorical Reviews

Item: Follow-up on Council Programmatic Review Recommendations

1. Habitat Effectiveness Monitoring and Evaluation

In concluding the Review of Research, Monitoring, Evaluation and Artificial Production Projects in July of 2011, the Council identified habitat monitoring and evaluation as a critical programmatic issue (RM&E Programmatic Issue #2), and wanted to ensure that regional monitoring and evaluation of habitat work would occur in a coordinated, standardized manner. Regional monitoring and evaluation of habitat work must be defined in a way that would allow an assessment of our investment in habitat actions and an understanding of the benefit of that work for key fish species.

In July 2011, the Council expectation was that the federal agencies were working, in the aftermath of the ISRP review and other comments and developments, to reshape the implementation plan for the Columbia Habitat and Monitoring Program (CHaMP) project (and possibly the related Integrated Status and Effectiveness Monitoring Program (ISEMP) research effort) and to make additional progress on the other elements of the habitat effectiveness monitoring and evaluation framework.

NPCC Expectations from the July 2011 Council Recommendation:

- BPA and NOAA Fisheries will meet at least quarterly with the Council's Fish and Wildlife Committee to report on progress with field testing monitoring protocols, techniques and methodologies as implementation in the pilot subbasins is carried out;
- Within one year, NOAA and Bonneville, working with other relevant participants, should further develop the analytical, evaluation and reporting elements of the habitat effectiveness monitoring and evaluation effort to accompany the CHaMP monitoring, consistent with the ISRP's review conclusions;
- Within the year Bonneville and its partners should develop for ISRP review a proposal to transform that effort away from monitoring work elements on individual projects into a cost-effective, independent third-party, standardized, and statistically valid method for evaluating project-level effectiveness. This transformation should be ready in time for the geographic review of habitat actions.

Status Update:

- Sept. 29, 2011: Tony Grover provided a status update on the CHaMP project. The Council recommended funding to BPA of a set of pilot watersheds to begin implementing the Columbia Habitat Monitoring Program. A report to the Council and ISRP for review is scheduled for January 2012. A recommendation by the Council about continuing the CHaMP effort, staying in pilot mode for another year or to go to full implementation will occur after the January report is reviewed, requested responses by the ISRP are received, and the Council makes a decision.
- March 30, 2011: ISRP Review of the Columbia Habitat Monitoring Program (CHaMP) Protocols | document ISRP 2011-10 <http://www.nwcouncil.org/library/report.asp?d=53>. The ISRP was impressed by many aspects of the CHaMP sampling protocols. However, the ISRP notes that consensus among major habitat monitoring organizations with respect to the most

effective protocols for tracking habitat attributes and metrics has not yet occurred. The ISRP recommends that the CHaMP team continue its dialog with other monitoring groups to resolve differences in approaches and that consideration be given to designing rigorous field tests of various protocols; The ISRP noted that the most pressing need is to develop robust, accurate relationships between VSP parameters for target fish species and changes in habitat condition that are related to restoration, or continued habitat degradation, in CHaMP watersheds; and the ISRP would like to review CHaMP after one to two years of data collection to see how field and data management protocols have been modified and how monitoring results are being incorporated into establishing restoration priorities.

Council Follow-up Action:

- At the January 2013 Fish and Wildlife Committee meeting, BPA is expected to submit for Council and ISRP Review a 2 year CHaMP update; an update on ISEMP, and a programmatic strategy for independent, third party monitoring of habitat projects.

2. The Estuary Synthesis Report -- Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of habitat actions in the estuary

In concluding the Review of Research, Monitoring, Evaluation and Artificial Production (RM&E+AP) Projects in July of 2011, the Council called for the development of an estuary-wide synthesis report prior to the initiation of the review of habitat actions (RM&E Programmatic Issue # 3). Lead entities were the US Army Corps of Engineers and BPA, with assistance from the Lower Columbia River Estuary Partnership, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Oregon Department of Wildlife, the Columbia Land Trust, and the Columbia River Estuary Study Taskforce.

Status Update:

- Sept. 29, 2011 Tony Grover updated the Council on the estuary synthesis plan. A plan to develop the regional monitoring framework for the estuary was scheduled for December 2011, which would be followed by a summary of all work to date in the summer of 2012 and completion of the monitoring strategy, including updated project selection criteria ready for ISRP review in late 2012. It is important that this work be sufficiently developed for use by the Council and ISRP during the Geographic category reviews.
- In Nov. 2012, a draft synthesis report, strategy report and action plan were submitted to the ISAB and went out for public comment.
- ISAB Review of the synthesis report, strategy report and action plan and the original draft documents, September 11-12, 2012:
<http://www.nwcouncil.org/library/report.asp?docid=699>

Council Follow-up Action:

- At the January 2013 Fish and Wildlife Committee meeting, Patty O Toole will provide the Council with an update on public comments received and potential next steps.

3. Program Evaluation & Reporting Committee (PERC) Requirement on the Habitat Evaluation Project (HEP)

In concluding the Resident Fish, Data Management and Regional Coordination Category Reviews in July of 2012, the Council established a Program Evaluation & Reporting Committee

(PERC) to engage in a regional data management and sharing discussion. The PERC would provide guidance related to Council oversight and management of data management needs and activities, and associated challenges and opportunities. This guidance would be directed towards existing and evolving regional level data-management projects and data-sharing processes.

Status Update:

As part of their decision regarding the PERC at the Nov 2012 Council meeting, the Council made the following recommendations regarding the Habitat Evaluation Project (HEP):

- Reconvene the Wildlife Crediting Forum (WCF) to address needs and future plans for HEP; specifically to make recommendations to the Council on:
 - As a first priority, the need to access information such as GIS maps or tools from NHI in the future.
 - The need, if any, for future HEP surveys
 - o Describe the need for HEP surveys to support active management decision making;
 - o Frequency and duration of that work; and
 - o Recommend a succession plan as the current HEP team leader transitions to retirement.
 - The need to archive the existing vegetation transect data into a central repository.
- The WCF should convene as needed to develop recommendations and suggested outcomes for review by the Fish & Wildlife Committee by January 1st 2013, or sooner, on needs identified above.

Council Follow-up Action:

- As part of the January 2013 Council meeting, Peter Paquet will provide the full Council with the recommendations from the WCF regarding the HEP. The full Council is slated to make a Decision at the January Council meeting on the WCF recommendations.

4. Technical Service Work Plan -- Council Recommendation Regarding the Status of the Resources Report (SOTR)

As part of their decision regarding the Program Evaluation & Reporting Committee (PERC) at the November 2012 Council meeting, the Council made the following recommendations regarding the Status of the Resources Report (SOTR):

Council Recommendations:

1. Discontinue the Status of the Resources Report.
2. A Council and BPA staff steering committee should develop a one-year (2013) scope of work for technical services to support reporting needs. The scope of work will be based on identified gaps that must be filled resulting from the absence of the SOTR (work, products, technical services, or reports).
3. No later than January 2013 Council meeting, the steering committee will recommend the most economic and efficient means to satisfy the scope of work.

Council Follow-up Action:

- At the January 2013 Fish and Wildlife Committee meeting, Nancy Leonard will present the Council with an updated Technical Services Work Plan.

5. White Sturgeon

In concluding the Review of Research, Monitoring, Evaluation and Artificial Production Projects in July of 2011, the Council recommended the development of a comprehensive management plan for white sturgeon through a collaborative effort involving currently funded projects for both Council and ISRP Review.

Council Expectations from the July 2011 Council Recommendation:

- Complete, in conjunction with regional, tribal, state, and federal management entities, a collaborative and comprehensive strategic plan for sturgeon conservation, restoration and management to include specific objectives, strategies, actions, milestones and schedules for habitat protection and restoration, natural production, hatchery production, fishery management, research, monitoring, and evaluation.
- A description of what we know and do not know about sturgeon life history, status, limiting factors, and current and past programs and activities. The plan should also describe results and conclusions from past work and the extent to which both previous and future work has or will benefit sturgeon and other fish and wildlife. Within the planning area from the mouth of the Columbia upstream to Priest Rapids on the mainstem and up to Lower Granite Dam on the Snake River, this comprehensive management plan should describe for sturgeon a comprehensive and integrated vision, goals, critical uncertainties and risks related to uncertainties, research needs, strategies, and related provisions. The plan should also include summary information for sturgeon areas above Priest Rapids and Lower Granite.
- Include specific sections or chapters that identify conservation, mitigation, management and research objectives, strategies, actions and schedules for different portions of the basin.
- Incorporate guidance for subsequent implementation work plans, schedules and agreements.
- All of the sturgeon projects should then receive a project-specific recommendation as follows: The Council would recommend implementation for each sturgeon project with relevant conditions though FY 2012. Funding in FY 2013 would be dependent on outcome and review of the plan to reflect the need to implement the highest-priority actions.

Status Update:

Lynn Palensky provided an update on the sturgeon comprehensive management plan to the Fish and Wildlife Committee as part of the December 2012 webinar. A team has been working to develop a document, now referred to as the *Columbia River Basin White Sturgeon Framework*. Lynn reported that the team believes the Framework will be ready for ISRP and public review after the January 2013 Council meeting and asks that the request for comments come from the Council.

Council Follow-up Action:

- At the January 2013 Fish and Wildlife Committee meeting, the primary team developing the sturgeon document is expected to present the plan, and request that the Council make the *Columbia River Basin White Sturgeon Framework* available for concurrent ISRP and public review.

Item: Follow-up on Project-specific Council Recommendations

6. Willamette River Basin Memorandum of Agreement Regarding Wildlife Protection and Enhancement: Project #2011-003-00, *Willamette Wildlife Mitigation Program (WWMP)*

- On November 9, 2010, Bonneville and the State of Oregon presented to the Council the agreement elements. A key aspect of this agreement was the need to develop criteria to review, prioritize, and select proposed projects. It also stated the requirement to have the criteria reviewed by the ISRP. Staffer Mark Fritsch will provide an overview of the recently completed ISRP review.