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May 1, 2008

DECISION MEMORANDUM

TO: Council members

FROM: Mark Fritsch, project implementation manager

SUBJECT: Council decision on Project 2007-405-00, Rufus Woods Supplementation and Creel project (3rd Quarter 2007)

PROPOSED ACTION: Council staff recommends that The Council approve funding for Project 2007-405-00, Rufus Woods Supplementation and Creel Project. This approval is made on condition that the stable isotope and diet analysis components of the project will not be funded.

SIGNIFICANCE: The proposed action will provide funds to the Colville Tribe to implement the Lake Rufus Woods creel survey and stocking proposal, as recommended by the ISRP, for Fiscal Year 2008 and 2009.

BUDGETARY/ECONOMIC IMPACTS

This is a new project that was proposed for funding in the third quarter of 2007. To date no money has been provided for the project. If the staff recommendation is approved, based on the revised proposal and budget¹ as reviewed by the ISRP the resulting budget to implement the project as recommended would be \$223,192² in Fiscal Year 2008, and \$240,638 in Fiscal Year 2009.

Out-year costs have been identified as \$252,670 in Fiscal Year 2010 and \$265,303 in Fiscal Year 2011. These budgets outside the current fund cycle will be determined at a later date through other processes (e.g., MOA implementation³ and future review).

¹ This submittal was received on March 18, 2008, in response to the ISRP's request for additional information about the study designs (ISRP document 2007-17). The response materials consisted of a cover letter, a revised proposal and budget and the requested study designs.

² This budget reflects the removal of the budget associated with the isotope analysis that would not be funded @ \$5,250.

³ This project is identified in the MOA between the CCT and Bonneville @ \$171,000 in 2008, \$191,000 in 2009 and \$500,000 in 2010.

BACKGROUND

The Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation (Colville Tribe) propose to stock triploid rainbow trout into Lake Rufus Woods, the reservoir between Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee dams, to provide increased tribal subsistence and tribal and non-tribal recreational harvest. In addition, the Colville Tribe proposes to evaluate stocking success with creel data collection.

The request was reviewed as a new project at the BOG meeting in May 2007 and presented as part of the Council's decision on third quarter within-year project funding requests⁴. The Council supported sending the project to the ISRP for review. This approval included a condition that an update regarding funding will be provided during the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2008

On August 21, 2007 the proposal was submitted to the ISRP for review. The proposal was reviewed with the same criteria used during the FY 2007-09 project review. On September 27, 2007, the ISRP provided a preliminary review of the proposal and found that it was not complete enough to determine whether it meets the Fish and Wildlife Program scientific review criteria. Consequently, the ISRP requested that project sponsors revise their proposal in response to the ISRP comments and submit the revised proposal for final ISRP review (ISRP document 2007-13). On October 5, 2007, a request was made to the Colville Tribe to revise their proposal based on their preliminary review and on November 1, 2007, a revised proposal was received and sent to the ISRP for review. On December 10, 2007, the Council received the ISRP's review of the proposal (ISRP document 2007-17). The ISRP stated the proposal "meets scientific criteria (qualified)." The ISRP found that the proposal needed additional detail regarding creel census. This included not only the creel design, but also the components associated with the isotope study and trout diet analysis. The ISRP recommended that a study plan be drawn up for each of these three project elements prior to stocking 24,000 feminized triploid rainbow trout.

On January 25, 2008, the Council received a letter from the Colville Tribe that recognizes the need for the analysis and design of the relevant work elements as outlined in their proposal, as suggested by the ISRP in their review. The Colville Tribe also noted that they are currently seeking the assistance of a biometrician for work elements associated with the *Colville Tribal Hatchery Project* (1985-038-00), *Chief Joseph Kokanee Enhancement Project* (1995-011-00), and *Lake Roosevelt Habitat Improvement Project* (1990-018-00). Based on this need associated with other ongoing projects, the Colville Tribe requested that it would be cost effective to hire the biometrician through an ongoing project, and it would be time-sensitive for contracting purposes. The Colville Tribe, as part of this cost share, with another project requested \$10,000 to contribute to the cost of hiring a biometrician to assist in providing the additional analysis and design of the creel census. The deliverables associated with the biometrician will be the review and analysis of the study plans for creel, diet, and stable isotope studies and making any necessary suggestions to insure the defensibility of the project.

It was determined by Council staff that the request received from the Colville Tribe for a biometrician could be addressed through Project #1991-051-00, *M&E Statistical Support For*

⁴ The proposal was submitted in April and requested \$169,797 in Fiscal Year 2007, and \$178,887 for Fiscal Year 2008 and \$178,887 in Fiscal Year 2009.

*Life-Cycle Studies*⁵. This collaboration allowed the Colville Tribe to work with Dr. John Skalski of the University of Washington through existing project budgets and refine the study plans as requested by the ISRP.

On March 18, 2008, the Colville Tribe submitted a response to the ISRP's request for additional information about the study designs. The response materials consisted of a cover letter, a revised proposal, a document summarizing the procedures to be used to determine rainbow trout origin and diet preferences including information on the use of stable isotopes to describe trophic partitioning⁶, and a creel census study plan⁷.

ANALYSIS

On April 11, 2008 the Council received the ISRP's final review (ISRP document 2008-3) stating that the proposal *Meets Scientific Review Criteria (In Part)*. The ISRP determined that sufficient information has been presented to justify the Lake Rufus Woods creel survey and the stocking of triploid rainbow trout, but the ISRP found that the stable isotope and diet analysis components of the project have not been adequately justified.

The ISRP was generally concerned about the stable isotope techniques due to the feasibility of the approach outlined in the proposal. Though they see the use of stable isotopes may be useful in determining trout origin, at least in differentiating naturally produced fish from those that were released from net pens in Rufus Woods Lake or Lake Roosevelt, they are uncertain of how long the isotopic signatures of the food sources the different stocks are using would be sufficiently different to enable clear separation.

As for the diet analysis, the ISRP felt that there was not adequate information to justify the that work element in the implementation of the project, primarily due to the proposed sample size and the details associated (i.e., fish size and protocols) with the sampling plan. The ISRP also mentioned that they felt that the diet analysis would be a worthy addition to the Rufus Woods Supplementation and Creel Project if additional detail and confirmation was proposed.

On April 18, 2008 the Council received a letter from the Colville Tribe providing additional comment to the isotope and diet analysis issues raised by the ISRP. The Colville Tribe confirmed the limitation associated with the isotope analysis but said that the power of this technique to differentiate between the different groups of fish based on what they have been eating warrants that the work element be funded only as a "Proof-of-Concept"⁸ that may lead to a more detailed study in the future. The cost associated with this work element as proposed in the submittal review is \$5,250 or 2.3 percent of the proposed project budget. The proposed diet study is not an attempt to complete a through diet analysis, but is only intended to determine food sources for rainbow trout in Rufus Woods Lake. As proposed there is no cost associated

⁵ This project develops statistical methods for monitoring and evaluating salmonid recovery plans and provides added-value analyses and statistical support on regional fisheries issues in the Fish and Wildlife Program.

⁶ Intended to demonstrate that the isotopic techniques could be used to ascertain fish of different origin in Lake Rufus Woods.

⁷ The revised proposal included costs associated with a more robust creel survey at \$228,442 in 2008, \$240,638 in 2009, \$252,670 in 2010 and \$265,303 in 2011.

⁸ The ISRP in their final review stated that a proof-of-concept pilot study is needed to demonstrate that the technique can actually help differentiate between the five potential origins of rainbow trout in Lake Rufus Woods.

with this action, it is a component of the exit creel surveys and will only be analyzed for presence or absence of food categories.

Based on the ISRP reviews and the favorable final recommendation the Council staff recommends that the Council approve the project as proposed and reviewed by the ISRP. At this time funding for the isotope and diet analysis components will be deferred until other processes are addressed in the basin (e.g., MOA's and regional M&E). Therefore, this recommendation is conditioned on the understanding that no budgets will be provided to conduct the stable isotope and diet analysis components of the project.