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January 26, 2012

## DECISION MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Council members

**FROM:** Mark Fritsch, project implementation manager

**SUBJECT:** Quarterly Review of Within-year Project Funding Adjustments for Implementation.

**PROPOSED ACTION:** Approve the within-year project-funding request as presented by staff.

### BUDGETARY/ECONOMIC IMPACTS

The requested amount associated with the recommended request is \$85,000 in expense Fiscal Year 2012 funds<sup>1</sup>.

### BACKGROUND

In 2004, Bonneville and the Council formed a budget oversight group (BOG) to conduct a budget tracking process. A principal role of the BOG is to validate whether the requests are a reschedule<sup>2</sup> or within-year request (i.e., scope change, budget change, scope/budget change, and new request). Reschedules are forwarded to Bonneville for assessment and funding as funds become available, and within-year requests are also forwarded to Bonneville for recommendation on the availability of funds as identified at the quarterly reviews.

The BOG meets monthly to review change requests and to track the fiscal year budget and then uses quarterly reviews to initiate a process to establish which budget adjustment requests can be met with the available funding in the current fiscal year project budget. This process also includes a public comment period.

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<sup>1</sup>The balance for the within-year placeholder at the end of the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2012; Bi-Op Placeholder @ \$1,951,311 (out of \$2,000,000), and Non-Bi-op Placeholder @ \$815,000 (out of \$1,000,000).

<sup>2</sup> Reschedules are project work task or tasks, as reviewed and approved, that are aligned from one fiscal year to another.

On January 10, 2012, the Council staff presented to the Fish and Wildlife Committee the requests and reviewed the schedule for the within-year budget adjustment requests for the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2012.

Of the eight requests reviewed by the BOG during the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2012, two requests need a decision in February. As outlined in the attached table (see Attachment 1, page 5), one request triggered the threshold adjustment as part of the budget-tracking process<sup>3</sup>, two requests were within the recommendations made as part of the wildlife category review, and three requests were addressed as an administrative action. Based on staff review and comment received, the staff will bring to the Committee and the Council a recommendation at the February meeting.

The comment period associated with this request closed on January 25<sup>th</sup>. No comments were received.

### ANALYSIS

The following addresses the two project requests and the Council staff's recommendations. In addition, on January 25, 2012, the Council received a letter from Bonneville summarizing the two within-year requests being considered during the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2012 (see Attachment 2, page 6).

- **Project #1992-061-03, Albeni Falls Wildlife Mitigation-Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG)**

The Idaho Fish and Game (IDFG) is requesting \$389,268 in expense funds (over a 3 year period)<sup>4</sup> to provide cost share with the Avista Corporation and the U.S Forest Service (USFS) to complete a restoration project on the Lower St. Joe River. The proposed restoration project adjoins the 62 acre Lower St. Joe wildlife mitigation parcel that was secured by the project in 2007.

Avista Corporation owns 62 acres directly adjacent and upstream of the IDFG parcel. The Shadowy St. Joe Campground which is upstream to the Avista parcel is managed by the USFS. The campground has a developed public access site with parking and restroom facilities. In the past both the Avista and IDFG parcels were cleared of forests and wetlands and grazed. In addition, Miesen Creek was ditched (i.e., channelized) directly into the St. Joe River.

The within year request would provide an opportunity for IDFG to assist in a restoration project in collaboration with Avista Corporation and the USFS. The amount requested exceeds<sup>5</sup> the Council's recommended *five-year not-to-exceed* expense planning budget amount (i.e., FY2010-FY2014) for proposed work as recommended to Bonneville as part of the Wildlife Category Review.

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<sup>3</sup> Thresholds are requests that are within 10 percent of the reviewed and approved project budget and less than \$75,000.

<sup>4</sup> Request is for \$199,276 in FY 2012, \$182,792 in FY 2013 and \$7,200 in FY 2014.

<sup>5</sup> Based on: average annual expense per year was \$698,703 as defined in the Wildlife Category Review (total per FY2010-2014 @ \$3,493,515) with the current working budget (contracted) is \$725,772.

The request provides an opportunity to restore a floodplain area, address a channelized section of Miesen Creek, and increase habitat diversity.

**Staff Recommendation:** This request is not appropriate at this time based on the extensive review and recommendation as provided by the Council for Fiscal Year 2010 - 2014 through the Wildlife Category Review. The sizeable O&M budget associated with this project is intended to protect the past investments (i.e., acquisitions) made through the Albeni Falls Wildlife Management Plan<sup>6</sup> to protect, restore, maintain, and manage wetland, riparian and upland coniferous forest habitats. Though this request may provide benefit to the parcel purchased through the Program in 2007, any restoration should be prioritized within the annual O&M budget as recommended for this project (i.e., FY 2012 at \$725,772). Based on this and past reviews the Council staff recommends that the Council not support this request. In addition, Bonneville is not supporting this request.

- **Project #1997-030-00, Chinook Salmon Adult Abundance Monitoring**

The Nez Perce Tribe (NPT) is requesting \$85,000 in expense funds to modify a weir used to collect adult steelhead to estimate escapement information in Joseph Creek which is located in the Grande Ronde River subbasin in the Snake River system.

As you may recall this project was a Fast Track project that was recommended to Bonneville as part of the BiOp fast-track proposals needed to meet high priority FCRPS reasonable and prudent alternative (RPA) gaps in April 2010.

The floating weir collects adult steelhead to estimate escapement, determine natural/hatchery composition, run timing, age structure, sex composition, life history characteristics, and validate existing index redd count and PIT tag array data with actual escapement information. The weir's first year of operation was in 2011. The high flows experienced last year prevented the trap from operating in a continuous fashion since the crew did not have the ability to safely clean debris off the screen panels until the flow receded. The inability to clean the panels prevented the screen from operating and therefore affects the accuracy of the populations estimators associated with this BiOp project.

Based on this first year of operation there is a need to provide the operating crew the ability to install a cable lift system that would allow the crew access for cleaning off debris and keeping the weir panels in a position that allows the weir to fish through high flow events.

**Staff Recommendation:** The importance and justification of this BiOp project was clearly articulated as part of the Council recommendation to Bonneville in April 2010. Though the Nez Perce Tribe was able to construct and fish the weir as proposed and

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<sup>6</sup> The goal of the plan assists IDFG and the Kalispel, Coeur d'Alene and Kootenai Indian Tribes to: 1) Protect and enhance through land acquisition, a variety of wetland and riparian habitats; 2) Restore 28,587 Habitat Units (HUs) lost as a result of the construction of Albeni Falls Dam, and; 3) Conduct long-term wildlife habitat management activities at individual mitigation project sites.

reviewed, environmental circumstances demonstrated modifications to the weir are needed to ensure that the trapping facility can operate and secure the data as intended. Based on this need and to ensure the safety of the NPT staff the Council staff recommends that the Council support this request for implementation. Bonneville is also supportive of this request. This is conditioned on the expense funds being secured from the Bi-Op Placeholder.

**Attachment 1: Within-year project funding adjustments received as part of the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2012.**

| Type                  | Project #   | Project Title  | Sponsor                      | FY 2012 Budget (BPA) | Request                | Status                      |
|-----------------------|-------------|--|------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Quarterly</b>      |             |  |                              |                      |                        |                             |
|                       | 1992-061-03 | Albeni Falls Wildlife Mitigation-Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG)      | IDFG                         | \$725,772            | \$389,268              | Not Approve                 |
|                       | 1997-030-00 | Chinook Salmon Adult Abundance Monitoring                                      | NPT                          | \$472,582            | \$85,000               | Approve @ \$85,000          |
| <b>Threshold</b>      |             |  |                              |                      |                        |                             |
|                       | 1983-436-00 | Umatilla Passage Operations and Maintenance (O&M)                              | Westland Irrigation District | \$521,989            | \$30,689               | Threshold approved, 12/6/11 |
| <b>Category</b>       |             |  |                              |                      |                        |                             |
|                       | 2000-021-00 | Ladd Marsh Wildlife Mitigation   | ODFW                         | \$75,383             | \$12,686               | Wildlife Category Review    |
|                       | 2006-004-00 | Wenas Wildlife Mitigation  | WDFW                         | \$359,217            | \$120,400              | Wildlife Category Review    |
| <b>Administrative</b> |             |  |                              |                      |                        |                             |
|                       | 1990-055-00 | Idaho Steelhead Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Studies                        | IDFG                         |                      | \$50,000 <sup>7</sup>  | Approved 10/14/11           |
|                       | 2010-035-00 | Abundance, Productivity and Life History of Fifteenmile Creek Winter Steelhead | ODFW                         |                      | \$18,000 <sup>8</sup>  | Approved 11/10/11           |
|                       | 2007-332-00 | Mitigation of Marine-Derived Nutrient Loss in Central Idaho                    | IDFG                         |                      | \$180,000 <sup>9</sup> | Pending                     |

<sup>7</sup> \$50,000 is moved from project 2010-057-00 B-run Steelhead Supplementation effectiveness Research (NPT) to project 1990-055-00 Idaho Steelhead Monitoring & Evaluation Studies to more efficiently conduct run reconstruction tasks. This is a permanent transfer; therefore this action will be reflected in future non-accord budget decisions funding for this project.

<sup>8</sup> Contract budget error that underfunded the project by \$18,000 in FY 2012.

<sup>9</sup> MOA discussion between Idaho and Bonneville to provide Accord funds to close-out this project.

**Attachment 2:** Letter received on January 25, 2012 from Bonneville regarding within-year budget adjustments associated with the Quarterly Review.



**Department of Energy**

Bonneville Power Administration  
P.O. Box 3621  
Portland, Oregon 97208-3621

ENVIRONMENT, FISH AND WILDLIFE

January 25, 2012

In reply refer to: KEW-4

Mr. Tony Grover  
Fish and Wildlife Division Director  
Northwest Power and Conservation Council  
851 SW Sixth Avenue, Suite 1100  
Portland, OR 97204-1348

Dear Mr. Grover:

In accordance with the Budget Oversight Group (BOG) process, the BOG conducted the first quarter review of within-year budget and/or scope modification requests for Fiscal Year 2012 [submissions reviewed by BOG in October, November and December]. These requests were presented at the January Fish and Wildlife Committee Meeting, and a 14-day public comment period was opened. As a result of the BOG review and consideration of any comments, the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) has arrived at the following tentative conclusions subject to further consideration following receipt of the Council's recommendations.

**Project Funding Requests**

**Project Number:** 1992-061-03

**Project Name:** Albeni Falls Wildlife Mitigation - IDFG

**Contractor:** Idaho Department of Fish & Game (IDFG)

**BPA-COTR:** Lee Watts III

**BPA Manager:** Paul Krueger

**Budget Year/Amount Requested:** \$199,276/FY12; \$182,792/FY13; \$7,200/FY14

**Funding Type:** Expense

**How does this project support a Biological Opinion?** This project does not support a Bi-Op.

**Explanation of need:** The IDFG Albeni Falls Wildlife Mitigation project is requesting additional funding in order to cost share with Avista Corporation and the U.S Forest Service to

restore 124 acres of floodplain and riparian wildlife habitat fronting the St. Joe River in Idaho. IDFG protected 62 acres of the floodplain in March 2007 to partially mitigate for wildlife habitat loss due to the construction and operation of Albeni Falls Dam. Avista owns 62 acres directly adjacent and upstream of the IDFG parcel. Both the Avista and IDFG parcels were once grazed and used as pasture. The cottonwood forests and scrub-shrub wetlands were cleared and Miesen Creek ditched along a road and channelized to discharge directly into the St. Joe River.

Cost-share partners (Avista & USFS) have already started the first phase of the restoration project. The second phase of the project is focused on the property protected under the Albeni Falls Wildlife Mitigation Project. At present, the parcel yields low habitat units (HU's) because the parcel was previously grazed and used as pasture. Miesen Creek was ditched along the roadway and the entire parcel was converted from a cottonwood gallery floodplain to a uniform reed canary grass dominated pasture. An intense restoration effort is needed to increase the HU's. A cost-share restoration project is the most efficient approach to convert an agricultural floodplain area back to a complex of herbaceous, scrub-shrub and forested wetland as well as increase habitat diversity.

**BPA Recommendation:** BPA does not support this request for a within-year budget increase. BPA supports IDFG in the prioritizing of their existing O&M budget for Albeni Falls wildlife acquisitions; therefore if IDFG chooses to prioritize this restoration work within the available budget, it should be coordinated with the BPA project manager for consideration of an adjustment to the upcoming FY12 statement of work.

BPA appreciates IDFG's interest in the proposed restoration of previously acquired land under the Albeni Falls wildlife program, consider it of value relative to improving habitat quality for wildlife and opportunity to "grow" HU's, and also pleased to see the opportunity for leveraging other cost-share funds. However, there are several considerations that cause us to conclude that increasing the budget for this work is not a priority at this time. First, BPA has supported within-year budget increases for IDFG that has resulted in the multi-year budget being greater than the Council's July 2009 budget recommendation. There are other priorities across the Basin that we must also consider as we allocate limited funds. Second, in most cases the past few years, within-year budget increases have been approved for single year adjustments only, and we are unwilling to encumber out-year budgets with this request. Importantly, BPA has been working closely with IDFG to reallocate available funds to support wildlife mitigation that is "in place, in kind." Finally, as previously discussed, the Fish and Wildlife Program is being fully implemented, with associated spending near available budgets. As such, this request represents another one of those difficult project funding decisions that BPA must make to ensure funds are available for the highest priority actions. While we recognize the value of this work and the benefit of cost-share, we are unwilling to support the additional budget request as we manage current spending within the available budget.

**Project Number:** 1997-030-00

**Project Name:** Chinook Salmon Adult Abundance Monitoring

**Contractor:** Nez Perce Tribe

**BPA-COTR:** Debbie Docherty

**BPA Manager:** Paul Krueger

**Budget Year/Amount Requested:** \$85,000 / FY12

**Funding Type:** Expense

**How does this project support a Biological Opinion?** This project supports the FCRPS BiOp: RPA 50 Fish Population Status Monitoring; RPA 51 Collaboration Regarding Fish Population Status Monitoring; RPA 62 Fund Selected Harvest Investigations; RPA 64 Investigate hatchery Critical Uncertainties.

**Explanation of need:** The Chinook Salmon Adult Abundance Monitoring project is requesting additional funding for a cable lift system to successfully trap adult steelhead in Joseph Creek. During the first year of project operation in 2011 recent record-high stream discharge up to 2,180 cfs was experienced in Joseph Creek. That level of discharge crushed down the floating weir panels as planned to allow large debris to pass over the weir and not damage the structure. However, smaller debris and bed load lodged on the weir panels causing the weir panels to remain down for five plus days at a time which precluded effective steelhead trapping in both the upstream and downstream traps. This down time occurred multiple times during the 2011 season. Project staff had to wait for stream flows to recede before they could safely access and clean debris off of the weir panels and get the floating weir and traps operational again.

Function of the cable lift system is to raise and lower the weir panels, allowing access to them to clean off debris/bed load and keep the weir panels in the up position allowing traps to function and capture adult steelhead. This would effectively reduce the multiple periods of weir down time, allow capture and marking of steelhead, and improve the ability to provide unbiased mark-recapture population estimates. Components of the needed work include engineering design, site transect analysis, two anchoring bases, a metal tripod, cabling system, winches, and access to the weir panels under high flow.

**BPA Recommendation:** BPA supports this request. The data from the weir is BiOp critical to validate population abundance assessments for listed salmonids in Joseph Creek. Operation of the weir in its current configuration during higher flows and heavier debris events is unsafe, subsequently resulting in the inability to collect this important information because technicians cannot safely wade to mid-stream to clean all of the weir panels caused by debris and bed load from high flows. The cable lift system will enable a safer operating condition for technicians and more consistent sampling across the migration.

### **Summary**

In summary, the total of expense funding recommended in this letter is \$85,000. We believe this project is consistent with priorities identified during previous Council reviews and/or other BPA and Council discussions.

Please feel free to contact either Greg Dondlinger at 503-230-5065 or me at 503-230-5549 for further information or if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

/s/

**William C. Maslen**

Director for Fish and Wildlife

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