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July 1, 2010

DECISION MEMORANDUM

TO: Council members

FROM: Mark Fritsch, project implementation manager

SUBJECT: Follow-up action for the BiOp fast-track review: Project #2010-033-00, *Estimate the Relative Reproductive Success of Hatchery and Natural Origin Steelhead in the Methow River Basin*

PROPOSED ACTION: That the Council recommend to Bonneville this project for implementation.

SIGNIFICANCE

This project is part of a larger set of 19 fast-track projects addressing the highest priority gaps as identified by the Bonneville/Action Agency/Council workgroups.

All of the fast-track projects are considered a small subset of the RM&E categorical review. If funded now, the projects will not need to complete a new proposal form for review during the RM&E categorical review that began this June. The projects will still be included in the categorical review, however, in order to provide the reviewers with a complete picture of RM&E actions currently being funded, or being proposed for funding, under the Council's program

BUDGETARY/ECONOMIC IMPACTS

The expense planning budget associated with this project represents a not-to-exceed budget for the project from Fiscal Year 2010 through 2013 at \$937,645, with an annual average of \$237,281.¹

¹ The recommended budgets do not assume any cost savings that may be achieved by Bonneville during contracting. During the four year budget period, adjustments can and should be made as necessary during contracting. Actual spending by Bonneville for each project, whether higher or lower than the recommended planning budget, must be sufficient to maintain project integrity. In recommending the work and the planning budget, the Council included detailed expectations as part of its April and May decisions.

BACKGROUND

In the summer and fall of 2009, the Bonneville/Action Agency/Council workgroups identified 27 projects necessary to meet high priority FCRPS reasonable and prudent alternative (RPA) gaps. The fast-track review process began on December 14, 2009; the council received 19 complete project proposals by the January 25, 2010 deadline. The 19 project proposals were sent to the ISRP for science review.

The ISRP's preliminary review was issued on February 24, 2010 (ISRP document 2010-7). The ISRP found that nine of the 19 proposals met scientific review criteria. Of those nine proposals, five were qualified based on issues that could be dealt with during contracting. On April 14, 2010, the Council recommended the nine fast-track proposals to Bonneville for implementation.

The remaining ten proposals received an "in part/response requested"² recommendation, and on February 24, 2010 a request for a response to the ISRP for the additional information was sent to project proponents. On March 25, 2010 responses were received and on April 15, 2010, the ISRP provided their final review for the fast-track proposals (ISRP document 2010-10).

Of the ten proposals reviewed, the ISRP found that four met scientific review criteria, three received a "qualification"; one received an "in part (qualified)"; one remained at an "in part"; and one received a "does not meet scientific review criteria." On May 12, 2010, the Council provided recommendations for these projects. As part of this recommendation the Council included the following for Project #2010-033-00, *Estimate the Relative Reproductive Success of Hatchery and Natural Origin Steelhead in the Methow River Basin*.

The Council recommends that this project respond to the ISRP's request for a revised proposal and a complete response ahead of the RM&E/Artificial Production Category Review so that the needed actions associated with this project can be implemented in FY 2010 if a favorable ISRP review and Council recommendation is received.

On May 13, 2010, the Council received a submittal from Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) that includes a cover letter, a response to the specific ISRP issues, and a revised narrative. The Council received the ISRP's final review (ISRP document 2010-18) of the revised narrative on June 9, 2010. The ISRP found that the proposal met scientific review criteria.

The project's purpose is to evaluate quantitatively the relative reproductive success of naturally spawning hatchery and natural origin steelhead in the Methow River Basin over two generations.

ANALYSIS

The ISRP stated that the WDFW had addressed the concerns that had been raised as part of the preliminary reviews. In addition, they found the proposal timely in providing an improved understanding of the demography and viability of upper Columbia ESU steelhead and the relationship between hatchery and natural fish in this region.

² The ISRP found that two of the ten proposals justified the fast-track component of their projects but the overall project proposals required responses.

Based on the ISRP review the Council staff recommends that the Council supports this project for implementation.