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Northwest
RiverPartners
For salmon, our economy and quality of life

May 25, 2009

Mark Walker, Director of Public Affairs
Northwest Power and Conservation Council
851 SW 6th Avenue, Suite 1100
Portland, Oregon 97204

2009005-18

Re: High Level Indicators – Fish and Wildlife Program

Dear Mr. Walker:

RiverPartners commends the Council for sparking discussion and development of “High Level Indicators” (HLIs) to track regional progress in fish and wildlife enhancement efforts. Northwest families and businesses, through Endangered Species Act and Northwest Power Act obligations, are providing an unprecedented amount of funding to mitigate for the impacts of the federal hydro system on fish and wildlife resources. It is imperative that the results and accomplishments of such an extraordinary effort be documented and disseminated in an understandable way to the public, congressional and state legislators, and others in the region.

We do share the concern that unless properly scoped and implemented, this initiative could increase the costs associated with research, monitoring and evaluation of projects which already stands at 40 percent or more of the Council’s fish and wildlife program. For this reason, we urge you to adopt the concept of developing High Level Indicators while continuing to work with the appropriate regional entities to refine implementation of the concept. Regional buy-in and support of HLI’s will be crucial to successful implementation.

To this end, the Council should develop a proposed work plan and budget detailing how it will approach implementation. The work plan should address, among other items: who will be doing the work, the costs associated with collecting data, especially data or information that may not be readily available, and an assessment of whether proposed indicators add value and can be easily communicated. To assist in development of its work plan and build regional support, the Council should consider holding a workshop involving policy and technical representatives of the prime entities involved in fish and wildlife efforts. The Council can play a crucial role in bringing entities together to ensure coordination and standardization in data collection and metrics, and identify cost sharing opportunities. Data that is already being collected in other regional efforts, or will be collected, such as through implementation of the hydro system Biological Opinion, must be tightly coordinated, not duplicated.

RiverPartners appreciates the opportunity to comment. The Council’s leadership can help ensure that the necessary data and information is collected in a coordinated way and communicated to track progress and illustrate the breadth of the region’s commitment to fish and wildlife enhancement.

Sincerely,



Terry Flores, Executive Director

Cc: NPCC Members
Greg Delwiche, BPA
Tony Grover, NPCC

MAY 19 2009