



Department of Energy

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

ENVIRONMENT, FISH AND WILDLIFE

March 2, 2010

In reply refer to: KEW-4

Mr. Mark Fritsch
Manager, Project Implementation
Northwest Power and Conservation Council
851 SW 6th Ave, Suite 1100
Portland OR 97204-1348

Mr. Erik Merrill
ISRP/ISAB Coordinator
Northwest Power and Conservation Council
851 SW 6th Ave, Suite 1100
Portland OR 97204-1348

Re: Upper Columbia Programmatic Habitat Project 2010-001-00
ISRP Narrative Proposal for Review (BiOp, non-Accord)

Dear Messrs. Fritsch and Merrill:

Would you please forward this letter and the accompanying narrative proposal to the Independent Scientific Review Panel (ISRP) for scientific review?

This new project is replacing 14 Biological Opinion (BiOp) non-Accord habitat projects from the FY07-09 solicitation cycle that represent approximately \$3.5 million in annual funding. Bonneville Power Administration (Bonneville) must maintain this effort beyond 2009 to meet BiOp objectives, notwithstanding the Columbia Basin Fish Accords. We hope you agree that this programmatic approach will help us meet the challenges of maintaining an effective habitat protection and restoration effort in the Upper Columbia (Columbia Cascade Province).

The Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board (UCSRB) agreed to serve as this project's proponent. Over the last 10 years the UCSRB has garnered the confidence of local sponsors through its leadership in salmon recovery planning and its effective management of project selection processes for the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) and the Mid-Columbia Habitat Conservation Plan Tributary (Trib) funds. Technical integrity of the UCSRB's work is assured by the Upper Columbia Regional Technical Team (RTT), which provides solid guidance ranging from identification of reach-specific limiting factors through quantified evaluation of project proposals and analytical workshops. In short, the UCSRB provides essential infrastructure and leadership for meeting the challenges of an expanding and increasingly holistic habitat strategy to support salmon recovery in the Upper Columbia.

The project's narrative proposal addresses how three of the most significant challenges will be met through a programmatic approach. First, multi-year planning and across-subbasin coordination will facilitate implementation of targeted large-scale and intensive reach-based restoration that requires substantial funds from multiple sources. Second, the annual RTT open competitive 6-step process for selecting and funding projects – the same as presently used for

SRFB and Trib funds – will provide flexibility to fund the best small-scale projects available to implement each year across all sponsors, action types, and subbasins within the Upper Columbia Evolutionarily Significant Units. Third, monitoring and evaluation also will shift to a programmatic approach that ensures implementation/compliance monitoring for all actions/projects as well as supports – through targeted restoration efforts – reach-based effectiveness monitoring by separate research, monitoring, and evaluation (RM&E) projects in the Entiat and Methow subbasin intensively monitored watersheds.

The monitoring and evaluation plan described in Section G of the proposal tries to capture dynamic regional initiatives in a way that can be applied programmatically. It identifies nascent projects for project-level implementation/compliance monitoring that Bonneville may fund to help satisfy BiOp requirements then backs them up with alternatives and contingencies if those plans are not realized. We anticipate that this M&E plan – if acceptable to the ISRP and to the Council – would be applied also to the Yakama Nation (YN) Accord project 2009-003-00, Upper Columbia Habitat Restoration (also referred to as Columbia Cascade Province MOA Habitat Projects). That YN Accord project was recently reviewed by the ISRP (ISRP 2010-2) and recommended for funding by the Council, with the condition that the M&E plan proposed for this project receives a favorable ISRP review. Therefore, the M&E plan in this proposal would have value beyond just this project.

We appreciate the ISRP's review and the Council's consideration of this proposal for the new Upper Columbia Programmatic Habitat Project. Both the UCSRB and Bonneville would be glad to answer any questions and provide supporting information. Please contact me (503-230-5213) if any additional information is desired from Bonneville.

Sincerely,



Roy Beaty
Fish Biologist/Project Manager

cc:

Ms. Julie Morgan, Mr. Derek Van Marter, and Mr. James White, UCSRB
Mr. Casey Baldwin, WDFW