

Jeffery C. Allen
Chair
Idaho

Ed Schriever
Idaho

Doug Grob
Montana

Mike Milburn
Montana



Northwest **Power** and **Conservation** Council

KC Golden
Vice Chair
Washington

Thomas L (Les) Purce
Washington

Ginny Burdick
Oregon

Louie Pitt, Jr.
Oregon

January 30, 2024

MEMORANDUM

TO: Fish and Wildlife Committee Members

FROM: Patty O'Toole, Fish and Wildlife Division Director

SUBJECT: Fish and Wildlife Division Workplan Highlights for 2024

BACKGROUND:

Presenter: Patty O'Toole, Fish and Wildlife Division Director, and staff

Summary: Staff will review Fish and Wildlife Division workplan highlights for 2024

Relevance: The workplan will guide division work for the remainder of 2024

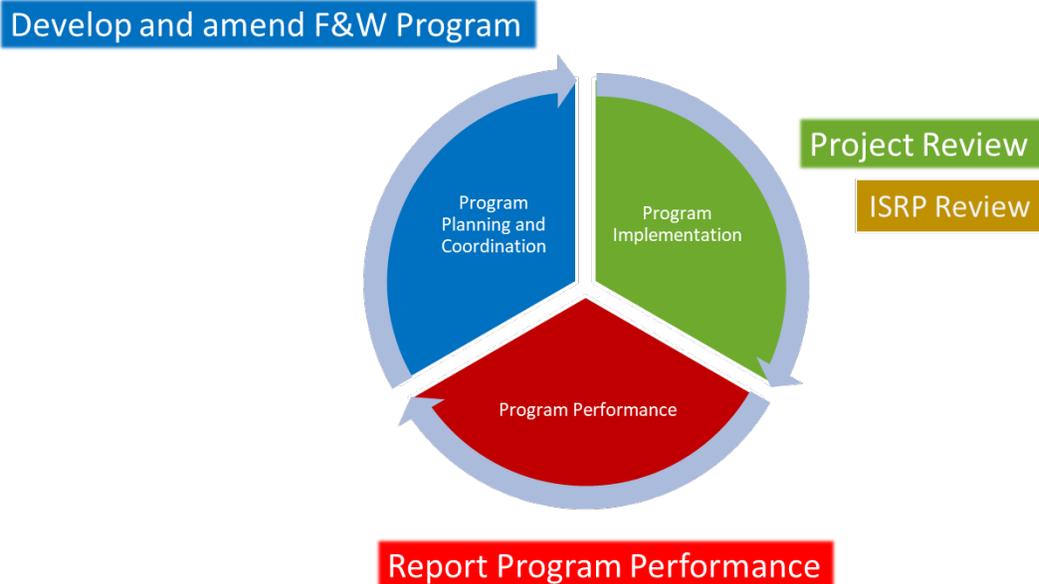
Workplan: Draft plan for 2024

Background:

At the February Fish and Wildlife Committee meeting, staff will review the Fish and Wildlife Division Workplan highlights for 2024. Staff will distribute the additional information to members before the meeting by email.

The work of the staff is generally organized into three major areas (see figure 1): 1) Program policy development and planning; 2) Program implementation including the major task of periodic review of projects and tracking implementation by others; and 3) Program performance, although there is overlap between these three areas.

Figure1: Organization of major areas of staff work.



The staff estimates initiating work to amend the 2014 Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program early in 2025. Staff will begin preparatory work in 2024. Tasks include providing an overview of the legal framework and procedures for amending the Program to the Council later this year. Staff will also work with the Council to outline a letter requesting recommendations to amend the Fish and Wildlife Program as required under the Northwest Power Act (Act).

Work will continue in 2024 to review direct-funded mitigation projects. The staff is wrapping up planning for the next cycle of review and are emphasizing a shift from a comprehensive review process to a more targeted review for *ongoing* projects. The staff also anticipates *new* projects coming into the Program that will require a more comprehensive review, and staff will continue to track past Council review recommendations. The review and recommendation of projects by the Council and review by the Independent Scientific Review Panel are required under the Act, but the Council can exercise some flexibility around *how* the review occurs. Additionally, late in 2024, the Review Panel will initiate review of the Steelhead program for the Lower Snake River Compensation Plan.

Also occurring this year will be the continued implementation of the Council's Asset Management Strategic Plan for identifying and addressing non-recurring maintenance needs of prior Program investments, such as hatcheries and fish screens.

Finally, the staff will wrap up development of several products aimed at helping the Council and others in the basin to better understand the performance and progress of the Fish and Wildlife Program over time, including hydrosystem, hatchery and habitat

assessments. The goal is to review this work at intervals through 2024 with the Council and the Council's implementation partners so that the information can be available for the upcoming amendment of the Program in 2025.

These tasks are not the only tasks for the division. Several other tasks are ongoing including coordination of the Program and its implementation with partners, management of program data and information, tracking implementation of Program measures and project recommendations and supporting independent science reviews at both the project and program levels.

The Fish and Wildlife division currently is staffed with four staff members and a director that will perform the bulk of this work, with the support of an administrative assistant. The division also houses and supports the Independent Science Manager who works side by side with staff on organizing and planning project and science reviews, and reports to the science panel executive boards.