

Council Meeting Summary
June 10 & 11, 2025
Hilton Garden Inn Missoula
3720 North Reserve Street
Missoula, Montana, 59808

This is a summary of the Council's June 2025 public meeting and the actions the Council decided upon. The meeting agenda and presentation materials for each agenda item during the meeting are posted at <https://www.nwcouncil.org/meeting/council-meeting-2025-06-10/>. The meeting recording and a copy of this summary will also be posted on that page.

June 10, 2025

Council Chair Mike Milburn brought the meeting to order at 8:31 a.m. Mountain Time. Council Members Jeff Allen, KC Golden, Margaret Hoffmann, Thomas L. (Les) Purce, Charles F. Sams III, Ed Schriever, and Doug Grob were in attendance in person. The next council meeting is scheduled for June 26, 2025, via webinar.

Motion for Executive Session

Member Purce moved that the Council meet in Executive Session on the afternoon of June 10, 2025, to discuss personnel matters.

Member Golden seconded.

No discussion.

Voice vote - all in favor, none opposed.

Motion was approved.

Council Meeting Agenda Items

1. Council Work Session: Fish and Wildlife Program Amendment

a. Amendment process check-in

Fish and Wildlife Division Director Patty O'Toole introduced the timeline, framework, and expectations for the day's work session and the public comment opportunity specific to it. O'Toole highlighted the division's approach to processing Fish and Wildlife Program

amendment recommendations, how to access available documentation, when future work sessions are scheduled, where the group is in the amendment process, and what are the substantive decision-making standards in the Northwest Power Act.

b. Review and discuss recommendations (general overview and review of hydro operations recommendations)

Director O'Toole was then joined by Project Review and Implementation Manager Mark Fritsch, General Counsel John Shurts, Fish and Wildlife Program Scientist Kate Self, Biologist for Program Performance Kris Homel, and Fish and Wildlife Habitat Specialist Heather Hendrixson to provide a high-level overview of recommendations received. Homel, Self, Hendrixson, and Shurts presented initial observations by topic and focus: Program framework and organization; goals, objectives, indicators and performance evaluation; hydrosystem operations and measures; ecosystem functionality; water quantity and quality; climate change; strongholds strategy; protected areas and licensing conditions; predator management; non-native and invasive species; estuary, plume, and ocean research; hatchery mitigation; anadromous fish mitigation in blocked areas; resident fish and wildlife mitigation; adaptive management, research, monitoring, and evaluation; reporting and data systems; implementation provisions; Council roles and responsibilities; and funding concerns.

Report from the Executive Director

Following a short break, Interim Executive Director Guy Norman commented on the Council's role in the region and the effectiveness of the Fish and Wildlife Program.

b. Review and discuss recommendations (general overview and review of hydro operations recommendations), continued

Fish and Wildlife Program Scientist Kate Self introduced a deep dive into recommendations submitted for hydropower operations. Specific categories were baseline hydrosystem measures; F&W Program goals and objectives related to hydrosystem operations; flow objectives; storage reservoir operations; integration of Columbia River Treaty requirements; run-of-the-river pool operations, spill, fish passage, and transportation; Mid-Columbia PUD dams; Lower Snake River dams; sturgeon entrainment and passage; power system considerations; the Fish Passage Center; blocked area fish passage; and measures specific to the Willamette River Basin. General Counsel John Shurts provided legal commentary, background, and analysis throughout.

c. Discuss Program organization concepts and/or examples

Biologist for Program Performance Kris Homel discussed objectives for Fish & Wildlife Program reorganization, the conceptual approach used, the 2014/2020 Program outline, redundancies between strategies and sections, organizational tools, and a draft outline for an amended Program with improved functionality for council members' consideration. Homel covered its key elements, structure, and principles, and provided detailed examples of categories.

Presentation materials are available at https://www.nwcouncil.org/f/19429/2025_06_1.pdf

2. Council Work Session: Power Plan & Fish and Wildlife Program Amendment

a. Scoping the Changing Hydro Operations Scenario

Director of Power Planning Jennifer Light introduced this topic and provided context for the coordinated approach. This session was meant to gather initial member questions and feedback and to frame analytical questions for the Changing Hydro Operations scenario. Fish and Wildlife Program Scientist Kate Self discussed water transit time (WTT) Program amendment recommendations, and Director Light explained possible analysis of WTT in the GENESYS model. Power System Analyst Dor Hirsh Bar Gai offered a visualization of climate model informed flows and their relationship to WTT. Manager of Planning and Analysis John Ollis provided context for the granularity of models and cost-effective adjustments that can be made within them. Then, Hirsh Bar Gai and Ollis discussed limited ramping of hydropower and options for flexibility. Director Light and staff then highlighted a potential hybrid sensitivity and next steps. General Counsel John Shurts offered additional insight throughout.

Presentation materials are available at https://www.nwcouncil.org/f/19424/2025_06_2.pdf

Public comment on Fish and Wildlife Program amendment recommendations

Joe Maroney, Director of Fisheries and Water Resources for the Kalispel Tribe, gave public comment.

Chair Milburn adjourned the meeting at 3:10 p.m. Mountain Time.

Executive Session – Closed Session

Council members met in Executive Session to discuss personnel matters.

June 11, 2025

Council Chair Mike Milburn brought the meeting to order at 8:32 a.m. Mountain Time. Council Members Jeff Allen, KC Golden, Margaret Hoffmann, Thomas L. (Les) Purce, Charles F. Sams III, Ed Schriever, and Doug Grob were in attendance in Missoula, Montana. The next Council meeting is scheduled for July 15 & 16, 2025, in Portland, Oregon, and via webinar.

Council Meeting Agenda Items, Continued

3. Remarks from Mark Hayden, General Manager, Missoula Electric Cooperative and Rex Griffin, Ravalli Electric Cooperative

Council Member Doug Grob introduced Mark Hayden, General Manager of Missoula Electric Cooperative and Rex Griffin, Trustee of Ravalli Electric Cooperative. Mark Hayden highlighted the population served by Missoula Electric Cooperative, the lengthening fire seasons in Montana, and the increasing devastation from individual events. He described Missoula Electric Cooperative's wildfire mitigation plan and year-round preparation, funding concerns, rapid growth in their service area, increased peak loads and consumption, and challenges in implementing new energy efficiency measures. In 2024, Missoula Electric joined Pacific Northwest Generating Co-op (PNGC) to diversify their power supply, mitigate cost pressures, and increase reliability.

Rex Griffin spoke next, citing concerns about resource and transmission adequacy in the Northwest. Griffin highlighted the convergence of increased electrification, unpredictable solar and wind generation, increasing demands on Tier 2 power from Bonneville Power Administration, and reductions of dispatchable baseload generation. PNGC has been ramping efforts to fill gaps. He stressed the benefits of PNGC's work, dam management, and regional collaboration.

Discussion with Council members included wildfire liability risks and costs, diversified power asset portfolios, the benefits of participating in PNGC, perspectives on challenges facing fish, and rate increases due to extreme weather events.

Presentation materials are available at https://www.nwcouncil.org/f/19420/2025_06_3.pdf

4. Update on current operations of Libby and Hungry Horse

Policy Analyst Kerry Berg introduced Marotz Enterprises' Brian Marotz and Matt Boyer, Fisheries Mitigation Manager, Region 1 Science Program Supervisor, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. Brian Marotz identified the geographic location, functions, and importance of Hungry Horse and Libby Dams, then described the goal to consider hydropower production and marketing, flood risk management, and ecosystem services at the same time. Dams altered river flows, created reservoirs, changed flood patterns, and dramatically impacted ecosystems. He asked, how do we make the entire system work better? The answer was to develop reservoir models and gather and feed ten years of extensive ecosystems data for both dams into them, leading to improved reservoir operations and power production. From the models came data-driven, integrated rule curves. Out of this framework grew VarQ (Variable Flow) Flood Risk Management that was implemented in Libby and Hungry Horse reservoirs to improve refill, reduce drawdown, produce power, and protect people downstream from flooding. This approach allows operators to respond to water supply changes in each subbasin, improve temperature management, and increase survival rates for anadromous and resident fish.

Discussion included barriers to and incentives for implementing VarQ throughout the region, considerations for irrigation, cold water for salmon, managing difficult decisions, influences of topography, runoff timing and storage, and the Council's regional role.

Presentation materials are available at https://www.nwcouncil.org/f/19427/2025_06_4.pdf

5. Presentation on Glacial Lake Missoula

Policy Analyst Kerry Berg introduced James Sheldon, President of the Glacial Lake Missoula Chapter of the Ice Age Flood Institute. Sheldon presented a story, maps, and a history lesson showing the spatial parameters and geologic effects of Ice Age floods, specific to Glacial Lake Missoula. Sheldon's details included the lake's giant outburst flood, telltale signs of massive mud and water flows visible today, black basalt mesa formations, rich topsoil deposits, giant gravel bars, champions of the now-proven theory of the lake's formation, and the grading and shaping of the Columbia River Gorge and Basin. The Ice Age Flood Institute is developing the first National Geologic Trail, following Glacial Lake Missoula's flood path.

Presentation materials are available at https://www.nwcouncil.org/f/19425/2025_06_5.pdf

6. Update and status of Asset Management Strategic Plan recommendations for Program hatcheries and fish screens

Project Review and Implementation Manager Mark Fritsch introduced Executive Manager, Fish and Wildlife Program, Jason Sweet; Fish and Wildlife Administrator Andy Traylor; and Project Manager Eric Leitzinger, all from Bonneville Power Administration (BPA). Andy Traylor described Bonneville's Strategic Asset Management Plan and the funding sources from the FY 2022 and 2023 Reserves Distribution Clause (RDC) provisions and the BP24 Integrated Program Review (IPR). These support non-recurring maintenance needs at hatcheries and for fish screens. Eric Leitzinger discussed specific fish screen replacements, materials, facilities, and equipment funding priorities for implementation by the end of FY 2027. Traylor provided an update on hatchery projects, funding awards, and recent successes. Jason Sweet discussed regional collaboration and the continuity of maintenance in the future.

Presentation materials are available at https://www.nwcouncil.org/f/19426/2025_06_6.pdf

7. Power Plan Update

Director of Power Planning Jennifer Light provided an overview of the Power Plan development process and highlighted current efforts and upcoming steps. Scenario modeling begins shortly, and the discount rate used in the analysis needs to be finalized. Director Light discussed the status of the final input and scoping elements, the proposed approach to a discount rate, approval needed for the selected rate, and questions around additional discussion. Due to the complications of using multiple discount rates, Director Light recommends a single, regional, blended rate for all entities at 3.7%. Members supported moving forward with this rate.

Presentation materials are available at https://www.nwcouncil.org/f/19423/2025_06_7.pdf

8. Proposed Conservation Resources Part 3

Manager of Power Planning Resources Kevin Smit and Senior Resources Analyst Christian Douglass presented the third part of their series on proposed conservation resources. Smit introduced the nearly final draft conservation supply curves for the Ninth Power Plan, beginning with an overview and timeline. Douglass highlighted efficiency measures for which analysis was completed since the Council last met, including water heating, residential HVAC, and residential weatherization, then explained draft results and supply

curves for the residential sector, agricultural sector, aggregate supply curves, and a comparison between current supply curves and those from the 2021 Plan. Smit discussed commercial HVAC options and commercial refrigeration. For each measure, staff assesses the amount of energy and capacity available, the costs involved, and the pace of market integration. Smit explained summary results, and he and Douglass presented supply curves and key findings by sector. The data will be used as inputs to OptGen modeling and will be compared to demand side and generating resources.

Presentation materials are available at https://www.nwcouncil.org/f/19421/2025_06_8.pdf

9. Proposed Demand Response Potential Part 2

Director of Power Planning Jennifer Light introduced Resources Analyst Joe Walderman. This was Walderman's second presentation on demand response (DR) supply curves of 28 DR products for use in the Power Plan, assessed for both summer and winter peak potential. Analysis was provided for the following categories: grid-enabled water heating, electric vehicle charging, residential HVAC, commercial HVAC, commercial and industrial curtailment, irrigation, price-based and system demand response (passive DR), battery storage, and summary results. The review and revision process continues this month. The framework for modeling includes how to bin costs, identifying dispatch assumptions, and determining total potential by cost and deployment type.

Presentation materials are available at https://www.nwcouncil.org/f/19422/2025_06_9.pdf

10. Council Business

Public comments

Scott Levy provided public comment.

Motion to Approve Summary of the May 2025 Council Meeting

Member Purce moved that the Council approve for the signature of the Vice Chair the official summary of the May 2025 Council Meeting held in Portland, OR and via webinar, as presented by staff.

Member Grob seconded.

No discussion.

Voice vote - all in favor, none opposed.

Motion was approved.

The approved summary of the May 2025 Council meeting and other materials from that meeting are at <https://www.nwcouncil.org/calendar/council-meeting-2025-05-13/>.

Chair Milburn adjourned the meeting at 2:51 p.m. Mountain Time.