

Council Meeting Summary
July 15th & 16th, 2025
Council Central Office and via Webinar
851 SW Sixth Avenue, Suite 1100
Portland, OR 97204

This is a summary of the Council's July 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/calendar/council-meeting-2025-07-15/>. The meeting recording and a copy of this summary are also posted there.

July 15, 2025

Council Chair Mike Milburn brought the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. Pacific 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 August 12 & 13, 2025, in Portland, Oregon, and via webinar.

Introduction of Executive Director and Executive Director Report

Chair Milburn thanked Interim Executive Director Guy Norman for his leadership and service, then welcomed Executive Director Peter Cogswell and provided a short bio for him. Executive Director Peter Cogswell discussed his first impressions, relevant experience, history with the Council, perspectives on regional risks, and the work ahead.

Council Meeting Agenda Items

1. Power Plan Update

Director of Power Planning Jennifer Light provided a Power Plan timeline, elements completed, and upcoming Power Division agenda items. On the Power Plan timeline, the division has transitioned into the scenario modeling stage, and Director Light explained the two scenarios developed for this Power Plan, their sensitivities, the four steps involved for each, studies to complete, and how this work relates to the Fish and Wildlife Program amendment process.

Presentation materials are available at https://www.nwcouncil.org/f/19496/2025_07_1.pdf

2. Council Work Session: Fish and Wildlife Program Amendment

a. Amendment process check-in

Fish and Wildlife Division Director Patty O'Toole introduced work session topics, set expectations, and oriented the group to the Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program amendment timeline. Director O'Toole discussed the development and usefulness of topic-based summaries of recommendations and comments. Members were directed to begin considering the framework of their own contributions to the amended Program.

b. Continued review of recommendations

Staff presented draft recommendation observations, organized into related themes around similar topics, with areas of agreement and disagreement identified. The material presented did not reflect all recommendations, which are found on the Council's website. The material was provided to give the members and others a sense of the range of recommendations we received. Topics introduced in this work session include resident fish mitigation; predator management; non-native and invasive species; anadromous fish mitigation in blocked areas; goals, objectives, indicators, and performance; adaptive management; data management and reporting; research, monitoring, and evaluation (RM&E); and multiple implementation provisions. There was lively discussion with members about the Council's role in regional predator management and adaptive management.

c. Break for public comment on program and power plan topics

Council members received public comments from the following parties: Tribal Council Member Jonathan Smith, Sr., Warm Springs Tribe; Regional Coordinator Tom Iverson, Yakama Nation Fisheries; Special Assistant Michael Garrity, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife; Columbia River Coordination Section Manager Art Martin, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife; Legal Director Miles Johnson, Columbia Riverkeeper; Liz Hamilton, Northwest Sport Fishing Industry Association; and Outreach Coordinator Abby Dalke, Save Our Wild Salmon.

d. Resume work session discussion items

Director O'Toole reintroduced the current recommendation summary topic, Fish & Wildlife Program implementation provisions. O'Toole and Project Review and Implementation

Manager Mark Fritsch gave an overview of recommendations received regarding funding and implementation decisions, funding priorities, and Council roles and responsibilities.

e. Overview of comments received

Fish and Wildlife Division Director Patty O'Toole introduced General Counsel John Shurts, who gave an overview of comments received on Fish & Wildlife Program amendment recommendations. Shurts presented some background, noted that the number of comments received were unusually high for this point in the process, and highlighted the three main topics that emerged—the annual anadromous fish abundance goal of 5 million, multiple perspectives on hydrosystem operations, and the Lower Snake River dams—as well as a range of additional topics.

f. Begin identifying issues

Director O'Toole listed 10 main topics for consideration: the 5 million fish goal; hydrosystem operations for fish; habitat; artificial production; Upper Snake reintroduction; predator management; sturgeon mitigation and passage; funding adequacy; increasing mitigation actions; and the role of the Council and the Program regionally.

Presentation materials are available at https://www.nwcouncil.org/f/19499/2025_07_2.pdf

Chair Milburn adjourned the meeting at 2:57 p.m. Pacific Time.

July 16, 2025

Council Chair Mike Milburn brought the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. Pacific 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 Portland, Oregon. The next Council meeting is scheduled for August 12 & 13, 2025, in Portland, Oregon, and via webinar.

Council Meeting Agenda Items, Continued

3. Presentation by Independent Science Review Panel (ISRP) on Habitat Retrospective Report

Independent Science Manager Erik Merrill introduced Chair Richard Carmichael, Vice-Chair Kurt Fresh, Kurt Fausch, and Stan Gregory of the Independent Scientific Review Panel (ISRP). Chair Carmichael discussed ISRP scientific review responsibilities, the scope of retrospective reviews in general, the highly collaborative Habitat Retrospective Report specifically, and its advancements, accomplishments, and organization. Gregory covered habitat protection and restoration planning and prioritization, improvements in goals and objectives, ecological process-based restoration, and recommendations for project development. Fausch presented methods for habitat restoration; Action Effectiveness Monitoring (AEM) of Intensively Monitored Watersheds (IMW); Research, Monitoring, and Evaluation (RM&E); and data synthesis. Fresh highlighted confounding factors, such as variable ocean conditions, and provided examples of exemplary projects.

Presentation materials are available at https://www.nwcouncil.org/f/19493/2025_07_3.pdf

4. The Pacific Northwest Utilities Conference Committee (PNUCC) Northwest Regional Forecast

Director of Power Planning Jennifer Light introduced Executive Director Crystal Ball and Analytics and Policy Director Aliza Seelig, PNUCC; and Gillian Charles, Red Kite Consulting. Executive Director Ball presented the annual update to the Northwest Regional Forecast (NRF) of power loads and resources from the regional utility perspective. Ball explained PNUCC's role in communicating the challenges faced by regional utilities. Charles presented load forecasts, trends, and expectations; the role of energy efficiency; and utilities' resource acquisition plans. Seelig discussed the evolving mix of long-term resource acquisitions and capacity, a synthesis of the resource picture for 2026, the growth of demand response, and forecasted gaps during peak hours. Ball stressed the interdependence of resources, the essential role of natural gas, and the importance of regional collaboration and coordinated decision-making.

Presentation materials are available at https://www.nwcouncil.org/f/19494/2025_07_4.pdf

5. Update on Project Review

Project Review and Implementation Manager Mark Fritsch and Fish and Wildlife Program Scientist Maureen Hess provided a summary of the updated project review process for fish and wildlife lands. In preparation for the lands review starting in October, Fritsch discussed programmatic history and how transparency, integrity, and refinement grow from periodic science reviews. Hess detailed efficiencies in the revised process for reviewing existing

projects, the rationale for initiating a review of lands projects, the expected timeline, and next steps.

Presentation materials are available at https://www.nwcouncil.org/f/19492/2025_07_5.pdf

6. Council Business

Motion to Approve Summary of the June 2025 Council Meeting

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

Member Golden seconded.

No discussion.

Voice vote - all in favor, none opposed.

Motion was approved.

The approved summary of the June 2025 Council meeting and other materials from that meeting are at https://www.nwcouncil.org/f/19495/2025_07_6minutes1.pdf.

Motion to Approve Summary of the June 26, 2025, Council Work Session

Member Purce moved that the Council approve for the signature of the Vice Chair the official summary of the June 26, 2025, work session held via webinar, as presented by staff.

Member Hoffman seconded.

No discussion.

Voice vote - all in favor, none opposed.

Motion was approved.

The approved summary of the June 26, 2025, Council meeting and other materials from that meeting are at https://www.nwcouncil.org/f/19497/2025_07_6minutes2.pdf.

Decision to adopt Council budget for Fiscal Year 2027 and Fiscal Year 2026 Revised Budget

Member Purce moved that the Council adopt the Fiscal Year 2027 and Fiscal Year 2026 revised budgets and authorize reprogramming of available Fiscal Year 2025 funds for unanticipated Fiscal Year 2025 costs, as presented by staff.

Member Grob seconded.

No discussion.

Voice vote - all in favor, none opposed.

Motion was approved.

The approved Fiscal Year 2027 and Fiscal Year 2026 revised budgets are available at https://www.nwcouncil.org/f/19498/2025_07_6budget.pdf.

Public comments

The Council received public comments from Joe Maroney, Director of Fisheries and Water Resources for the Kalispel Tribe, and Marc Sullivan, Western WA Coordinator for Save Our Wild Salmon Coalition.

Chair Milburn adjourned the meeting at 11:36 a.m. Pacific Time.