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May 9, 2023

### **MEMORANDUM**

**TO: Council Members**

**FROM: Kris Homel, Leslie Bach, and Patty O'Toole**

**SUBJECT: Program Performance: Overview of Approach and Description of Program Retrospective**

### **BACKGROUND:**

**Presenters:** Kris Homel, Leslie Bach, and Patty O'Toole

**Summary:** Council staff will present a status update on assessing the performance of the Council's Fish and Wildlife Program. The update will focus on an overview of the approach to assessing performance and a description of the Program Retrospective. The Program Retrospective describes development of various programs over time in relation to internal Council and external regional events. This description is facilitated by using a common set of terms to categorize each program, which can be cross walked to the current 2014 program strategies and associated strategy performance indicators. The full presentation on the Program Retrospective was delivered to the Fish and Wildlife Committee in August and September over the course of four hours. For the Council meeting, the presentation will focus on the phases of the performance assessment, the rationale for developing a retrospective, the format and content of the retrospective, and some key examples.

**Relevance:** Beginning with the Power Act and the first program in 1982, every fish and wildlife program has included references to aspects of program

performance. The 2009 and 2014 programs expanded on performance with an emphasis on understanding the outcomes from the investment in fish and wildlife mitigation. The 2020 program addendum addresses program performance through (1) reorganizing and compiling the goals and objectives of the program, which serve as benchmarks for performance, and (2) developing strategy performance indicators.

Workplan: Item 2.1: Program Performance- complete Program Retrospective

Background: The Northwest Power and Conservation Council's Fish and Wildlife Program represents a 40-year effort to mitigate for the effects of the hydropower system on fish and wildlife in the Columbia Basin. The scope and investment in this Program make it one of the largest fish and wildlife mitigation efforts in the world and a significant part of the tapestry of mitigation efforts in the Columbia Basin. The Program is developed by drawing on regional expertise on how best to mitigate for the construction and operation of the hydrosystem. Consequently, there is an expectation that complete implementation of prescribed actions through investment in mitigation will contribute to and achieve established objectives and goals.

It is important to note that implementation of the Fish and Wildlife program occurs against a changing backdrop. Even as substantial effort is applied to mitigate for the impacts of the hydrosystem, other human impacts and natural disturbances in the basin produce environmental degradation that can negatively affect ecosystem function or fish and wildlife populations. Likewise, ongoing mitigation or restoration work associated with other regional efforts can positively affect the ecosystem. Accomplishments of the program must be understood and interpreted in the context of these changing environmental conditions.

To understand what kind of progress has been made, we developed a retrospective describing the history of the program (1980-2020) as a way to develop a common understanding that feeds into a more detailed assessment of program performance. This retrospective summarizes the background of the program, including the legal framework and co-occurring events that precipitated the formation of the Council and the Council's Fish and Wildlife programs. It further describes how programs were developed over time in relation to regional events and draws on a common set of terms to categorize the measures or strategies described in each program. The terms used to categorize programs crosswalk to 2014 strategies and strategy performance indicators (SPIs), such that datasets on outcomes can be linked to the work that was called for in each program over time.

The full presentation on the Program Retrospective was delivered to the Fish and Wildlife Committee in August and September over the course of four hours. For the Council meeting, the presentation will focus on the

phases of the performance assessment, the rationale for developing a retrospective, the format and content of the retrospective, and some key examples.

An understanding of history and context are key to future assessments of performance because they set the boundaries on the kinds of work that have been called for, where that work occurred, and when the work was implemented. This translates into a more refined understanding of when outcomes from that work might be observable. In this presentation we will describe the general approach to phases 2 – 5 of the assessment, which cover the following categories: hydrosystem; habitat; artificial production; and program adaptive management. In each of these phases, we will describe the types of actions and projects that have been implemented over time at the scale of the Columbia River Basin/ Fish and Wildlife Program and at the geographic scale of ecological provinces. We will draw on datasets assembled for the strategy performance indicators as well as other information to characterize relationships between what was called for, what was implemented, and what kinds of changes have occurred.

#### More Info:

The full presentations on the Program Retrospective were delivered to the Fish and Wildlife Committee in August and September. The powerpoint presentations are available here:

August: [https://www.nwcouncil.org/fs/17876/2022\\_08\\_f1.pdf](https://www.nwcouncil.org/fs/17876/2022_08_f1.pdf)

September: [https://www.nwcouncil.org/fs/18031/2022\\_09\\_f2.pdf](https://www.nwcouncil.org/fs/18031/2022_09_f2.pdf)