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June 6, 2023

### **MEMORANDUM**

**TO: Fish Committee Members**

**FROM: Kerry Berg**

**SUBJECT: Montana Resident Fish Mitigation Update**

### **BACKGROUND:**

**Presenter:** Matt Boyer, Hydropower Mitigation Coordinator, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

**Summary:** Hungry Horse Mitigation is a long-term effort to offset fisheries losses caused by the construction and operation of Hungry Horse Dam. The project supports applied research and monitoring used to guide project implementation, quantify progress toward objectives, and adaptively inform future mitigation program direction. The overarching goal is to understand, maintain, and maximize ecosystem integrity and resilience, thereby conserving self-sustaining fisheries, native fish assemblages and the habitats they occupy. Work prioritization follows the mitigation framework adopted by the Council in the 2004 Flathead Subbasin Plan, addressing three primary limiting factors: 1) impoundment and hydrosystem operations; 2) physical habitat alteration; and 3) non-native species interactions. Some of the major accomplishments include eradication of hybridization threats from nonnative trout in the South Fork Flathead watershed and conservation of local Westslope Cutthroat Trout genetic stocks, acquisition, protection, and restoration of critical habitat for native focal fish species, and completion of applied research projects with peer-reviewed publications that inform conservation management actions. Goals and objectives in this project build on past work and lessons

learned. Projects are identified for implementation based on their ability to deliver high conservation value for focal fish species, offer a high likelihood of success, and provide sustainable outcomes over a discrete time frame.

**Relevance:** The Council's Fish and Wildlife Program calls for mitigation for resident fish and other aquatic species impacted by the hydrosystem.