

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

Council Meeting Summary **February 7, 2024** **at Coeur d'Alene, ID and via Webinar**

This is a summary of the Council's February 2024 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-2024-02-06/>. The meeting recording and a copy of this summary will also be posted on that page.

February 7, 2024

Council Chair Jeffery Allen brought the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. Pacific time. Council Members Ginny Burdick, KC Golden, Doug Grob, Mike Milburn, Thomas L (Les) Purse, and Ed Schriever were in attendance in Coeur d'Alene, ID. Member Louie Pitt Jr. attended virtually. The next Council meeting is scheduled for March 12-13 in Portland, OR and via webinar.

Reports from the Committee Chairs and Executive Director

Power Committee

Member Grob, Power Committee chair, reported on the power committee meeting held on February 6, 2024.

1. Power Committee Update and Planning

Jennifer Light, the Council's Director of Power Planning, began the presentation by discussing the Power Division 2024-2025 Work Plan. The work of the Power Division

will continue to focus on implementation of the 2021 Power Plan and preparation for the Council's ninth power plan. In 2024, more of the work will shift towards preparation for the next plan.

For the report and the presentation materials, see https://www.nwcouncil.org/fs/18606/2024_02_p1.pdf.

2. Mid-Term Assessment Summary

Jennifer Light, the Council's Director of Power Planning, discussed staff's proposed summary for the 2021 Power Plan Mid-Term Assessment. Next steps for the Mid-Term Assessment include updated load forecast information might shift the narrative, continuing to work towards the 2029 Adequacy Assessment will provide new insights, and tracking and reporting on resource development will continue to inform the mid-term assessment. Light shared the proposed summary details and the committee provided a head nod in support of posting the material.

For the report and the presentation materials, see https://www.nwcouncil.org/fs/18608/2024_02_p2.pdf.

3. Discussion with Northern Idaho Utilities

Representatives from Northern Idaho Utilities, including Jim Robbins, Director at Kootenai Electric, Steve Klatt, Director at Northern Lights, Inc, and Jeff Copeland, Director at Clearwater Power presented on the challenges their utilities are facing including significant growth, supply chain issues, higher costs, and community challenges.

For the report and the presentation materials, see https://www.nwcouncil.org/fs/18607/2024_02_p3.pdf.

4. Preparation for the Ninth Plan

Council's Director of Power Planning, Jennifer Light shared a summary of the preparation for the ninth power plan. The Power Division is starting to prepare its models and data sets for the Council's next power plan. Light provided a high-level overview of the construction that goes into a power plan, characterized the starting point for the analytics, and outlined initial thinking on potential risk areas to explore through scenario modeling. This was an opportunity for the power committee to discuss and provide feedback on this proposed methodology and analysis needed to create the

ninth power plan. This information will inform an issue paper, that the staff will seek Council approval to release for public comment at its March 2024 meeting.

For the report and the presentation materials, see https://www.nwcouncil.org/fs/18609/2024_02_p4.pdf.

Fish and Wildlife Committee

Member Milburn, Fish and Wildlife Committee Chair, reported on the fish and wildlife committee meeting held on February 6, 2024.

1. Fish and Wildlife Committee Update and Planning

Patty O'Toole, the Council's Fish and Wildlife Division Director gave a brief overview of each of the committee's agenda items.

For the report and the presentation materials, see https://www.nwcouncil.org/fs/18602/2024_02_f1.pdf.

2. Update on Northern Pike Predator Control Efforts

The Council's Washington Policy Analyst/Biologist, Stacy Horton, introduced fish and wildlife managers from the upper Columbia who provided an update on efforts to control non-native invasive northern pike. Presenters included Chris Donley, Region 1 Fish Program Manager at Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Marc Terrazas, Fisheries Biologist at Spokane Tribe of Indians, Holly McLellan, Aquatic Invasive Species Manager at Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, Joe Maroney, Director of Fishery and Water Resources at Kalispel Tribe, Angelo Vitale, Fisheries Program Manager at Coeur d' Alene Tribe, and Jon Firehammer, Research Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist at Coeur d' Alene Tribe. They discussed the expansion of pike in the Basin, trend information on northern pike populations, an update on the rapid response planning, and efforts to prevent dispersal.

For the report and the presentation materials, see https://www.nwcouncil.org/fs/18613/2024_02_f2.pdf.

3. Report on Progress of Communication/Information Sharing with Bonneville

Patty O'Toole, the Council's Fish and Wildlife Division Director and Jason Sweet, Bonneville Power Administration Executive Manager of the Fish and Wildlife Program provided an update on progress of communications and information sharing between the Council and BPA and developments since this topic was last discussed in December 2023. Sweet mentioned some Ideas related to improvements to CBFish and a possible way to track budget changes that meet a certain threshold through that system. Staff conversations will continue, and the committee will get another update in April 2024.

For the report and the presentation materials, see https://www.nwcouncil.org/fs/18603/2024_02_f3.pdf.

4. Update on Operation and Maintenance Subcommittee Meeting

The Council's Fish and Wildlife Project Review and Implementation Manager, Mark Fritsch provided an overview of the Asset Management Strategic Plan and an update on the Operation and Maintenance Subcommittee meeting held in January 2024. The subcommittee discussed the Plan's annual process and the continued integration of funds from the FY 2022 reserves distribution clause, and the BP-24 Rate Case which will augment the existing \$500,000 Asset Management Placeholder for fish screens and hatcheries.

For the report and the presentation materials, see https://www.nwcouncil.org/fs/18604/2024_02_f4.pdf.

5. Fish and Wildlife Division Workplan Highlights for 2024

Patty O'Toole, the Council's Fish and Wildlife Division Director shared the Fish and Wildlife Division Workplan highlights for 2024. O'Toole noted that while the Fish and Wildlife program amendment process is likely to begin in early 2025, preparatory work will begin later this year. Other staff work this year includes continued review of directly funded mitigation projects. Also occurring this year will be continued implementation of the Council's Asset Management Strategic Plan and the development of several products aimed at helping the Council and others to better understand the performance and progress of the program over time.

For the report and the presentation materials, see https://www.nwcouncil.org/fs/18605/2024_02_f5.pdf.

Executive Director Report

The Council's Executive Director, Bill Edmonds, shared the news of two new hires for the Council's Public Affairs and Communications team: Kym Buzdygon, Lead Communications Specialist, with a focus on Fish and Wildlife and Peter Jensen, Communications Specialist, with a focus on Power, both will begin their new roles this month. Edmonds then shared that the Public Affairs Committee has been recently working on communications strategy, including messaging on the Council that will be useful in many areas over the next several years. Edmonds highlighted one piece of that work to include a welcoming line on the Council's website, which reads: Established to inform and advance a regional vision for power and fish & wildlife in the Columbia Basin.

Council Meeting Agenda Items

1. Actions to Increase Mitigation for Losses in the Blocked Areas Above Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee Dams

Council's Washington Policy Analyst/Biologist, Stacy Horton, introduced Chad McCrea, Natural Resources Director at Spokane Tribe of Indians, Ralph Allan Jr., Fish and Wildlife Manager for the Coeur d' Alene Tribe, and Jason Sweet, Executive Manager of the Fish & Wildlife Program at Bonneville Power Administration to discuss the third annual update on the Fish and Wildlife Program language calling for increased mitigation for losses in the blocked areas above Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee Dams. The presenters shared progress made and how ongoing work in Lake Roosevelt, with the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife will take place as part of this effort. This is the third annual update.

Presentation materials are at: https://www.nwcouncil.org/fs/18610/2024_02_1.pdf.

2. Steelhead response to habitat improvement in the Potlatch watershed of Idaho, Potlatch River Steelhead Monitoring and Evaluation Project

Windy Schoby, Council's Idaho Fish and Wildlife Policy Analyst, introduced Brian Knoth, Lead Biologist with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game. Knoth began the presentation with a brief background on why they are working in the Potlatch River and how it is important to recovery efforts. Knoth described the history of the Idaho Department of Fish and Game restoration and monitoring programs. Knoth described the environmental factors they are addressing in the watershed as well as some of the strategies they are using. Knoth highlighted accomplishments of the restoration and monitoring programs. Fish response to the habitat improvements include increased fish growth and improved survival.

Presentation materials are at: https://www.nwcouncil.org/fs/18614/2024_02_2.pdf.

3. Summary of Recent Resource Development and Comparison to 2021 Power Plan Recommendations

Council Power Staff Annika Roberts and Dylan D'Souza gave an update on generating resource builds. Roberts began the presentation with a closer look at what has been built in the region and how that is stacking against the resource strategy in the 2021 Power Plan. An annual look at resource changes since the 2021 Power Plan revealed that approximately 3,200 MW of renewables have been built in the region and that puts the Council nearly at the 2027 goal the Plan has set. A deeper look at coal retirement was presented, highlighting delays in announced timelines, and announced conversions from coal to natural gas conversions. D'Souza provided the Western Electricity Coordinating Council (WECC)-Wide generating resources update compared to the WECC buildout forecast from the 2021 Plan. The WECC has added 42,342 MW of new resources, most being solar and battery. The retirements across the WECC totaling 4,179 MW, most being California natural gas.

Presentation materials are at: https://www.nwcouncil.org/fs/18611/2024_02_3.pdf.

4. Council Business

Approval of January 2023 Council Meeting Summary

Member Golden moved that the Council approve for signature of the Vice Chair the summary of the January 2023 Council Meeting, via webinar as presented by staff.

Member Schriever seconded.

No discussion.

Voice vote – all in favor, none opposed.

Motion was approved.

The approved summary of the January 2023 Council meeting and other materials from that meeting are at: https://www.nwcouncil.org/fs/18601/2024_02_4minutes.pdf.

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Member Golden moved that the Council authorize staff to extend the contract with Bluestone Strategies for government affairs support for the rest of FY 2024, in an amount not to exceed \$90,000, as presented by staff.

Member Purce seconded.
No discussion.
Voice vote – all in favor, none opposed.
Motion was approved.

Materials are at: https://www.nwcouncil.org/fs/18612/2024_02_4bluestone.pdf.

Public Comments

Bruce Jim, Chair of the Fish and Wildlife Committee of the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon, submitted a handwritten comment that was read into the record. Jim expressed continued concerns about the status of salmon and steelhead in the Columbia River. A scanned copy of the handwritten comments can be found at <https://nwcouncil.box.com/s/upslnfl2o32sa87ug9ics34n9spnsu0y>.

Chair Allen adjourned the meeting at 12:06 p.m. Pacific time.