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March 6, 2018

MEMORANDUM

TO: Fish and Wildlife Committee Members

FROM: Tony Grover

SUBJECT: Six High Priority Fish and Wildlife Goals for 2018

Summary: Council staff track and help implement a wide range of activities identified in the Council's 2014 Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program. Staff have identified six of these activities as priorities for 2018. These activities have regional policy implications and will influence the amended 2019 Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program.

Relevance: Core to implementing the Council's Fish and Wildlife Program.

Background: The six identified priority goals each have a long and complex history that appear to reaching major milestones in calendar year 2018. The attached memo summarizes the certainty of the priority occurring in 2018 and the likely workload, referred to as level of intensity, for staff and Council members. The six are:

1. Initiate the process to amend the 2014 Fish and Wildlife Program.
2. Establish a long term operation and maintenance plan for program hatcheries, screens and lands.
3. Conduct project reviews, particularly all program research projects.
4. Complete work on a program tributary habitat monitoring strategy.
5. Finalize a set of quantitative objectives for program several focal species and their habitat.
6. Finalize Phase I investigations of reintroduction of anadromous fish above Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee dams.

Each of these priority goals will generate products and sharpen policy questions for consideration during the upcoming 2019 amendment to the Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Program.

More Info: Attachment: Six High Priority Fish and Wildlife Goals for 2018

Six High Priority Fish and Wildlife Goals for 2018

The Council and staff will be involved in and lead many fish and wildlife processes during the year, far too many to share in a high level look at 2018. Below are six prominent activities from the many we will be engaged in this year. If another priority emerges this list can be updated with that new priority.

1. **Call for recommendations to amend the 2014 Fish and Wildlife Program** as early as April of 2018. Close the recommendation period after 120 days to 180 days. Produce a draft amended Fish and Wildlife Program about 4-5 months after the close of recommendations.

Certainty: Almost certain, because the Council controls the timeline and the production of the draft Program.

Level of intensity: High to very high for both Council members and central and state staff.

2. By the end of 2018 finalize a long term **Operation and Maintenance schedule** for BPA-funded hatcheries, fish screens and lands.

Certainty: Likely for Program hatcheries, because the process requires BPA fish and wildlife management and staff to perform various tasks to bring this to conclusion. Identifying the future O&M costs of fish screens is dependent on the outcome of negotiations to clarify responsibility between BPA and the owner / operators of the fish screens and will probably continue into 2019. Long term O&M needs for lands is dependent on remote sensing and assessment currently being conducted by BPA. A long term O&M Strategic Plan and a Non-routine Maintenance Framework will be completed by the end of this year.

Assure two to three years of funding commitments to implement the O&M activities as envisioned in the schedule through the use of cost savings.

Certainty: Probable to highly likely, because the cost savings funds have been identified and appear to be sufficient for the envisioned O&M needs for the next few years.

Level of intensity: Moderate for staff and low for most Council members. Much of the hatchery work has been completed under member Booth's leadership. The negotiations regarding responsibility for fish screens is a workload for BPA and the owner/operators of the screens. The lands information and assessment is being conducted by Bonneville and is well advanced. The O&M Strategic Plan, including priorities, will be discussed several times with the Committee and the Council this year.

3. **Project reviews**:
 - a. Review fish and wildlife research projects by the end of 2018.
 - b. Map out the process and timeline for remaining sets of project reviews.

- c. Continue Three-Step reviews of hatchery programs and evaluations of projects with conditional funding recommendations

Certainty: Likely to highly likely, because most of the information and scheduling is within the control of Council staff. BPA is probably able to adequately staff the process.

Level of intensity: Varying at times from moderate to very high for some staff and low for Council members.

4. Reach regional agreement on a [tributary habitat monitoring strategy](#) that can be considered for inclusion into the next Fish and Wildlife Program.

Certainty: Highly likely to almost certainly, because Council staff control the scheduling and drafts and also have the involvement, support and interest of fish and wildlife managers, BPA and NOAA.

Level of intensity: Varying at times from moderate to very high for some staff and low for Council members.

5. [Finalize a set of quantitative objectives](#) for several focal species and their habitat. Consider these objectives, and the previously identified natural origin salmon and steelhead objectives, for inclusion into the next fish and wildlife program.

Certainty: Likely to highly likely, because information for existing fish focal species have been compiled, with ongoing fish manager involvement per the 2014 Program. Review of draft objectives for seven species of resident and anadromous fish will be completed by spring, in time for consideration in the upcoming amendment process.

Level of intensity: Varying at times from moderate to very high for some staff and low for Council members.

6. [Finalize the reports and assessments](#) conducted by the tribes and others [for Phase I investigations of reintroduction](#) of anadromous fish above Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee dams. Conduct ISRP review of Phase I results.

Certainty: Highly likely. The UCUT tribes are currently compiling a Phase I report to be submitted to the Council for ISRP, staff, and Council review. This report will include work that Council staff completed in 2016 reviewing fish passage technologies.

Level of intensity: The bulk of the work by Council staff was completed in 2016 and 2017; however, staff continues to stay informed of new developments and aid in regional efforts. Once the Phase I report is submitted to the Council, the ISRP and staff will need to devote time to science review and staff recommendations.