

Independent Scientific Advisory Board

for the Northwest Power and Conservation Council, Columbia River Basin Indian Tribes, and NOAA Fisheries

and

Independent Scientific Review Panel

for the Northwest Power and Conservation Council; 851 SW 6th Avenue, Suite 1100; Portland, Oregon 97204

At the Northwest Power and Conservation Council's February 18th meeting, Independent Scientific Review Panel members Dr. Nancy Huntly and Dr. Richard N. Williams, chair, will present the key finding from the recent joint ISAB and ISRP review of the Action Agencies and NOAA Fisheries' draft *Research, Monitoring & Evaluation Plan for the NOAA-Fisheries 2000 Federal Columbia River Power System Biological Opinion* (RME Plan). This ISAB and ISRP review was requested by NOAA Fisheries and the Council in September 2003. The draft RME Plan was developed jointly by staff from NOAA Fisheries, the Bonneville Power Administration, the Army Corps of Engineers, and the Bureau of Reclamation, and is designed to help implement the NOAA Fisheries 2000 Federal Columbia River Power System (FCRPS) Biological Opinion (BiOp) and the Federal Caucus Basinwide Salmon Recovery Strategy. The purpose of the RME Plan is to initiate and coordinate a process for evaluating the status of affected stocks of ESA listed anadromous salmonids and the effectiveness of mitigation and conservation actions.

The ISAB and ISRP found the draft RME Plan to be well organized and quite comprehensive overall. It represents an excellent start, and its authors should be commended for their work. It has broad applicability and should be instructive to all practitioners. However, the ISAB and ISRP review identifies some large contextual questions that would likely limit the effectiveness of the Plan, independently of how well it addresses the smaller issues. The ISAB and ISRP review provides general recommendations and detailed comments to improve the draft RME Plan that should be addressed by the RME group as they finalize the plan.

The ISAB and ISRP review is on the Council's website at:

www.nwcouncil.org/library/isab/isab2004-1.htm

The Action Agencies and NOAA Fisheries' draft *Research, Monitoring & Evaluation Plan for the NOAA-Fisheries 2000 Federal Columbia River Power System Biological Opinion* (RME Plan) is available online at: www.nwr.noaa.gov/1hydroweb/fedrec.htm.