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August 30, 2004

**To:** Council Members

**From:** Peter Paquet, Manager, Wildlife & Resident Fish

**Subject:** Discussion of Potential Process for Fish Habitat Acquisition Projects

At the August Fish and Wildlife Committee meeting Council and Bonneville staff briefed the members on an approach to habitat acquisition patterned after the Columbia Basin Water Transactions Program, which has been used successfully by Bonneville to acquire water for the benefit of fish. The Water Transactions Program is implemented through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, which evaluates and prioritizes proposals based on criteria developed in a regional process and it was suggested that they would play a similar role for habitat projects. Qualified proposals become eligible for funding by Bonneville. A similar process could be implemented to acquire riparian habitat for fish and wildlife mitigation efforts and would be consistent with the Council's 2000 Fish and Wildlife Program which calls for a process and funds to address both water and habitat acquisitions.

As per Council direction, staff has continued to discuss the above concept with Bonneville staff and we still believe it would be possible to put such a process in place so that it could be implemented as a pilot project during the next budget cycle. At the September 7<sup>th</sup> Fish and Wildlife Committee meeting Bonneville and Council staff will brief the Fish and Wildlife Committee on the course of action for initiating this type of habitat acquisition process including: possible geographic scope of pilot project, habitat acquisition v. water issues, schedule, funding and potential partnerships.