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February 8, 2005

DECISION MEMORANDUM

TO: Council Members

FROM: John Ogan and Lynn Palensky

SUBJECT: Decision whether to adopt the second set of subbasin plan recommendations as amendments to the Council's Fish and Wildlife Program

ACTION RECOMMENDED

In December of 2004, the Council voted to release for public review and comment a second set of 29 subbasin plan recommendations as draft amendments to the Council's fish and wildlife program. Staff has reviewed the public comment on these draft amendments submitted to the Council and further reviewed the proposed subbasin plans in the light of these comments, and has the following recommendations:

(1) The staff recommends that the Council adopt as amendments to the Council's Fish and Wildlife Program the management plan portions of the subbasin plans for the following 27 subbasins:

Boise/Payette/Weiser	Kalama	Upper & Lower Mid-Snake
Burnt/Powder	Klickitat	Walla Walla
Clearwater	Lewis	Washougal
Cowlitz	Little White Salmon	Wenatchee
Deschutes	Lower Columbia/Estuary	Wind
Elochoman	Lower Mid Columbia Mainstem	Yakima
Entiat	Methow (<i>delay</i>)	
Grays	Okanogan (<i>delay</i>)	
Imnaha	Snake Hells Canyon	

Each of the 27 subbasin plans proposed for adoption have been revised to some extent since they were submitted to the Council as recommendations for program amendments in May 2004. The revisions addressed specific areas where the staff believed additional work was required in order to find that the plans meet the adoptability standards based on the Act and 2000 Program. Each recommended subbasin plan also includes a technical assessment and an inventory that underlies and supports the management plan. The staff recommends that the technical assessments and inventories not be adopted formally into the program, but instead be included in appendices to the program.

(2) The staff recommends that the Council delay adopting the subbasin plans for the Methow and Okanogan subbasins until the March Council meeting. The staff, Washington State subbasin planning coordinator and key subbasin planning entities are currently working together on refinements to the prioritization sections of those plans, and need additional time to finish this last bit of work.

Background

The Council's 2000 Fish and Wildlife Program amendments called for a complete restructuring of the fish and wildlife program through a framework of vision, objectives and strategies at different geographic scales (basinwide, ecological province, subbasin), tied together with a consistent scientific foundation. In the 2000 Program, the Council also adopted basinwide provisions, and described how it would add more specific objectives and measures at the subbasin and province levels and committed to future amendment processes to develop program provisions at those levels.

Although the 2000 Program suggested that the province scale provisions would be developed next, the Council deferred an amendment process for province level measures in light of advice that province goals and objectives would be difficult to develop without first obtaining a better understanding of the technical assessments and corresponding objectives at the subbasin level.

On August 12, 2002, pursuant to Section 4(h) of the Northwest Power Act, the Council broadly distributed a request for recommendations for amendments to the program at the subbasin level. The Council notified in writing the relevant fish and wildlife agencies and tribes and others that the Council sought recommendations for subbasin plans or subbasin plan elements as described in the 2000 Program. At the same time, the Council worked with a broad range of interests in the region and developed a non-binding Technical Guide for Subbasin Planners to help ensure that plans had a consistent format and content.

The Council worked with Bonneville to secure funding support for planning groups. This is the first time that funding has been made available to the public to help develop proposed fish and wildlife program amendments. \$15.2 million was made available by Bonneville to help planning groups develop subbasin plan recommendations that could be considered for amendments to the fish and wildlife program.

On May 28, 2004, the Council received recommendations for 59 subbasin plans from the various subbasin planning entities. The Council made those recommendations available for public review and comment. The public comment period on the recommendations ended on August 12, 2004. The Council received an extensive set of comments, including a report from a team of

independent scientists organized by the Council. During this comment period the Council staff also conducted its own review of the plans, for consistency with the standards in the Northwest Power Act for program amendments and with the provisions in the 2000 Program.

Following the close of public comment on the recommendations, the Council staff and then the Council considered the plans and public comment against a consistent set of standards derived from the Power Act and 2000 Program, with a tentative proposal for the treatment of each recommended subbasin plan as a potential fish and wildlife program amendment. As one result of this review, the Council provisionally divided the subbasin plan recommendations into three categories or tracks, with a different schedule for considering draft and then final program amendments for each category or track.

Track 1 Plans: For the group of plans that met the adoptability standards as submitted (“green”/track 1), the Council staff prepared them to be adopted as draft program amendments. On October, 13, 2004, the Council released for public review and comment this first set of 29 subbasin plan recommendations as draft amendments to the Council’s Fish and Wildlife Program. The Council adopted 23 of those subbasin plans as final amendments to the program at its December 2004 meeting.

Track 2 Plans: The staff identified a second set of plans that required additional work before they could be adopted and released as draft amendments to the program. ***This second set of plans (“blue” or track 2) is before the Council here, proposed to be adopted as amendments to the fish and wildlife program.*** These plans were modified after they were submitted on May 28, 2004 to meet adoptability standards. Statements of work and contracts for specific revisions and additions were developed and contracts were let in September 2004. By late November, the subbasin planners submitted all of the revisions requested. The staff and state coordinators met and systematically reviewed this material to ensure that it addressed the previously noted deficiencies in the plans. The staff determined that, overall, the revisions were on point and high quality and when added to the plans, the adoptability standards were met.

The Council released this second set of revised plans as draft fish and wildlife program amendments at its December 2004 meeting and released them for public comment. This second set of subbasin plans also includes the six Lower Columbia plans that were shifted from the green to the blue adoption schedule because of the timing of the final product delivered to the Council in December 2004. We received written comments on the draft program amendments, and held public hearings in all four states of the Columbia basin. The comment period on these draft amendments ended January 31, 2005. The staff and then the Council reviewed the public comments on the draft amendments, together with the draft amendments, the original recommendations, and the comments on the recommendations.

The Council did not receive extensive comments on these draft program amendments, and the comments the Council did receive were largely favorable to the proposed amendments and urged Council adoption, with few or no changes. The staff recommends that the Council adopt 27 of these proposed subbasin plans as amendments to its fish and wildlife program (we are proposing a month delay in adopting the Methow and Okanogan to allow us to work through some final adjustments with planning parties). What follows is a separate page on each recommended subbasin plan, briefly summarizing the public comment on each plan and addressing any plan-specific issues raised in the comments.

Subbasin: Boise, Payette and Weiser

Description of subbasin plan: The Boise Payette and Weiser (BPW) subbasin plans were under one cover for all three subbasins. The Project team for this plan was composed of staff from Ecovista, Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG), and the Idaho Council on Industry and the Environment (ICIE) and was tasked with pulling the parts of the plan together under a single cover under the guidance of larger planning and technical teams. The *Boise, Payette, and Weiser Subbasin Plan package* was submitted to the Council by the Shoshone-Paiute Tribe. The staffs review of the three plans, the subbasin plan supplement, and related administrative record demonstrates that both its substance and public involvement aspects are consistent with the Council's 2000 Program, and was guided by informational materials provided by the Council, such as the Technical Guide for Subbasin Planners.

The vision for the BPW subbasins is healthy, productive ecosystems with diverse aquatic and terrestrial species that will support sustainable resource-based industries that provide goods and services and other activities for a growing human population. Anadromous fish have been extirpated and therefore the plan focuses on the management of resident fish and wildlife. The focal species include bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*), redband trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*); and kokanee (*Oncorhynchus nerka*). Sixteen terrestrial focal species were selected primarily because they were either species at risk and/or could be used as indicators for habitat health.

Summary of public comment on the subbasin plan as a draft program amendment:

US Bureau of Reclamation

- Suggests technical and/or editorial changes to the assessment, management plan and supplement

Pat Barclay - Idaho Council on Industry and the Environment

- Concerns that planners were not given enough time to review plan and provide meaningful input
- References to timber harvest and grazing were particularly negative
- The document has typos, outdated data and misinterpreted data

Staff recommendation: Adopt subbasin plans recommended to the Council in May 2004 incorporating the revisions dated November 26, 2004. The plans along with the revisions were released for public review as a draft program amendment in December 2004.

Subbasin: Burnt

Description of subbasin plan: The Baker County Association of Conservation Districts, and organization comprised of the various Soil and Water Conservation Districts in Baker County, led the planning team. The team also comprised members from the US Fish and Wildlife Service, ODFW and the Bureau of Land Management. The staff's review of the Burnt plan and related administrative record demonstrates that both its substance and public involvement aspects are consistent with the Council's 2000 Program, and was guided by informational materials provided by the Council, such as the Technical Guide for Subbasin Planners.

The Burnt and Powder River plans resemble one another with the exception that the Burnt has no known bull trout populations. Thus, bull trout is not a focal species in the Burnt Plan. Redband trout comprise the Burnt's focal aquatic species, while focal terrestrial species include sage grouse, ruffed grouse, American marten, American beaver, quaking aspen and curleaf mountain mahogany. The terrestrial species section of the May 2004 plan has significant detail on all focal and many non-focal species and habitat types.

The November response provided additional detail on the key limiting factors for redband trout, including the effect of fine sediment on spawning and incubation habitat, the impact of water quantity and quality on summer rearing and winter rearing, and physical obstructions from passage barriers for migration. The response identifies low flow as the primary factor for depressed populations of redband and would prioritize that factor in management actions, though the planners would like to deal holistically with the problems confronting focal species.

Summary of public comment on the subbasin plan as a draft program amendment:

US Bureau of Reclamation

- Suggests one editorial change.

Staff recommendation: Adopt subbasin plan recommended to the Council in May 2004 incorporating the revision dated November 26, 2004. The plan along with the revisions was released for public review as a draft program amendment in December 2004.

Subbasin: Clearwater

Description of subbasin plan:

The Nez Perce Tribe, working with and through the Clearwater Policy Advisory Committee led the development of the Clearwater Plan. The planning process and structure built upon the work done as part of the Focus Watershed program that involved the NPT and Idaho Soil Conservation Commission. The Clearwater Planners organized a technical committee to assist with the planning efforts. Limiting factors, those physical or biological conditions or processes, or effects of the same that impede the ability of species of management significance from expressing a more full realization of their historic productivity are set out in the plan. Potential Management Units are a key feature of the Clearwater Assessment and Management Plan. PMU's "scale-down" the assessment information, especially limiting factors, and set the stage for strategic management response options at a finer geographic scale. PMUs are groups of 6th Field HUCs, contiguous or noncontiguous, intended to characterize areas with similar themes or attributes that will influence restoration and/or recovery planning

To emphasize major differences in planning concerns and implementation response feasibility, after delineation by "primary characteristics", PMUs are stratified further based on ownership of land: within the subbasin: that dominated by private ownership (excluding corporate ownership), mixed ownership (including corporate ownership), or federal ownership. Within the Clearwater subbasin, land use and management strategies and opportunity differ substantially between these ownership areas, and will likely impact future planning strategies within and between them.

The technical subcommittee, to link limiting factors to the PMUs, identified nineteen restoration issues. Restoration issues represent the causative actions for limiting factors (e.g. mining and grazing), or are expressions of causative actions (e.g., high water temperatures, loss of prairie grassland habitats), or represent characteristics reflecting the lack of degradation and need for protection (e.g. wilderness and roadless management), or conditions that reflect degradation of critical characteristics (e.g., loss of riparian/wetlands or loss of ponderosa pine stands). The logic is that by addressing the restoration issues where they are known to exist, limiting factors will be addressed. The plan prioritizes restoration issues against the PMU's in a series of tables organized around land ownership.

The Clearwater Plan augments the PMU tables above by explaining where PMU's are found by "drainage". These drainage summaries identify the PMU types present; identify the limiting factors, existing focal species, restoration issues, and existing projects RME actions. The summaries conclude with a generalized discussion of present and anticipated management approaches. The Clearwater Management Plan includes specific adult return objectives for anadromous species (See Table 3, Clearwater Management Plan, p. 16). These objectives aim to meet mitigation, restoration, harvest and recovery goals. These anadromous species objectives require a combined application of habitat protection and restoration strategies and artificial production strategies, and mitigation of deleterious out-of-subbasin effects. The staff's review of the Clearwater plan and related administrative record demonstrates that both its substance and public involvement aspects are consistent with the Council's 2000 Program.

Summary of public comment on the subbasin plan as a draft program amendment:

Nez Perce Tribe

- The subbasin plan generally provides for, but doesn't provide *explicit* context for the NPT Resident Fish Substitution Program, conservation enforcement or harvest monitoring, and recommends specific language to address the issues.

Staff recommendation: Adopt subbasin plan recommended to the Council in November 2003 incorporating the revision submitted in December 2004. The plan along with the revisions was released for public review as a draft program amendment in December 2004.

Note in the response to comments or findings that the Council adopts that the implementation activities related to resident fish substitution, harvest monitoring, and conservation enforcement discussed in the NPT letter dated January 12, 2005 are within the general scope of the objectives and strategies in the plan adopted by the Council and may be pursued, if desired, in future project selection processes.

Subbasin: Deschutes

Description of subbasin plan: The first planning group formed in Oregon for the Council's subbasin planning process, the Deschutes Coordinating Group (DCG) encompasses a large and varied contingent of interests in the Deschutes Basin. The Deschutes Resources Conservancy, Wy'East RC&D, ODFW, Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs, the City of Bend, Oregon Water Resources Department, US Fish and Wildlife Service, all Deschutes Watershed Councils, and the Deschutes Land Trust were just some of the numerous planning participants. The initial planning meeting had over 100 attendees. The staff's review of the Deschutes plan and related administrative record demonstrates that both its substance and public involvement aspects are consistent with the Council's 2000 Program, and was guided by informational materials provided by the Council, such as the Technical Guide for Subbasin Planners.

The second largest subbasin in Oregon (only the Willamette is larger), the Deschutes aquatic focal species consisted of chinook salmon, steelhead/redband trout, bull trout, sockeye and lamprey. Terrestrial focal species included American beaver, Columbia spotter frog, mule deer, golden eagle, Greater sage grouse, sharp-tailed grouse and white-headed woodpecker. The May 2004 plan and November 22, 2004 response to the Council's request for additional planning identified several key limiting factors including connectivity between habitats, reduced population distribution, loss of upland stability, and loss of riparian function.

The May 2004 plan identified limiting factors in each major planning unit and identified population response through EDT analysis for anadromous stocks and QHA analysis for resident aquatic species. The November response identified numeric biological objectives for spring and fall chinook and steelhead, including a scenario with passage re-established at Pelton Dam. The response from the DCG refines the project prioritization criteria at both a coarse and subbasin scale to aid in project selection throughout the various priority planning units.

Summary of public comment on the subbasin plan as a draft program amendment:

US Bureau of Reclamation

- Offers minor technical corrections to the plan.

Staff recommendation: Adopt subbasin plan recommended to the Council in May 2004 incorporating the revisions dated November 26, 2004. The plan along with the revisions was released for public review as a draft program amendment in December 2004.

Subbasin: Entiat

Description of subbasin plan:

The Yakama Nation and Chelan County prepared the Entiat subbasin plan. The Entiat subbasin plan was developed in coordination with five other subbasin plans in the Upper Columbia region under the oversight of the Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board. The staffs review of the Entiat plan, the subbasin plan supplement, and related administrative record demonstrates that both its substance and public involvement aspects are consistent with the Council's 2000 Program, and was guided by informational materials provided by the Council, such as the Technical Guide for Subbasin Planners.

This plan was developed simultaneously and in coordination with an ESA recovery plan for the subbasin. The plan was developed in coordination and consultation with WDFW, NOAA Fisheries, USFWS, and other state and local governmental entities.

The vision for the subbasin includes establishing self-sustaining and harvestable populations of indigenous fish and wildlife while enhancing the existing customs, cultures, and economies within the basin. Focal fish species in the Entiat are Spring Chinook, Late Run Chinook, Coho, Steelhead, Bull Trout, West Slope Cutthroat, and Pacific Lamprey. Wildlife planners emphasized an ecosystem approach through use of focal habitat types while including components of single-species, guild, or indicator species assemblages. Wildlife focal species in the Entiat are: White Headed Woodpecker, Flammulated Owl, Gray Flycatchers, Mule Deer, Brewer's Sparrow, Sharp Tailed Grouse, Grasshopper Sparrow, Red Eyed Vireo, American Beaver, and Yellow Breasted Chat.

Summary of public comment on the subbasin plan as a draft program amendment

Chelan County Conservation District on behalf of the Entiat Watershed Planning Unit

- Recommendation to adopt the plan in to the program
- Even though there are some deficiencies in the plan the document provides a good representation of the existing conditions and has provided reasonable conclusions in the key findings and management plan
- The plan incorporates by reference the WRIA 46 management plan for the Entiat
- They view the subbasin plan as a living document that is intended to change over time and thus look forward to opportunities to periodically update the subbasin plan

Staff recommendation: Adopt subbasin plan recommended to the Council in May 2004 incorporating the revisions dated November 26, 2004. The plan along with the revisions was released for public review as a draft program amendment in December 2004.

Subbasin: Imnaha

Description of subbasin plan: The Nez Perce Tribe led the planning in the Imnaha, with the Wallowa County Natural Resources Advisory Committee forming the planning team. The Committee includes the Tribe, the County and local landowners, along with ODFW and various federal land managers.

The extensive Imnaha submission in May 2004 included fall chinook, spring chinook, summer steelhead, bull trout, and lamprey as focal aquatic species and a substantial list of terrestrial species including flammulated owl, olive-sided flycatcher, bighorn sheep, Rocky Mountain goat, and bald eagle. The May plan identified out-of-basin effects as a primary limiting factor to the anadromous focal species. The November 22, 2004 response indicates that in-basin habitat is in good condition relative to the other subbasins, with conditions generally improving. The response tiers in-basin limiting factors, with excessive summer temperatures, low flow problems, excessive amounts of fine sediment. The response identifies Big Sheep Creek as the primary habitat-based limiting area of the Imnaha subbasin.

The plan and response state that out-of-basin factors continue to limit the potential for the Imnaha and stresses that until those out-of-basin factors get addressed, and addressing them is a priority of the plan, artificial production will remain a key strategy to attempt to mitigate for the out-of-basin effects and meeting tribal treaty rights.

Summary of public comment on the subbasin plan as a draft program amendment:

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

- Many comments submitted by ODFW were not incorporated into the amendment
- Plan does not recognize many on going monitoring and evaluation or habitat restoration efforts in the subbasin
- Some problems with focal species have not been fully described
- Some habitat factors have been overstated
- Feels the plan not provide an adequate basis for setting all future priorities

Staff recommendation: Adopt subbasin plan recommended to the Council in May 2004 incorporating the revisions dated November 26, 2004. The plan along with the revisions was released for public review as a draft program amendment in December 2004.

Subbasin: Klickitat

Description of subbasin plan:

The Yakama Nation prepared the Klickitat subbasin plan, with assistance from the WDFW and opportunity for input from Klickitat County. The staffs review of the Klickitat plan, the subbasin plan supplement, and related administrative record demonstrates that both its substance and public involvement aspects are consistent with the Council's 2000 Program, and was guided by informational materials provided by the Council, such as the Technical Guide for Subbasin Planners.

The vision for the subbasin includes rebuilding anadromous populations of salmon and steelhead to healthy and harvestable levels through natural returns and artificial production. Artificial production and supplementation efforts in the Klickitat Subbasin are described in the Yakama Klickitat Fisheries Master Plan and focus on Coho, fall Chinook, spring Chinook, and steelhead. The overall goals of the programs, objectives and strategies are outlined below by species. The programs were developed in consideration of general habitat goals for natural production and within a multi-species framework. Focal fish species include Spring Chinook, Steelhead, Bull Trout, and Pacific Lamprey. Wildlife planners emphasized an ecosystem approach through use of focal habitat types while including components of single-species, guild, or indicator species assemblages. Wildlife focal species include: Yellow Warbler, American Beaver, Rocky Mountain Mule deer, Columbia and Black Tailed deer, Grasshopper Sparrow, Western Gray Squirrel, Flammulated Owl, White Headed Woodpecker, Greater Sandhill Crane, and Oregon Spotted Frog.

Summary of public comment on the subbasin plan as a draft program amendment

Klickitat County Planning Department

- Klickitat County does not support the subbasin plan.
- Plan was produced without adequate participation by Klickitat County.
- None of the comments submitted by Klickitat County have been addressed.
- Council should return the plan to the 'lead entities' and provide adequate time to organize a planning process to develop a plan that is consistent with the vision statement.

Daniel H. Lichtenwald

- Include notation that many shore bird species have been observed using wetlands during their migrations through the subbasin.

Staff recommendation: Adopt subbasin plan recommended to the Council in May 2004 incorporating the revisions dated November 26, 2004. The plan along with the revisions was released for public review as a draft program amendment in December 2004.

In response to comments or in findings adopted by the Council note that: (1) the fish and wildlife managers with jurisdiction in the subbasin support this program amendment and that the Act directs the Council to give significant weight to the recommendations of those parties; (2) that the County was provided opportunity and resources to be involved in the development of this plan, and that significant efforts were made by the Council and state coordinator to address the County's concerns which focus more on process than on actual substance or provisions of the plan itself, and; (3) as the plan is updated in the future the Council will seek to involve the County and reconcile the its concerns with this version of the plan.

Subbasin: Lower Middle Mainstem Columbia

Description of subbasin plan:

The Yakama Nation prepared the Lower Middle Mainstem (LMM) subbasin plan, with assistance from the WDFW, opportunity for input from Klickitat County and, in the response period, ODFW added Oregon and mainstem Columbia information. The staff's review of the Lower Middle Mainstem plan and related administrative record demonstrates that both its substance and public involvement aspects are consistent with the Council's 2000 Program, and was guided by informational materials provided by the Council, such as the Technical Guide for Subbasin Planners.

The planning area of the subbasin extends upstream from The Dalles Dam only to the Walla Walla River. The Hanford Reach is not within current planning boundaries, but its healthy and naturally spawning fall Chinook are addressed because of their importance to the subbasin and the region. Also, Willow Creek and Juniper Canyon do not appear in this Plan, as they were included in the Umatilla Subbasin Plan.

The vision for the subbasin includes rebuilding anadromous populations of salmon and steelhead to healthy and harvestable levels, particularly in Rock Creek and other small tributary streams. Focal fish species in the LMM are Steelhead/rainbow, Coho, fall Chinook, and White Sturgeon. Wildlife planners emphasized an ecosystem approach through use of focal habitat types while including components of single-species, guild, or indicator species assemblages. Wildlife focal species in the LMM are: Yellow Warbler, Lewis's that, American Beaver, Mule/Black Tailed deer, Grasshopper Sparrow, Brewer's Sparrow, White Headed Woodpecker, and Western Gray Squirrel.

Summary of public comment on the subbasin plan as a draft program amendment

Klickitat County Planning Department

- Inadequate time for review
- Klickitat County disagrees with numerous findings, objectives, and strategies found in the subbasin plan such as the proposal to enact a moratorium on mainstem water withdrawals [ODFW]
- Council should return the plan to the 'lead entities' with adequate time to organize a satisfactory planning process

Daniel H. Lichtenwald

- Consider including discussion of three industrial wind energy projects that are in the permitting/appeal stage: Bighorn, White Creek and Windricity Projects.
- Include notation that many shore bird species have been observed using wetlands during their migrations through the subbasin.

Staff recommendation: Adopt subbasin plan recommended to the Council in May 2004 incorporating the revisions dated November 26, 2004. The plan along with the revisions was released for public review as a draft program amendment in December 2004.

In response to comments or in findings adopted by the Council note that: (1) the fish and wildlife managers with jurisdiction in the subbasin support this program amendment and that the Act directs the Council to give significant weight to the recommendations of those parties; (2) that

the County was provided opportunity to be involved in the development of this plan, and that significant efforts were made by the Council and state coordinator to address the County's concerns which focus more on process than on actual substance or provisions of the plan itself, and; (3) as the plan is updated in the future the Council will seek to involve the County and reconcile the its concerns with this version of the plan.

Subbasins: Lower-Mid and Upper-Middle Snake

Description of subbasin plan: The Shoshone-Paiute Tribes (SPT) was the lead entity for the development of these plans. SPT hired two contractors to help organize the planning teams and to help write plan documents: Ecovista and the Idaho Council on Industry and the Environment (ICIE). The Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) helped develop the assessment and inventory for the subbasins. The staff's review of the Lower Middle Mainstem plan and related administrative record demonstrates that both its substance and public involvement aspects are consistent with the Council's 2000 Program, and was guided by informational materials provided by the Council, such as the Technical Guide for Subbasin Planners.

The Middle Snake subbasins encompass the Snake River, and the lands that drain into it, from Shoshone Falls to Hells Canyon Dam. Nearly half of the area is owned by BLM. The vision for the Middle Snake subbasins is a healthy ecosystem with productive and diverse aquatic and terrestrial species, with emphasis on native species, which will support sustainable resource-based activities for a growing human population. Since anadromous fish have been extirpated in the subbasins, the plans focus on restoring and maintaining viable populations of resident fish (red band trout, bull trout, whitefish, sturgeon, sculpin) freshwater mollusks and wildlife. The plan identifies six implementation priorities to address factors limiting these species of affecting their habitat.

Summary of public comment on the subbasin plan as a draft program amendment:

Owyhee Cattlemen's Association;

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation;

Jerry Hoagland;

- All are concerned with the characterization of livestock grazing in the subbasin assessment and in the supplement. The language implies that all grazing causes habitat degradation and urges the plan to distinguish between improper grazing and properly managed grazing of livestock.

Staff recommendation: Adopt subbasin plans recommended to the Council in May 2004 incorporating the revisions dated November 26, 2004. The plan along with the revisions was released for public review as a draft program amendment in December 2004. Staff recommendation also includes language changes proposed by commentors (insertion of the word "improper" with reference to grazing), where appropriate in the supplement, that responds to the concern of the commentors listed above. A separate plan for the Brownlee Reservoir was submitted to the Council on May 28th from the same group that completed the Burnt and Powder subbasin plans. This plan largely deals with wildlife species on a few streams that feed into the Brownlee Reservoir. That plan is included as an aspect of the other plans.

Subbasin: Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board Plans on the Washington side of the Lower Columbia, Gorge and Estuary provinces (Cowlitz, Elochoman, Grays, Kalama, Lewis, Little White Salmon, Washougal, Wind)

Description of subbasin plan:

The Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board (LCFRB) prepared subbasin plans for the Cowlitz, Elochoman, Grays, Kalama, Lewis, Little White Salmon, Washougal, and Wind subbasins. The LCFRB participated in development of the Lower Columbia, Estuary and Columbia Gorge subbasins. The staff's review of the LCFRB developed plans and related administrative record demonstrates that both their substance and public involvement aspects are consistent with the Council's 2000 Program, and was guided by informational materials provided by the Council, such as the Technical Guide for Subbasin Planners.

The planning area of these subbasins extends upstream from the mouth of the Columbia River to the Columbia Gorge. These plans were developed simultaneously and in coordination with watershed plans for many of the subbasins and an integrated ESA recovery plan for the Washington side of the River. All of these plans were developed in coordination and consultation with tribes, WDFW, ODFW, the Estuary Partnership, NOAA Fisheries, USFWS, the USACOE, EPA and other state and local governmental entities.

The vision for the subbasins includes rebuilding anadromous populations of salmon and steelhead to healthy and harvestable levels. A wide range of focal fish species are addressed in the plans including: Fall Chinook, Chum, Spring Chinook, Winter Steelhead, Summer Steelhead, Coho, Pacific Lamprey, green Sturgeon, White Sturgeon, Northern Pike Minnow, Shad, Walleye, Smallmouth Bass, Eulachon, and Channel Catfish. Wildlife focal species in the subbasins are: Bald eagle, Sandhill Crane, dusky Canada Goose, Columbia White Tailed deer, Seals, Sea Lions, Western Pond Turtle, Caspian Tern, Osprey, Yellow Warbler, Red Eyed Vireo, and River Otter.

Summary of public comment on the subbasin plan as a draft program amendment

No comments received.

Staff recommendation: Adopt subbasin plans recommended to the Council in May 2004 incorporating the revision dated November 26, 2004. The plans along with the revisions were released for public review as draft program amendments in December 2004.

Subbasin: Lower Columbia River and Columbia Estuary

Description of subbasin plan: Developed through a bi-state effort of Washington and Oregon, the Lower Columbia River and Columbia Estuary Plan encompasses two subbasins in the Council's program. The plan's geographic scope includes the tidally influenced areas within the Columbia River Basin, the Columbia River Plume (146 river miles) and incorporates some small tributaries on the Oregon portion of the Estuary subbasin. The Lower Columbia River Estuary Partnership, a bi-state organization, led the planning effort with assistance from Washington's Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board. The staff's review of the Lower Columbia and Estuary plans and related administrative record demonstrates that both substance and public involvement aspects are consistent with the Council's 2000 Program, and was guided by informational materials provided by the Council, such as the Technical Guide for Subbasin Planners.

The plans include numerous focal species, both ESA significant (chum, chinook, steelhead, bald eagle) and non-ESA (green and white sturgeon) along with other significant species such as river otter, American shad, and Caspian tern. The response from the Partnership to the Council's request for additional work, incorporated as part of the plan, prioritized five action-oriented strategies to address limiting factors in the planning area. Those five strategies in order of priority include: 1) reduce the effects of the Columbia River hydrosystem, 2) protect and restore habitat, 3) address toxic contaminants, 4) slow introductions of non-native species, 5) reduce predation on focal species. The framework for prioritizing projects builds upon the prioritized strategies, but recognizes that a key gap in the ability to prioritize actions in this part of the Columbia Basin involves the lack of an EDT-like model for the Estuary and Mainstem Lower Columbia. Creation of that type of model would potentially constitute a prioritized action.

Summary of public comment on the subbasin plan as a draft program amendment:

No comments received.

Staff recommendation: Adopt subbasin plans recommended to the Council in May 2004 incorporating the revisions dated November 26, 2004. The plans along with the revisions were released for public review as a draft program amendment in December 2004.

Subbasin: Methow

Description of subbasin plan: Not presented at this time – see staff recommendation below.

Staff recommendation: Delay adopting the subbasin plan recommended to the Council in May 2004 and the November 26, 2004 revisions. The delay is needed to allow for additional review and development of a prioritization framework to be included in the plan. The Washington state subbasin plan coordinator and Council staff are working with key planners on that prioritization framework and expect to be able to reach agreement in the relatively near future

Subbasin: Okanogan

Description of subbasin plan: Not presented at this time – see staff recommendation below.

Staff recommendation: Delay adopting the subbasin plan recommended to the Council in May 2004 and the November 26, 2004 revisions. The delay is needed to allow for additional review and development of a prioritization framework to be included in the plan. The Washington state subbasin plan coordinator and Council staff are working with key planners on that prioritization framework and expect to be able to reach agreement in the relatively near future.

Subbasin: Powder

Description of subbasin plan: The Baker County Association of Conservation Districts, and organization comprised of the various Soil and Water Conservation Districts in Baker County, led the planning team. The team also comprised members from the US Fish and Wildlife Service, ODFW and the Bureau of Land Management. The staff's review of the Powder plan and related administrative record demonstrates that both its substance and public involvement aspects are consistent with the Council's 2000 Program, and was guided by informational materials provided by the Council, such as the Technical Guide for Subbasin Planners.

The Powder River plan resembles the Burnt, with the inclusion of bull trout as a focal species. Redband trout also comprises the Powder's focal aquatic species, while focal terrestrial species include sage grouse, ruffed grouse, American marten, American beaver, quaking aspen and curleaf mountain mahogany. The terrestrial species section of the May 2004 plan has significant detail on all focal and many non-focal species and habitat types.

The November response provided additional detail on the key limiting factors for redband and bull trout, including the effect of fine sediment (redband) and high water temperatures relating to low flow and loss of riparian cover (bull trout) on spawning and incubation habitat, the impact of water quantity and quality on summer rearing and winter rearing (redband and bull), and physical obstructions from passage barriers for migration (redband and bull). The response identifies low flow as the primary factor for depressed populations of both redband and bull trout and would prioritize that factor in management actions, though the planners would like to deal holistically with the problems confronting all focal species.

Summary of public comment on the subbasin plan as a draft program amendment:

US Bureau of Reclamation

- Suggests three editorial changes.

Staff recommendation: Adopt subbasin plan recommended to the Council in May 2004 incorporating the revision dated November 26, 2004. The plan along with the revisions was released for public review as a draft program amendment in December 2004.

Subbasin: Snake Hells Canyon

Description of subbasin plan: The Nez Perce Tribe (NPT) served as lead entity for subbasin planning for the Snake Hells Canyon. NPT's contractor, Ecovista, organized and facilitated the planning and technical teams. The staff's review of the Snake Hells Canyon plan and related administrative record demonstrates that both its substance and public involvement aspects are consistent with the Council's 2000 Program, and was guided by informational materials provided by the Council, such as the Technical Guide for Subbasin Planners.

This subbasin represents a mainstem reach that spans the borders of three states. It provides upstream and downstream passage for anadromous and resident fish. The habitat in the Snake Hells Canyon provides suitable habitat for about 373 species of terrestrial wildlife. The primary impacts to anadromous fish are out of subbasin effects; to resident fish -- impacts of hatchery fish; and primary impacts to wildlife are loss of habitat. The framework for prioritizing strategies includes sets of priorities for each: aquatic: out of subbasin and in-basin effects; and terrestrial priorities include loss of habitat; land use related factors, and species-specific factors.

Summary of public comment on the subbasin plan as a draft program amendment

No comments received

Staff recommendation: Adopt subbasin plan recommended to the Council in May 2004 incorporating the revisions dated November 26, 2004. The plan along with the revisions was released for public review as a draft program amendment in December 2004.

Subbasin: Walla Walla

Description of subbasin plan: A bi-state effort of Washington and Oregon, Walla Walla County (Washington, for the Walla Walla Watershed Planning Unit) and the Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council (Oregon) led the planning effort in their respective states, with technical support from the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

The plan and its response to the Council's request for additional work incorporated an EDT assessment in the May 2004 submission and eight additional EDT scenarios in the November 26, 2004 response. Those scenarios include flow (2 scenarios), passage (1) and habitat changes (5). The May 2004 plan prioritized geographic areas for necessary habitat work, and the November response provided a prioritization framework for aquatic habitat and species, terrestrial habitat and species and process steps and additional considerations for the prioritization framework. All priority geographic areas include EDT results, the focal species affected, limiting factors and affected life stages, and habitat objectives. The November response also provided additional detail on Oregon information from the May 2004 proposed plan, allowing the Walla Walla Watershed Council to endorse the plan. The staff's review of the Walla Walla subbasin plan and related administrative record demonstrates that both its substance and public involvement aspects are consistent with the Council's 2000 Program, and was guided by informational materials provided by the Council, such as the Technical Guide for Subbasin Planners.

Focal species addressed through the Walla Walla Plan include summer steelhead, bull trout and spring chinook and a variety of terrestrial species including yellow warbler, great blue heron, American Beaver, sharp-tailed grouse and grasshopper sparrow.

Summary of public comment on the subbasin plan as a draft program amendment:

Garden Farms Irrigation District No. 13;
Columbia County Board of Commissioners;
City of Walla Walla, and
County of Walla Walla:

- Each expresses support for adoption of the Walla Walla subbasin plan and Addendum submitted November 26, 2004. Each also recognizes the need for further refinements, scientific understanding and ongoing discussion on for noted areas of disagreement.

Staff recommendation: Adopt subbasin plan recommended to the Council in May 2004 incorporating the revisions dated November 26, 2004. The plan along with the revisions was released for public review as a draft program amendment in December 2004.

Subbasin: Wenatchee

Description of subbasin plan:

The Yakama Nation and Chelan County prepared the Wenatchee subbasin plan. The Wenatchee subbasin plan was developed in coordination with five other subbasin plans in the Upper Columbia region under the oversight of the Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board. The staffs review of the Wenatchee plan, the subbasin plan supplement, and related administrative record demonstrates that both its substance and public involvement aspects are consistent with the Council's 2000 Program, and was guided by informational materials provided by the Council, such as the Technical Guide for Subbasin Planners.

This plan was developed simultaneously and in coordination with an ESA recovery plan for the subbasin. The plan was developed in coordination and consultation with WDFW, NOAA Fisheries, USFWS and other state and local governmental entities.

The vision for the subbasin includes establishing self-sustaining and harvestable populations of indigenous fish and wildlife while enhancing the existing customs, cultures, and economies within the basin. Artificial production and supplementation efforts in the Wenatchee Subbasin are focused on Spring and Summer Chinook, Steelhead, Coho and Sockeye. A great deal of effort is going into the reintroduction of Coho into the subbasin. Focal fish species in the Wenatchee are Spring Chinook, Lake run Chinook, Sockeye, Coho, Steelhead, Bull trout, Cutthroat Trout, Pacific Lamprey. Wildlife planners emphasized an ecosystem approach through use of focal habitat types while including components of single-species, guild, or indicator species assemblages. Wildlife focal species in the Yakima are: White Headed Woodpecker, Pygmy Nuthatch, Flammulated Owl, Gray Flycatchers, Mule Deer, Brewer's Sparrow, Sure Killed Grouse, Grasshopper Sparrow, Red Eyed Vireo, American Beaver, Yellow Breasted Chat.

Summary of public comment on the subbasin plan as a draft program amendment

No comments received.

Staff recommendation: Adopt subbasin plan recommended to the Council in May 2004 incorporating the revisions dated November 26, 2004. The plan along with the revisions was released for public review as a draft program amendment in December 2004.

Subbasin: Yakima

Description of subbasin plan:

The Yakama Subbasin Fish and Wildlife Planning Board prepared the Yakima subbasin plan. The staffs review of the Klickitat plan, the subbasin plan supplement, and related administrative record demonstrates that both its substance and public involvement aspects are consistent with the Council's 2000 Program, and was guided by informational materials provided by the Council, such as the Technical Guide for Subbasin Planners. This plan was developed simultaneously and in coordination with an ESA recovery plan for the subbasin. The plan was developed in coordination and consultation with Yakima County, Benton County, the Yakama Nation, WDFW, NOAA Fisheries, USFWS, the US Bureau of Reclamation and other state and local governmental entities.

The vision for the subbasin includes establishing self-sustaining and harvestable populations of indigenous fish and wildlife while enhancing the existing customs, cultures, and economies within the basin. Artificial production and supplementation efforts in the Yakima Subbasin are described in the Yakama Klickitat Fisheries Master Plan, included as an appendix to the plan. Using principles of adaptive management, the YKFP is attempting to evaluate all stocks historically present in the subbasin and apply a combination of habitat management and hatchery supplementation or reintroduction, to restore the Yakima Subbasin ecosystem with sustainable and harvestable populations of salmon, steelhead and other at-risk species. Focal fish species include Bull trout, Steelhead/Rainbow Trout, Spring Chinook, Fall Chinook, Coho, Sockeye, and Pacific Lamprey. Wildlife planners emphasized an ecosystem approach through use of focal habitat types while including components of single-species, guild, or indicator species assemblages. Wildlife focal species include: Western Toad, Sandhill Crane, White Headed Woodpecker, Lewis's Woodpecker, Western Gray Squirrel, Mule Deer, Sage Grouse, Brewer's Sparrow, Yellow Warbler, American Beaver, and Mallard.

Summary of public comment on the subbasin plan as a draft program amendment

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Wenatchee Field Office)

- USFWS offered suggested 25 modifications to the plan that from technical and editorial corrections to more substantive language changes. The changes cover a range of issues including bull trout, artificial production, and reintroduction sections of the plan.

Staff recommendation: Adopt subbasin plan recommended to the Council in May 2004 incorporating the revisions dated November 26, 2004. The plan along with the revisions was released for public review as a draft program amendment in December 2004.

In response to comments or in findings adopted by the Council, generally or with regard to this specific plan, note that editorial and/or substantive changes similar to those proposed by USFWS Wenatchee were proposed in a good number of the plans, but well after the planning process ran its course and the plans were submitted to the Council. Note that the Council understands that all plans may be improved in future versions along the lines suggested by commentors, and that not all participants saw everything they proposed included in this version of the plans, but, in this case and many others the issues raised do not call into the question the overall soundness of the plan or its consistency with the requirements of the Act or 2000 Program.

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