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January 10, 2006

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Fish and Wildlife Committee Members

**FROM:** Patty O'Toole, Program Implementation Manager

**SUBJECT:** Update on the Project Selection Process

The FY 2007 - 2009 project solicitation period ended January 10, 2006. At the January meeting, staff will present final solicitation statistics and provide a discussion of the following items.

### 1. Schedule:

- October 20, 2005: Request for proposals
- January 10, 2006: All proposals due
- **January 17 - June 16, 2006: Science review and local and basinwide prioritization**
- June 16, 2006: Preliminary science review report and local provincial priorities to the Council
- July 14, 2006: Responses for prioritized projects in the "fix it loop" are due
- August 31, 2006: Final science review report to the Council
- October 18, 2006: Council recommendations for funding to Bonneville

We have heard concerns from sponsors and Bonneville staff about the timing of the final Council recommendations, which is scheduled to occur in mid-October. The staff worked hard to develop a schedule that completed recommendations earlier, and compressed the time for many of the elements of this solicitation and review process as much as we believed was possible. Still, the mid-October was the earliest we determined that a full review meeting all requirements could be completed.

**2. Contract challenges:** For ongoing projects, which are recommended by the Council for continued funding, this schedule represents a contracting challenge. Generally speaking, Bonneville reports that it takes about 90 days to prepare a final contract, even for ongoing projects. For contracts that are renewed near the beginning of a fiscal year, a funding gap of up to 90 days could be created. The Council staff and Bonneville recognized this challenge some time ago and have been working on some solutions. Some alternatives include contract

termination, creating short-term contracts or contract extensions and staged recommendations. If time allows at the January meeting, we will discuss these options.

**3. Local province review group status:** We will discuss the status of the local province review groups. The members from each state are responsible for organizing and coordinating local groups to review proposals against subbasin plans, and providing the Council with recommendations on priorities. This facet of the process is logistically challenging, and in a few cases, has some participants concerned.

We also need to discuss and clarify the Council's expectations about what needs to be delivered by the local groups, and more fully explain how the Council retains the final responsibility for making funding recommendations even though local groups will provide advice.

**4. Issue memorandum development:** We will explain to the Council and public how we intend to organize and document the issues that emerge in this process, both programmatic and those that relate to particular projects, in a "rolling issue memo." The staff suggests that we return to the convention used in past years where the staff organizes and documents the issues in a rolling issue memorandum that evolves over the course of the process. This tool has been used successfully in the past to notify interested parties on the issues the staff sees developing, and to allow the Council and public to engage and dispose of them as they become ripe for action over the full course of this review and selection process.

**5. Regional monitoring and evaluation:** We will report on the outcome of a coordination workshop scheduled for January 12<sup>th</sup> with Bonneville, CBFWA and other regional entities on integrating monitoring and evaluation requirements through the project selection process.