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June 29, 2006

MEMORANDUM

TO: Council members

FROM: Doug Marker, Director
Fish and Wildlife Division

SUBJECT: Basinwide Proposals Update

As you will recall, the Council established a separate budget allocation for "Basinwide" proposals. These are proposals to do research, monitoring and evaluation, coordination and data management that have broad program and/or basinwide relevance (as opposed to being project, subbasin or single province oriented). The Council dedicated approximately \$32.4 million dollars for each fiscal year to such projects.

As is the case in the provinces, when the proposals were received, the total funding requested for the ongoing and new proposals was far in excess of the available budget. The review of these proposals, and the task of fitting them to the budget allocation has undertaken by and ad hoc group we call the "mainstem/systemwide review team" (MSRT). The MSRT had been facilitated by CBFWA staff and is comprised of Council, Bonneville, fish and wildlife manager, NOAA, USFWS and the Corps staff. The MSRT has rated proposals in the Basinwide category as "core", "high priority", "recommended action" or "do not fund" (in descending order of priority). The MSRT has also divided the proposals into functional groups so that like-kind proposals are evaluated and considered together.

The Council staff believes we are at a critical point for the evaluation of these Basinwide projects and most specifically, fitting the package to the available budget. The projects have been rated and the ISRP report is in hand, yet even with these pieces of information, it is clear that there is more priority work that is deemed scientifically sound than the budget allocation can accommodate. At the time of this writing, both the MSRT and Council staff are working on options to fit this package to the available budget. The staff believes that the MSRT work should continue, provided that it is on track to deliver to the Council staff a proposed suite of projects that fits within the allocation in the very near future.

Even as the MSRT and staff develop options, we want to apprise the Committee and Council of some themes or issues that are emerging that bear upon the prioritization of the Basinwide package of projects. We are not asking for a Council decision on the items below, we simply want to update you on the considerations that staff believes are in play as we and the MSRT strive to develop a budget for the Basinwide work.

Coordination and Data Management Proposals

The MSRT and Council staff would propose that approximately one-third of the available allocation (\$10.7 million/FY) be dedicated to this category of proposals.

- Need to consider as a package and streamline the proposals for CBFWA and other fish and wildlife manager coordination and support.
- Need to establish placeholder for functions historically performed by the Fish Passage Center: There are several proposals and the MSRT table adds all proposals so the budgets are redundant. There may be a recommendation from the fish and wildlife managers forthcoming.
- Need to prioritize data management tasks proposed in a series of projects --select from proposed Streamnet, NHI, PITAGIS tasks. May need to make area of emphasis choices (e.g. should we focus on population status and trend data for Streamnet, existing PIT data in PITAGIS; and deemphasize indicators of watershed conditions even though that will be needed to update subbasin assessments in the future?)
- May have to consolidate and sequence CSMEP, PNAMP tasks.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The MSRT and Council staff would propose that approximately one-third of the available allocation (\$10.7 million/FY) be dedicated to this category of proposals.

- To meet budget limits must we decide if Program funding should be diminished or eliminated for some species in some places?
- Need to decide if the intensively monitored watershed proposal can actually be expanded at this time. This has been presented as critical and ESA required work, and expansion was contemplated, but funding limits make it difficult to pursue as originally and currently proposed.
- May have to categorically reject all proposals that are not ESA required even though they are rated as "high priority."

Research

Again, the MSRT and Council staff would propose that approximately one-third of the available allocation (\$10.7 million/FY) be dedicated to this category of proposals.

- Need to understand if the Corps will fund some of the work proposed
- May need to choose between research emphasis areas, even where both or several areas appear to be critical and aimed at resolving key uncertainties (e.g. ocean/estuary study, fall Chinook study, artificial production study).