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August 31, 2006

MEMORANDUM

TO: Council

FROM: Steve Waste, Manager for Program Analysis and Evaluation

SUBJECT: The Role of the Estuary in Salmonid Survival

This is an informational briefing and no action is required.

The presentation will explain the importance of the estuary to the Columbia River ecosystem, with an emphasis on the role of the estuary in supporting salmonid survival. This briefing does not address the ocean or plume work research since the Council has recently been briefed on these topics. Instead, it focuses on restoration work in the estuary, as that is the element in common with the rest of the program, whereas the ocean research is unique to the estuary.

Many entities are working together on different aspects of restoration of the Columbia River estuary. Consequently, the panel presentation will begin with a brief overview of research, monitoring, and restoration activities in the estuary by Heida Diefenderfer or Ron Thom of Pacific Northwest National Laboratory.

The first panelist will describe what physical and biological features of estuarine habitats are important to the ecology of juvenile salmonids in the Lower River and estuary.

The second panelist will characterize how past and on-going habitat restoration and monitoring work has been implemented to improve these features for juvenile salmonids.

The final panelist will explain why these restoration activities are so important, by reporting on the status of recovery planning efforts in the Lower River and estuary.

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