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November 1, 2006

To: Council Members

From: Doug Marker, Director
Fish and Wildlife Division

Subject: Update on NEPA compliance for fish and wildlife projects

Greg Delwiche, Bonneville's Vice President for Environment, Fish and Wildlife, will brief the Council on Bonneville's approach to use its Fish and Wildlife Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement to meet National Environmental Policy Act requirements for project implementation. Below is a summary from Mr. Delwiche:

In late November, BPA plans to release a tiered Record of Decision off of its 2002 Fish and Wildlife Implementation Plan EIS (FWIP EIS), to provide programmatic NEPA coverage for routine F&W mitigation and management projects that make up a large percentage of the the 2007-09 project funding recommendations. Large scale, complicated, controversial projects (such as artificial production actions) will continue to require independent NEPA analysis. BPA will also reserve the right to determine that a project is outside the scope of the tiered ROD at any time prior to implementation and to require more detailed NEPA analysis and documentation. Projects covered by the tiered ROD will be looked at on an individual basis by BPA environmental staff to ensure all applicable laws and regulations in addition to NEPA are met (ESA, Cultural Resources, etc). Benefits of this new NEPA strategy include: reduction in internal and external environmental workload (therefore reducing project costs and in some cases enabling quicker implementation); focusing of environmental efforts on most complex projects; providing NEPA documentation at the time of the program decision; linking of F&W decisions to established policy based on regional recommendations.

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