

From: Gary Thorgaard
Sent: Monday, July 23, 2007 3:47 PM
To: O'Toole, Patty
Subject: Comments on our FY 07-09 innovative proposal (#200751100) on rainbow trout genetic markers

Dear Ms. O'Toole:

I am providing comments related to the review of our proposal (#200751100) to develop DNA markers for typing inland rainbow / redband trout and detecting potential hybridization with coastal rainbow trout. We appreciated the high ranking and positive comments from the Independent Scientific Review Panel in the innovative proposal competition for BPA funding. I would like to address the concerns raised in the ISRP's review.

The primary concern was the perceived lack of an "on-the-ground" component in the project. We recognize that direct utilization of the tests we propose to develop for identifying possible hybridization should have been stronger in the proposal. This reflected in part our failure to recognize what people consider to be "on-the-ground" and in part the relatively short turn-around time for submitting the innovative proposals. In fact, we do have good linkages to management biologists and have just completed a study in cooperation with Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks to utilize DNA tests which we recently developed on test populations in the Kootenai River system to identify possible hybridization. We have also contacted biologists in Idaho, Washington and Oregon to offer to collaborate in the utilization of DNA markers for identifying hybridization if our project is funded. Thus we feel that, if funded, we can deliver a significant "on-the-ground" component in our research.

A secondary concern were questions about the magnitude of the problem and the likelihood of utilization of the information. The problem of hybridization between inland and coastal rainbow trout does seem to be a major one in the Columbia basin, as evidenced by the numerous funded or proposed BPA projects and specific examples from subbasin plans which were cited in Sections 5 and 6 of our proposal. In addition to remediation (i.e., removal of hybridized populations), the information could be utilized in prioritizing populations for protection and utilization in restoration or enhancement programs. The level of interest in this issue among the various state agencies and tribes strongly suggests that tools that we develop will be utilized.

We can give good value for money spent on our project. Although our previous proposal (#200717500) was not funded, we were still able to carry out a project with support from Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks (MDFWP) and accomplish the objective in #200717500 related to identification of the DNA changes associated with the Ldh and Sod protein types associated with inland rainbow trout. A scientific paper based on this work should be submitted for publication shortly. Project #200751100 which is currently under review includes the original objectives which were not completed in the MDFWP project. I am pointing this out not to indicate that we will get the work done anyway (I don't believe that we will in this case) but to illustrate the motivation and efficiency that we bring to the project.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the review of our proposal.

Gary Thorgaard

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