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August 30, 2007

MEMORANDUM

TO: Fish and Wildlife Committee Members

FROM: Council staff

SUBJECT: Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Report on Abundance

The Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Authority will discuss its report at the September Fish and Wildlife Committee meeting. Attached is a memo from Brian Lipscomb.

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COLUMBIA BASIN FISH AND WILDLIFE AUTHORITY

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Coordinating and promoting effective protection and restoration of fish, wildlife, and their habitat in the Columbia River Basin.

The Authority is comprised of the following tribes and fish and wildlife agencies:

Burns Paiute Tribe

Coeur d'Alene Tribe

Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation

Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation

Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation

Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation

Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation

Idaho Department of Fish and Game

Kootenai Tribe of Idaho

Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks

National Marine Fisheries Service

Nez Perce Tribe

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of Fort Hall

Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of Duck Valley

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Coordinating Agencies

Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission

Upper Columbia United Tribes

Compact of the Upper Snake River Tribes

DATE: August 30, 2007

TO: Tony Grover, Northwest Power and Conservation Council
Fish and Wildlife Division Director

FROM: Brian Lipscomb, *Jane E. Cummins*
Executive Director

SUBJECT: Analysis of November 2006 Status of the Resource Summary Report

In response to your request, my staff has reviewed the data that supported the November 2006 CBFWA Status of the Resource Summary Report and provide the following results. I also suggest a few questions that the Council members may wish to consider in their upcoming FY08-09 data management project funding decisions based on these results.

The Status of the Resources Project (SOTR) was the most recent attempt within the Northwest Power and Conservation Council's Fish and Wildlife Program to comprehensively gather abundance data for focal fish populations in the Columbia River Basin. Following the development of subbasin plans, the Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife (CBFWA) staff identified: 1) focal populations from each subbasin plan, 2) biological objective(s) for each population, 3) current status and trend in abundance or available abundance indicator for each focal population, and compared them with the biological objective(s). The information was presented, by subbasin, in a standardized format. Evaluation of the inaugural effort revealed gaps in the data management framework necessary to support this effort in the future. In most cases where data are missing in the report, the cause is not lack of data but lack of infrastructure to provide regional access to the data in a timely and repeatable manner.

The subbasin plans identified a total of 31 distinct focal fish species within the Columbia River Basin. Data were collected and reported in the SOTR for a total of 281 individual focal populations, or population groupings, within the 58 subbasins where a subbasin plan was developed. Biological objectives were not consistently reported within the subbasin plans. Where objectives were missing, the Subbasin Plan appendices were reviewed for references to biological objectives and other fish and wildlife management plans were reviewed to determine the best available indicators of population targets.

The primary source of data was through internet access to the StreamNet project. For this data, CBFWA staff was able to provide an internet link to the data; however, about half of the data presented in the SOTR report was acquired as a result of CBFWA staff contacting individuals within fish and wildlife management entities. This data was acquired and maintained at CBFWA during the production of the SOTR report. This is not the desired strategy for supporting the SOTR in the future. It is important that a data management structure be developed that provides a list of the priority data needs for the region and helps support individual

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agencies and tribes making their data available via the internet. The intent of the CBFWA is not for the SOTR website to become an additional data warehouse in the Columbia River Basin but rather a web service type application or portal that will provide immediate access to data close to the source of collection via links within the SOTR web pages.

Status and trend data were reported for 51% of the focal populations. Snapshot data (i.e., single year index surveys or presence absence data) were reported for 10% of the populations. Data were not reported for approximately 39% of the focal populations. Data are missing from the SOTR for several possible reasons. Data may not be collected for those populations or data are collected but may not be reported into an accessible data base. Also, data may be maintained by the agency or tribe responsible for collecting the data and access to the data has not been authorized or provided. Bonneville Power Administration funding supports less than 47% of the data provided in the SOTR. A more systematic inventory of data access will be collected during the development of the next iteration of the SOTR and this inventory will be used to guide support for improving individual data systems.

Of the data reported in the SOTR, 40% was provided by the StreamNet project. Another data management project, the Fish Passage Center, provided 11%, primarily mainstem passage information. Another 30% of the data were obtained directly from the state fish and wildlife agencies. Tribal entities provided 12% of the data and 5% was provided by federal agencies. A private utility provided 3% of the data. Reviewing these statistics reveals a few general observations. It is likely that most of the available state level data were provided to the SOTR through the StreamNet project and direct state contacts. A small amount of the data in the SOTR was provided by the tribes. This may reflect a lack of information or more likely the lack of a regional framework to support sharing the tribal data. StreamNet is primarily funded to support state data and is not currently funded to support sharing of tribal data. Finally, other data are available that are collected through other federal agencies and public and private utilities. It is important that a comprehensive data management framework be developed for the region to provide an opportunity for entities that are not affiliated with the Fish and Wildlife Program to participate in providing data that can feed into the SOTR.

All federal data provided in the SOTR were bull trout data. StreamNet primarily provided salmon and steelhead data, although resident fish data was provided (sturgeon, bull trout, coastal cutthroat trout, and redband trout) particularly from Montana. Only 32% of the missing data in the SOTR consists of salmon and steelhead data; resident fish information has a larger gap in information within the SOTR than anadromous fish.

Finally, we are working with the CSMEP project to develop a data quality guide to rate the accuracy and precision of the data and how well that data represents each

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population. This should increase the confidence in decision makers when using the SOTR.

These results of this analysis raise several general questions for the Council and their staff to consider in the upcoming data management project funding decisions:

1. Does the SOTR represent the priority data for the Fish and Wildlife Program? A clear expression of the priority data needs for the Program could provide a road map for data collectors not funded through BPA that are interested in sharing their data. Members of CBFWA and NED will express their priorities in the Draft Strategy for Managing Fish, Wildlife, and Habitat Data for the Columbia River Fish and Wildlife Program. Council endorsement of this document would send a clear message of priority from their perspective.
2. Should the Fish and Wildlife Program support a channel steward (or data management coordinator), as defined by the Northwest Environmental Data network project, specifically assigned to coordinate the data requirements of the Fish and Wildlife Program? The SOTR and recovery monitoring could set the priorities for the channel steward to coordinate interaction and participation by the data collectors within the basin. Since the purpose of the SOTR is to provide access to the fish and wildlife managers' information for use in developing an evaluation of the Fish and Wildlife Program's strategies and actions, it may be sensible to locate this position within a regional coordinating body, such as CBFWA, that has direct access to a majority of the data providers. Much of the data for the SOTR was acquired by my staff directly contacting data collectors. This was inefficient and is not sustainable.
3. Should StreamNet be used as the primary data management project for the Fish and Wildlife Program and the SOTR? StreamNet has the opportunity to assist the state agencies to improve management of their data to increase timeliness and geographic coverage; however, the current StreamNet project is not funded at a level that can adequately address the data requirements for the SOTR.
4. What is the most cost effective means for accessing tribal data? A comprehensive review of tribal data sharing needs is required to determine how to optimize access and availability of tribal data for the SOTR. A data coordinator(s) closely tied to the sub-regional coordination projects could assist in developing regional access to tribal data. Also, a pilot study could be initiated to develop data sharing frameworks among the tribal entities to better coordinate with the StreamNet project. Resident fish data is disproportionately missing from the SOTR which may reflect the lack of tribal data in the SOTR.

CBFWA Members will be providing their input and response to these questions through their data management funding recommendations that will be presented at the October Council meeting.