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April 16, 2009

Mr. William C. Maslen
Manager, Fish and Wildlife Division
Bonneville Power Administration
P.O. Box 3621
Portland, Oregon 97208

Dear Mr. Maslen:

The purpose of this letter is to advise you of the Council's decision on a Columbia River Fish Accord proposal. This recommendation was made by the Council at its meeting on April 14, 2009.

In addition, a purpose of this letter is to inform the project sponsor and other interested parties of the status of this Council action. The following is a summary of the action taken by the Council at the meeting in March.

Snake River fall Chinook - modify ponds @ Lyons Ferry to improve adult holding, Project #2008-210-00

In 2008-2009, Bonneville, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (the "Action Agencies") signed agreements with the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR), the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation (CTWSRO), the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation (YN), and the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (CRITFC). The agreement with these Tribes and CRITFC is referred to as the Three Treaty Tribes MOA. The Action Agencies also signed agreements with the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation (CCT), the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes (SBT), and the states of Idaho, Montana and Washington. These agreements, the Columbia Basin Fish Accords, fund actions that will deliver specific, scientifically-sound results for the region's fish and wildlife.

As set forth in the guidance document outlining the review process for the Accords, the Council recognizes Bonneville's commitment to Accord projects. The Accords do not, however, alter the Council's responsibilities with respect to independent science review or the Council's role following such review. As with all projects in the Fish and Wildlife Program, Accord projects are subject to review by the Independent Scientific Review Panel (ISRP) and the Council provides funding recommendations based on full consideration of the ISRP's report and the Council's Program.

The biological objective associated with this project is to modify the Snake River fall Chinook adult holding ponds at Lyons Ferry Hatchery¹ in order to provide additional segregation capacity from four to eight ponds. This action will allow fish transported from Lower Granite Dam and adults that voluntarily swim into the facility to be segregated by run-timing, sex, origin, and sexual maturation. In addition, these eight ponds will reduce the need to crowd fish, handle, and sort fish by maturity status and as such decrease fish stress.

On February 12, 2009, the Council received from Bonneville a set of two Columbia Basin Fish Accords proposals. Included in this set was a proposal from the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) for Project #2008-210-00, *Snake River fall Chinook - modify ponds @ Lyons Ferry to improve adult holding.*²

The proposal was submitted to the ISRP for review, and on March, 6, 2009 the ISRP provided a review (ISRP document 2009-5). The ISRP found that the proposal “Meets Scientific Review Criteria”.

This lack of flexibility for holding adult fall Chinook at Lyons Ferry Hatchery has restricted the ability of the managers to hold and process fish during spawning as well as limited the capability to segregate adults for run reconstruction purposes by increasing the ability to segregate adult groups at the facility. To promote this spatial structure, local adaptation, and to improve productivity, the Hatchery Scientific Review Group (HSRG) recommended in its recently completed report that managers pursue development of broodstock collection capabilities for releases into the Clearwater River.³

Based on the ISRP review and confirmed support from the HSRG the Council supports this project for implementation. This recommendation is conditioned with the understanding that the information provided through this review will be used and incorporated in the anticipated categorical review associated with artificial production.

Sincerely,

Tony Grover
Director, Fish and Wildlife Division

¹ Lyons Ferry Hatchery is a Lower Snake River Compensation Plan (LSRCP) facility and the work would be done under the auspices of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) who administer the LSRCP.

² The proposal is listed in the May 2008 agreement in Attachment B, New, Hatchery Capital; and Attachment G, Snake River Fall Chinook ESU Hatchery Benefits Summary.

³ Columbia River Hatchery Reform Project Lower Snake River Fall Chinook Population Report, January 31, 2009.

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