

**Phil Rockefeller**  
Chair  
Washington

**Tom Karier**  
Washington

**Henry Lorenzen**  
Oregon

**Bill Bradbury**  
Oregon



## Northwest Power and Conservation Council

**W. Bill Booth**  
Vice Chair  
Idaho

**James Yost**  
Idaho

**Pat Smith**  
Montana

**Jennifer Anders**  
Montana

September 9, 2015

### DECISION MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Fish and Wildlife Committee Members

**FROM:** Tony Grover and staff

**SUBJECT:** Habitat Assessment Request for Proposals

**PROPOSED ACTION:** Staff will present a recommendation regarding immediate implementation of one action for the Council's 2014 Fish and Wildlife Program priorities: *Investigate blocked area mitigation*

### SIGNIFICANCE

Supports 2014 Fish and Wildlife Program priority work

### BUDGETARY/ECONOMIC IMPACTS

The proposal applicants will develop a cost estimate based on the tasks, deliverables, and timeline outlined in the Request for Proposals (RFP). At this time, Bonneville is considering making up to \$200k available for this work. The Council is not certain that the amount Bonneville is considering at this time will be adequate to accomplish the tasks as defined. The Council is encouraging proposal applicants to include detailed cost estimates to support the scope of work as defined in the solicitation. The Council will work with Bonneville and with the successful project sponsor to determine an appropriate budget target for the work. The final contract, including the precise project budget, will be negotiated between Bonneville and the successful applicant prior to contracting.

### BACKGROUND

On August 10 at the Fish and Wildlife Committee Meeting in Missoula, Committee members and staff discussed the implementation options for the seven emerging 2014 Fish and Wildlife Program (Program) priorities and their associated measures in the

Program. These can be found in the [Investment Strategy](#) of the Program. At this meeting, the Committee called for a special Fish and Wildlife Committee Meeting via teleconference on August 27 for the purpose of considering staff recommendations regarding immediate implementation of the Program's emerging priorities.

The Program priorities represent important measures that were either unimplemented or not being implemented to a sufficient extent. In the 2014 Program the Council provided the following guidance to Bonneville, the other federal agencies, and the region in general as to which of these new measures are emerging priorities for implementation in the next five years: "During the course of the next five years, the Council anticipates that Bonneville will take the necessary steps to integrate these priorities into the Program and will report annually to the Council on its progress." The Program further notes that, "Bonneville should fund any new fish and wildlife obligations from identifying savings within the current Program and as necessary, from additional expenditures. ...To the extent that targeted savings are insufficient to meet Bonneville's financial obligations in this Program, Bonneville should consider increasing expenditures."

## **ANALYSIS**

At the special August 27 Fish and Wildlife Committee teleconference meeting, the Committee and staff discussed four of the emerging program priorities:

- [long-term maintenance on Program investments](#) which was brought forward by staff as a RFP for a hatchery asset assessment of the 14 Bonneville-funded hatcheries in the Columbia River Basin;
- [determining hotspots for toxic contaminants](#) which was brought forward by staff as an email to the Toxics Reduction Workgroup calling for the group's strengthened efforts in mapping toxic contaminant hot spots in the Columbia River Basin;
- [addressing non-native and invasive species](#) which was brought forward by staff as a letter to the federal agencies requesting funding to increase hours of operation for state invasive species inspection stations; and
- [investigation of blocked area mitigation](#) which was brought forward as a RFP for a habitat assessment in the areas of US waters of the Upper Columbia River blocked to anadromous fish migration by construction of the hydrosystem.

It was decided at the meeting to move the first three listed above to the full Council for a decision at the September Council Meeting. The RFP for the habitat assessment would undergo further refinement and be brought forward for consideration and a decision at the September Fish and Wildlife Committee Meeting to recommend the Council support the attached joint solicitation with Bonneville for proposals to conduct the habitat assessment.

Since the August 27 meeting, Council members and staff have collaborated with Bonneville on the habitat assessment RFP. At the September Fish and Wildlife Committee Meeting, staff will discuss the updated RFP with Committee members. Staff recommends that the Committee support bringing the habitat RFP to the full Council for a decision at the October Council Meeting.

## **Attachment**

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Draft: September 9, 2015

## **Request for Proposals Northwest Power and Conservation Council's 2014 Columbia River Fish and Wildlife Program Emerging Priorities**

Dear Recipient:

The Northwest Power and Conservation Council (Council) is working with Bonneville Power Administration (Bonneville) to scope actions and make funds available to implement projects to address what the Council identified as the 2014 Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program's emerging priorities during fiscal years 2016-2017. With this letter the Council and Bonneville invite proposals to specifically address one of the emerging priorities:

**As one element of blocked-area mitigation, the Council seeks proposals to “[i]nvestigate the availability, suitability and salmon survival potential in habitats above Grand Coulee Dam” (that is, between river mile 545.1 and river mile 745 at the Canadian Border), including in any tributaries in this area that have the potential to support anadromous fish.**

If you are interested in submitting a project proposal to assess habitat for blocked area mitigation, please refer to *Emerging Program Priorities: Guide to Submitting Proposals* beginning on page two. The *Guide* contains the information you will need to submit a proposal for funding consideration. The packet includes guidance, tips, important dates and contact information. All information contained in this packet also can be found on the Council's website at: <http://www.nwcouncil.org/fw/XXX>. **Proposals are due by midnight November 30, 2015.**

The Council will use information submitted in your proposal, review by the Independent Scientific Review Panel (ISRP), and public comments to inform its project funding recommendation to Bonneville. The Council's funding recommendation will span fiscal years 2016 and 2017. Contract(s) for the work will be made between Bonneville Power Administration and the successful project proponents.



Northwest **Power** and  
**Conservation** Council



## **COLUMBIA RIVER BASIN FISH AND WILDLIFE PROGRAM**

### **DRAFT Emerging Program Priorities: Guide to submitting proposals**

**Fiscal Years 2016-2017**

Northwest Power and Conservation Council  
Bonneville Power Administration  
Independent Scientific Review Panel

This guide was prepared for use by both project proponents and proposal reviewers for the 2014 Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program.

**Draft September 9, 2015**

## **1. Background**

The Council and Bonneville are soliciting for proposals that address one Fish and Wildlife Program emerging priority for funding by Bonneville in Fiscal Year 2016 and 2017.

Habitat Reach Assessment: The Council is interested in investigating the habitat availability, suitability, and salmon survival potential in habitats above blocked areas of the Upper Columbia Basin within the United States. The purpose of the Request for Proposals is to develop an assessment of the Columbia River and its potentially anadromous-bearing tributaries for salmon and steelhead habitat from river mile 545.1 to river mile 745.

Background: The [Anadromous Fish Mitigation in Blocked Areas Strategy](#) in the Council's 2014 Fish and Wildlife Program, calls for a science-based, phased approach to investigate reintroduction of anadromous fish in the blocked waters of the Upper Columbia River. Phase 1 of this investigation is to include:

- *“Evaluate information from passage studies at other blockages and from previous assessments of passage at Grand Coulee and Chief Joseph dams*
- *Investigate habitat availability, suitability and salmon survival potential in habitats above Grand Coulee. This might include selective releases of salmon and steelhead. Investigate the scientific feasibility and possible cost of upstream and downstream passage options for salmon and steelhead. Before funding new investigations, provide the Council with a report for consideration of subsequent work to advance the fish passage planning process.*
- *As part of Phase 1, the Council will engage in discussions with tribal, state, and federal agencies and others regarding the purpose, scope and progress of reintroduction efforts above Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee dams.”*

This request for proposals is targeting *one element* of Phase 1: the investigation into habitat potential. The completion of a habitat assessment will inform further investigation into reintroduction in the Upper Columbia, especially once linked with the other elements of Phase 1.

Additionally, the Council identified investigation of blocked area mitigation as one of the program's emerging priorities:

*“Investigate blocked area mitigation options through reintroduction, passage and habitat improvement, and implement if warranted”*

Since the adoption of the Council's 2014 program, the Council and regional entities have begun important discussions and preliminary planning for how to implement this program priority while engaging all interested parties. In particular, the Upper Columbia United Tribes have begun collaborating with the region on developing a draft work and coordination plan.

## **2. Description of Solicitation**

### **Request for Proposals**

This solicitation focuses on compiling, integrating, synthesizing, and assessing existing data related to habitat for the species of interest within the area of interest to inform opportunities to investigate blocked area mitigation. This work also includes identifying and addressing uncertainties or gaps in habitat information (e.g. modeling, physical habitat assessment, etc.) Proposals should indicate what known data uncertainties or gaps will be addressed based on previous habitat assessments. The Council asks that the project proponent enter their data collection method information into *monitoringmethods.org* and strongly encourages them to look at methods already in the system to see if any fit their needs before creating a new method.

### **Species of Interest**

Chinook salmon, sockeye, and steelhead

### **Area of Interest**

This project will be conducted for the reach of U.S. waters of the Columbia River between river mile 545.1 and river mile 745, and any potentially anadromous fish-bearing streams and tributaries along this stretch. This nearly 200 mile segment of the Columbia River has been impounded since the 1940's, blocking anadromous fish from reaching the U.S. Upper Columbia waters.

### **2.1. Threshold Requirements**

Submission for funding under the Council's Program is open to organizations that are able to meet the requirements and expectations below. [Insert additional procurement details from Bonneville as needed]

1. To be considered, proposals must be received no later than midnight Pacific Standard Time on November 30, 2015.
2. The applicant must address the above emerging program priorities.
3. Tasks and deliverables are expected to be complete by the end of calendar year 2017.
4. Proposals for new projects that do not address these topics will not be considered for funding at this time.
5. Applicant must demonstrate its feasibility, readiness and qualifications for implementation.
6. Applicants must be able to quickly obtain site access to tribal lands and lands held by other authorities for field assessment work.
7. Applicants must be able to meet BPA contractual requirements. Requirements can be viewed here: [\[insert website\]](#).

### **2.1.1. Who may apply?**

All potential project proponents that meet the threshold requirements and can demonstrate an ability to work with and coordinate with the fish and wildlife agencies and tribes interested in this effort in this part of the upper Columbia. Coordination among these entities is strongly encouraged.

## **2.2 Tasks**

- Identify both reaches that have recent and reliable information regarding habitat condition that could be summarized without further assessment, and reaches that are lacking recent and reliable information regarding habitat condition
  - From that inventory, identify *target* reaches that are believed to have the highest potential for salmon habitat
  - Prioritize target reaches of relevant rivers and streams for field assessment based on existing information on habitat conditions
- Perform habitat condition surveys to evaluate existing habitat condition and suitability in areas lacking existing information
- Perform modeling as necessary to determine what species and life histories can be supported by the existing habitat and salmon survival potential (may include water quality assessments, predation and competition risk assessments for the target reaches, etc.)

## **2.3. Deliverables**

Once work is completed, the project sponsor will compile a report describing the condition, suitability, and potential of the habitat for salmon/steelhead survival potential for the target reaches in the area of interest. The report will be provided to the Council for consideration of subsequent work to advance the fish passage planning process.

## **2.4. Timeline for completing work**

Tasks and deliverables are expected to be complete by the end of calendar year 2017, provided that the review process and funding decision are timely and allow for full project implementation.

## **2.5. Cost Estimate**

The applicant will develop a cost estimate based on the tasks and deliverables and timeline, outlined above. At this time, Bonneville is considering making up to \$200,000 available for this work. The Council is not certain that the funding amount Bonneville is considering at this time will be adequate to accomplish the tasks as defined. Detailed cost estimates in proposals should be developed to support the scope of work as defined in this solicitation. The Council will continue to work with Bonneville and with the successful project applicant to determine an appropriate budget target for the work. The final contract, including the precise project budget, will be negotiated between Bonneville and the successful applicant prior to contracting.

## 2.6. Anticipated Schedule\* and Deadline for Submission

	<b>Proposals due</b>	<b>Nov 30, 2015</b>
	ISRP Review of proposals begins	Dec 1, 2015
Written Public comment on ISRP Reports	Preliminary ISRP Report & additional info request	Jan 6, 2016
	Additional information due for ISRP (fix-it loop)*	Jan 21, 2016
	ISRP Final Report	Feb 4, 2016
	Written Public comments Due	Feb 25, 2016
	Committee Recommendations	March 8, 2016
	Council Recommendation to Bonneville	April 12, 2016
	BPA Final Contracts in place	May-June 2016

*\*Proposals are due on Nov. 30<sup>th</sup>, 2015, but the remaining schedule could be faster or slower depending on necessary fix-it loop or other contingencies.*

## 3. How to Submit Proposals

### 3.1. Communications

Council staff leads	Review Process: Lynn Palensky Habitat assessment: Laura Robinson
Bonneville Contracting Officer	<i>Insert</i>
Technical contact (form-specific help)	Eric Schrepel
Science review	Erik Merrill, 503-222-5161, <a href="mailto:emerrill@nwcouncil.org">emerrill@nwcouncil.org</a> or Lynn Palensky <a href="mailto:lpalensky@nwcouncil.org">lpalensky@nwcouncil.org</a>

### 3.2. Getting started on your proposal

If you are interested in submitting a proposal for this work, please fill out the online form. The form and instructions are available at [www.nwcouncil.org/XX](http://www.nwcouncil.org/XX). Proposal forms must be completed by the close of business on November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2015. You will receive a confirmation email after you submit your completed proposal form. Completed proposal forms will be stored by the Council, and made publicly available for review after the ISRP completes its preliminary review on January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2016 (see schedule note in Sec. 2.6). Check back at the above link for news and updates regarding the proposal development and review process.

### 3.3. Important Guidance Documents

Past work and proposals that could be used to inform this project proposal:

- [UCUT Draft Project Work and Coordination Plan](#)
- [Spokane Tribe Anadromous and Resident Fish Habitat Assessment Project \(2014\)](#)



- [JSAP: Joint Stock Assessment Project; Project 1997-004-00](#) (JSAP)
- Colville Tribe project proposal (2007): [Assess Habitat and Passage for Anadromous Fish Upriver of Chief Joseph Dam](#)
- 15 tribes joint paper: [Fish Passage and Reintroduction into the US & Canadian Upper Columbia Basin](#)
- The [Intermountain Province Plan](#), specifically the [Spokane Subbasin Plan](#) and the [Upper Columbia Subbasin Plan](#)
- [The 2014 Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program](#)
- The Independent Scientific Advisory Board's (ISAB) [Using a Comprehensive Landscape Approach for More Effective Conservation and Restoration](#) Report (2011)
- The ISAB's [Columbia River Food Webs](#) Report (2011)
- The ISAB's [Review of NOAA Fisheries' Viable Salmonid Population \(VSP\) Modeling of Willamette River Spring Chinook Populations \(2014\)](#)
- [Fish and Wildlife Program Investment Strategy](#)

## 4. How Proposals are Evaluated and Selected

Proposals are evaluated and recommended by a combination of administrative evaluation and professional and scientific peer review. The evaluation occurs over several months in discrete steps, which are described below.

### 4.1. Administrative Review

All proposals will be reviewed by Bonneville and Council staff first to see that they contain the requested information and meet threshold criteria. Incomplete proposals will not be considered for funding. Project proposals will be posted on the Council's website [need to insert link] for the ISRP and public review and comment as soon as possible following the close of the solicitation.

### 4.2. Independent Science Review of the Proposals

Proposals for the emerging priorities will be distributed to the ISRP on December 1, 2015. The ISRP is scheduled to provide the Council with a final report on February 4, 2016. This report will include: an evaluation of each proposal for consistency with the specific elements of this targeted request and the criteria from the 1996 Amendment to the Northwest Power Act that proposals 1) be based on science principles; 2) benefit fish and wildlife; 3) have clearly defined objectives and outcomes; and 4) have provisions for monitoring and evaluation of results.

See the Council's website for [more information](#) about the ISRP and review criteria.

### 4.3. Public Comment

The Council will make the ISRP report available, along with the project proposals, for public review.

#### **4.4. Northwest Power and Conservation Council Recommendations to Bonneville**

Finally, based on the advice provided the ISRP, administrative review, and public comment, the Council will select the projects to be recommended for funding and make those recommendations to Bonneville at the March 2016 Council meeting. The Council must also comply with the requirements in Section 4(h)(10)(D) to “consider the impact of ocean conditions on fish and wildlife populations” and “determine whether the projects employ cost-effective measures to achieve program objectives” when making project funding recommendations. If the Council’s recommendations differ notably from those of the ISRP, the Council will explain its reasoning in writing as part of its recommendations.

BPA funding will be compliant with applicable procurement and contracting requirements and guidelines. Bonneville may request additional information during the course of the contracting process, which may include more specificity of the work to be performed and the associated costs. The amount of funding ultimately approved by Bonneville for a project may differ from the amount initially proposed by the applicant or recommended by the Council in its recommendations.