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Northwest Power and Conservation Council

W. Bill Booth
Vice Chair
Idaho

James Yost
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Pat Smith
Montana

Jennifer Anders
Montana

October 6, 2015

DECISION MEMORANDUM

TO: Council Members

FROM: Tony Grover and staff

SUBJECT: Habitat Assessment Request for Proposals

PROPOSED ACTION: Staff will present the Fish and Wildlife Committee recommendation regarding solicitation of proposals for action on the Council's 2014 Fish and Wildlife Program priority:
Investigate blocked area mitigation

SIGNIFICANCE

Supports 2014 Fish and Wildlife Program priority work.

BUDGETARY/ECONOMIC IMPACTS

Bonneville funding for proposals selected for implementation will be integrated into budget planning under the fish and wildlife program budget. The proposal applicants will develop a cost estimate based on the tasks, deliverables and timeline outlined in the attached Request for Proposals (RFP). At this time, funding of up to approximately \$200,000 may be available for subject work. Applicants are encouraged to collaborate and seek additional funding sources. The Council will work with Bonneville, other potential cost-share contributors, and with the successful project sponsor(s) 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 sponsor(s) during contract development. Depending on other funding sources, there may be multiple contract arrangements to support this work.

BACKGROUND

The 2014 Fish and Wildlife Program calls for the implementation of seven [emerging program priorities](#). The priorities represent new or expanded existing work in new or additional directions. 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.”

ANALYSIS

Council staff and Fish and Wildlife Committee members have discussed implementation options for the seven emerging program priorities at the previous three Fish and Wildlife Committee meetings. On August 10 at the Fish and Wildlife Committee meeting in Missoula, committee members and staff discussed the emerging priorities and their associated measures in the program. At that 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.

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 of program investments](#) which was brought forward by staff as an 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 U.S. waters of the upper Columbia River blocked to anadromous fish migration by construction of the hydrosystem.

At its August 27 meeting, the committee decided to move the first three priorities listed above to the full Council for a decision at the September Council meeting. Committee members and Council and Bonneville staff then refined the habitat assessment RFP and brought it back to the full committee in September. The committee recommended, after a few additional refinements with Bonneville, the RFP be considered by the full Council at its October meeting as a joint solicitation with Bonneville for proposals to conduct the habitat assessment.

Staff recommends that the Council support the habitat assessment RFP and the staff collaboration with Bonneville needed to begin the solicitation process.

Attachment

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October 6, 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, in coordination with Bonneville, invites 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: Request for Proposals* beginning on page two. The Request for Proposals (RFP) contains the information you will need to submit a proposal for funding consideration. The RFP includes guidance, tips, important dates and contact information. All information contained in this RFP also can be found on the Council's website: <http://www.nwcouncil.org/fw/reviews/2016habitat/rfp>. **Proposals are due by 5:00 p.m. PST December 15, 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 and the successful project applicant(s). Additional contracts with other funding entities are also possible.



COLUMBIA RIVER BASIN FISH AND WILDLIFE PROGRAM

Emerging Program Priorities: Request for Proposals

Fiscal Years 2016-2017

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

This Request for Proposals was prepared for use by both project applicants and proposal reviewers for the 2014 Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program

October 6, 2015

1. Background

The Council, in coordination with Bonneville, is 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 further inform that habitat potential, especially when linked with 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 may also include identifying and addressing uncertainties or gaps in habitat information (e.g. modeling, physical habitat assessment, etc.). Proposals should indicate known data uncertainties or gaps and the priority to potentially address the gaps based on previous habitat assessments. The Council asks that the project applicant enter their proposed 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 1940s, 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.

1. To be considered, proposals must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. Pacific Standard Time on December 15, 2015.
2. The applicant must address the emerging program priority described in Section 1. Background (above).
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 potential field assessment work.
7. Applicants must be able to meet Bonneville's contractual requirements.

2.1.1. Who may apply?

All potential project applicants 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. Collaboration among these entities is strongly encouraged. A joint application by interested parties will be viewed favorably given that a consortium of managers will benefit this project in the ability to share information, resources and workload, and will provide access to a broader range of expertise.

2.2. Tasks

- Compile and synthesize what is known about both the area of interest and species of interest using existing studies, GIS information, reports, and local knowledge
- Identify areas where information is weak or lacking
- Identify and prioritize target reaches for potential field surveys using information from the compilation and synthesis in the first step
- As necessary, perform field studies in target reaches to evaluate existing habitat condition and suitability (may include water quality assessments, predation and competition and species risk assessments, etc.)
 - Outline proposed study design (e.g., see menu in monitoringmethods.org)
 - Summarize information at the reach level by attribute (e.g., valley width, channel type, slope, terrace height and width, sinuosity, stream width and depth, gradient, substrate, eroding banks, water quality attributes, etc.)
- Summarize and analyze previously existing and newly collected data to determine: a) what species and life histories can be supported by the existing habitat; b) salmon survival potential; and c) species interaction, particularly with native and non-native fishes.
 - Analyze information to determine suitability for the species of interest, based upon water quality, habitat condition, and species assemblages.
- Evaluate findings and report to Bonneville and the Council.

2.3. Deliverables

Once work is completed consistent with the contract requirements, 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 Bonneville, other relevant entities, and the Council.

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, deliverables, milestones, and timeline, outlined above. At this time, funding of up to approximately \$200,000 may be available for the subject work. The Council strongly encourages applicants to collaborate and seek additional funding sources. The applicants should include any cost share, in-kind services, and funding from other sources in the total cost estimate. 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, other potential cost-share contributors, and the successful project sponsor(s) to determine an appropriate budget target for the work. The final contract, including the precise project budget, will be negotiated between Bonneville and the sponsor(s) during contract development. Depending on other funding sources, there may be multiple contract arrangements to support this work.

2.6. Deadline for Submission and Anticipated Schedule*

Proposals due	Dec 15, 2015	
ISRP Review of proposals begins	Dec 16, 2015	
Preliminary ISRP Report & additional info request	Jan 13, 2016	Written Public comment on ISRP Reports
Additional information due for ISRP (fix-it loop)*	Feb 3, 2016	
ISRP Final Report	Feb 24, 2016	
Written Public comments Due	March 24, 2016	
Committee Recommendations	April 2016	
Council Recommendation to Bonneville	May 2016	
BPA contract development	Summer 2016	
BPA Final Contracts in place		

**Proposals are due on December 15, 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 Technical Representative (COTR)	
Technical contact (form-specific help)	Eric Schrepel
Science review	Erik Merrill, 503-222-5161, emerrill@nwcouncil.org or Lynn Palensky lpalensky@nwcouncil.org

3.2. Getting started on your proposal

To submit a proposal, please download and complete the [Word proposal template](#). Proposals must be emailed to Lynn Palensky by the close of business (5 p.m. PST) on December 15, 2015. You will receive a confirmation email after you submit your completed proposal. Completed proposal forms will be stored by the Council, and made publicly available for review after the ISRP completes its preliminary review on January 13, 2016 (see schedule note in [Sec. 2.6](#)). Check back [here](#) 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](#)
- [East Fork Owyhee Salmon and Steelhead Recovery Project](#) and [2013 Annual Report](#)
- [Predicting natural channel patterns based on landscape and geomorphic controls in the Columbia River basin, USA.](#) 2014.

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 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 16, 2015. The ISRP is scheduled to provide the Council with a final report on February 24, 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 Review

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

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 May 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.

Bonneville funding will comply 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.