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October 6, 2015

MEMORANDUM

TO: Fish and Wildlife Committee Members

FROM: Lynn Palensky, Program Development Manager

SUBJECT: Wildlife Projects Review Update

BACKGROUND:

Presenters: Lynn Palensky, Mark Fritsch

Summary: Staff will propose a path for the next wildlife review process. The proposed path begins with an assessment of current implementation of wildlife measures in the program and issues identified in previous wildlife reviews (Phase 1). The phased approach will involve a focused project review of wildlife projects based largely the management plan and annual reports that are updated during Phase 1.

Relevance: Implementation of the wildlife elements of the fish and wildlife program. The Council's current funding recommendations expired a year ago at the end of FY 2014.

Workplan: The work is being tracked in the Division's annual work plan as a high-priority task, and in the Council's Annual Work Plan for 2015.

Background: During the last wildlife project review process in July 2009 FY 2010-2014, the Council recommended continued funding for 34 projects. The Council's recommendation included expectations to maintain the habitat units previously acquired in the program, to work toward full mitigation, and to improve the coordination and efficiency of monitoring wildlife

habitats. *The Council recommended a five-year expense planning budget (FY2010-FY2014) for proposed work, with one exception.*

The programmatic issues resulting from the 2009 wildlife review are summarized as follows.

1. Habitat Evaluation Procedure (HEP)
 - A. The interaction between wildlife crediting and monitoring
 - B. HEP participation funding
2. Prospects for a regional RM&E approach
3. Ongoing wildlife crediting issues
4. Management Plans
 - A. General (standardized format, accessibility)
 - B. Multiple uses of wildlife conservation lands (agriculture, grazing, including income-generating activities)
5. Weed control - regional plans and best management practices
6. Equipment/facilities purchase and replacement

The 2014 Program for wildlife calls for (*paraphrased*):

- Complete operational loss assessments
- Keep acquiring and enhancing land to fully mitigate for losses
- Monitor and evaluate species response to habitat
- Complete loss mitigation agreements for remaining construction and inundation losses by 2016
- Finalize management plans for all parcels that do not otherwise provide long-term maintenance and sustaining minimum credited habitat values.
- Provide for timely ongoing operation and maintenance costs associated with existing investments (Appendix P)

As part of the ISRP's recommendation for wildlife projects, they stressed the importance of managing mitigation properties under a management plan. Without management plans, gaining a scientific understanding for how managers operate properties to benefit wildlife species and implement the Council Program becomes a difficult challenge. The final Council recommendations stated that management plans were expected to all be in place by FY 2011. They are not complete to date. Staff suggest that perhaps the best method for ISRP and Council review of long-term operations and maintenance wildlife projects is through a review of approved management plans once we have them in place.

Staff recommended steps for moving forward

Staff recommend initiating a phased approach for the next wildlife projects review process. Beginning with a focus on how program measures are being implemented and how issues identified in the previous wildlife reviews are being addressed. To begin, Bonneville and Council staff would work together on the following areas:

Initial Phase

- 1) Inventory project portfolio for:
 - a. settlement agreements (complete and planned); and

b. outstanding/outdated management plans and link to O&M strategic Plan

2) Complete Management plans

- Finalize standardized template. Work with Bonneville and ISRP to finalize by end of 2016.
- Ask sponsors to complete or update management plans where needed

3) Standardize Annual Report Format

Finalize template. Work with Bonneville and ISRP to finalize by end of 2016. (Links to management plan for adaptive management, accomplishments to date, and unforeseen circumstances).

4) Inventory Operational loss assessments: Where do they exist, where are they in progress, where are they still to be developed? Identify issues that prevent us from completing loss assessments. How would operational loss mitigation factor into construction and inundation loss settlements? Potential ties to fish mitigation?

5) *Complete loss mitigation agreements for remaining construction and inundation losses by end of 2016* (program language). If these cannot be complete by end of 2016, identify road blocks to progress and necessary steps/schedule for completion.

6) Describe the current approach(s) to implement monitoring on wildlife projects. Summarize in an issue paper and develop available/logical options for moving forward.

Phase 2

7) Begin a focused review in winter 2017 (presentations, management plans, and results reporting) based on the work accomplished over the course of the project, especially between FY 2010-FY 2016. Establish a 5 to 10 year cycle for a results/adaptive management review by the Council and ISRP to ensure accountability and promote information sharing.

Other considerations to think about for moving forward:

- 1) IEAB's 2015 recommendations in their *Report on Long-term Cost Planning for the Fish and Wildlife Program*
- 2) WAC recommendations
- 3) ISRP and ISAB review of annual reports associated with the Research Plan review

More Info: [Council recommendations](#) for the 2009-2010 Wildlife Review.

[Wildlife Advisory Committee](#) work in 2015.

2014 Fish and Wildlife Program [measures for wildlife](#) mitigation.