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March 1, 2016

MEMORANDUM

TO: Council members

FROM: Tony Grover

SUBJECT: Update on NOAA Fisheries regional partnership on establishing salmon and steelhead objectives

BACKGROUND: NOAA Fisheries convened a 'Columbia Basin Partnership Workshop' on February 7, 2016. While NOAA is assessing how Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) requirements might influence the process, they held the first gathering of the full Partnership as a workshop as opposed to a formal meeting. All stakeholders who expressed an interest in the Partnership were invited, and it was open to the general public. The purpose of the workshop was to provide an opportunity for participants to learn more about the effort to set up a constructive dialogue regarding long-term salmon goals in the Columbia Basin.

Presenters: Council members and staff who attended the February 7, 2016 Partnership workshop.

Summary: 60 to 80 people participated in the workshop, including a very wide range of interests and expertise. To develop a common level of understanding, NOAA is proposing two additional workshops on May 4, 2016, and June 7, 2016. Formal meetings are projected to commence in the fall of 2016.

Relevance: Implements the Council's 2014 emerging priority 2, adaptive management, through setting program objectives for natural spawning salmon and steelhead.

Background: The purpose of the Columbia Basin Partnership (Partnership) is to lead a science-based, results-driven, transparent, and publicly-embraced effort to establish integrated goals for listed and non-listed Columbia Basin salmon and steelhead that optimally balance long-term conservation and harvest and integrate and support regional and local efforts.

NOAA Fisheries envisions this process to generate quantitative, adult return goals at the species, stock, major populations group, and population levels for both listed and unlisted stocks. The goals would address both conservation and harvest/fishing aspirations, hatchery mitigation goals and others. The process would also consider habitat capacity and climate change.

In addition to enhanced engagement and understanding among members, the outcome of shared goals will be a concise, common definition of success. Numerical adult return goals would allow a means to measure progress, and a clear way to maintain public support for regional efforts. Additionally, chances of achieving success will be enhanced through better coordination and effective use of resources.

While the Columbia Basin Partnership will not result in a regulatory decision or commit any party to a set of activities, it is NOAA's hope that the prospect of a common, long-term set of goals for salmon and steelhead would inspire the region's partners to integrate efforts and seek efficient ways to achieve common goals.