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May 3, 2015

MEMORANDUM

TO: Fish and Wildlife Committee members

FROM: Tony Grover

SUBJECT: Discussion of Staffing Needs in the Fish and Wildlife Division

BACKGROUND:

Presenter: Tony Grover

Summary: The Fish and Wildlife Division has two vacancies and seeks to fill one of these vacancies immediately with a person experienced in Columbia River hydropower system fish and wildlife mitigation issues.

Background: The retirement of two senior staff from the division in the last 15 months presents an opportunity to rebalance workloads and assignments among existing staff and to reconsider the staff configuration to support the Council's fish and wildlife program. The most reliable sources used to define the division's workload and priority needs for staff knowledge, skills and abilities is the 2014 Fish and Wildlife Program, which discusses implementation priorities and measures, and in a detailed seven page Excel spreadsheet which breaks out all division work into one of four categories. Those work breakout categories are: high priority, ongoing work, lower priority and intermittent, intensive tasks. A summary version of this spreadsheet will be provided to Committee members at the meeting.

The Fish and Wildlife Program addresses specific measures to implement floodplain restoration in the estuary, the Kootenai River, the Willamette and in various tributaries. This is not a new issue, currently representing,

as it does, approximately \$70 million each year in fish and wildlife mitigation spending by Bonneville, but one that appears to be an emerging area of significant potential for improving habitat. There are a number of workshops coming up in the next year focused on healthy floodplains – including a technical workgroup, and the CRITFC’s annual Future of our Salmon Conference. These and other events signal a growing interest in the region to further address the issue of floodplain ecology. The 1996 Return to the River and other subsequent science panel reports repeatedly have stressed the importance of floodplain habitat and its potential to restore anadromous fish capacity and productivity.

The Council’s role of influence in river system dam configuration and hydropower operations has evolved – as the Council steps aside and often defers to the individual states and federal agencies. Others have picked up a larger role and the Council’s direct role has been reduced in the regional system configuration team (SCT), in the TMT dam operations group, in NOAA’s Recovery Plans, in the FCRPS BiOp development process and, of course, in the Accord agreements. Nevertheless, the staff believes that there is still a need to perform periodic evaluations of proposed changes to river operations (e.g. future proposed spill experiments, new BiOp operations, different reservoir levels). Lacking any in-depth expertise and analytical capability, the states, some tribes and others still look to the Council for an independent evaluation of new proposals and the effects of proposed changes in dam fixes or power operations. In addition, we provide input to the technical and policy groups in the SCT, Willamette BiOp and related research. The SCT and Willamette activities direct about \$80 million per year in Corps funds, most of it reimbursed by BPA, for fish passage facilities and related research. At some point in the future, we may want to be more involved in river or hydrosystem issues. Through this new position and, if needed, with some contracting, we could move more quickly to address this important part of the Fish and Wildlife Program and Northwest Power Act.

Retaining some expertise in hydrosystem issues would help us implement the related provisions in the Fish and Wildlife Program: mainstem habitat and hydrosystem flow and passage measures as well as the emerging priorities (#7 improve floodplain habitats).

In general, we are transitioning away from the full time mainstem hydro position and heading toward more of a focus on improving hydrology and floodplain habitats throughout the basin, but the traditional role is still important.

More Info: The Council’s executive committee discussed this position at the previous Council meeting and seeks concurrence from the fish and wildlife committee to proceed with advertising and hiring this position.

Final draft position description, attached.

JOB ANNOUNCEMENT: FLOODPLAIN RESTORATION HYDROLOGIST

APRIL 5, 2016

FINAL DRAFT

The Council has an opening in its fish and wildlife division for a floodplain restoration hydrologist. The individual in this position will be a member of the fish and wildlife mitigation team, helping to implement the policies, programs, and initiatives of the Council's 2014 Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program. The director of the fish and wildlife division supervises this position.

Primary Duties and Responsibilities

- Develop and maintain collaborative working relationships with a wide variety of stakeholders, including tribal, state, and federal managers of hydrosystem operations and fish and wildlife resources in the basin.
- Work closely with the fish and wildlife division and Council members to organize and summarize technical information used to develop policy decisions.
- Analyze, summarize, and clearly communicate, orally, visually, and in writing, environmental data, opinions, and analyses to a wide variety of audiences.
- Implement the Council's fish and wildlife program, including the hydrosystem passage and flow provisions and the emerging priority on efforts to improve floodplain habitat
- Evaluate basin stream flows, water quality, and quantity changes and their effects on habitat and biological diversity, especially in relationship to the productivity, abundance, and diversity of anadromous and resident fish populations.
- Serve as liaison to Columbia Basin teams and workgroups that manage water to provide appropriately timed stream flows for anadromous and resident fish.
- Lead or participate in other fish, wildlife, hydrologic or ecosystem-related analyses and policy development activities as assigned.
- Respond to inquiries from the public to improve access to the Council's fish and wildlife data and analyses.
- Present technical information on policy and project funding recommendations to Council members and others in a clear and concise manner.

Essential Skills and Qualifications

- A background or keen interest in fish, wildlife, and ecosystem mitigation and restoration science and related policy issues.
- Ability to communicate technical information to policy makers and others clearly and concisely in written and oral presentations.
- Bachelor's degree or higher in hydrology, fluvial geomorphology, ecosystem restoration, environmental engineering, and/or other natural sciences.
- Experience with hydrosystem fish and wildlife mitigation or a closely related field.
- Knowledge of the Federal Columbia River Power System Biological Opinions and Columbia Basin tribal trust and treaty obligations is preferred.
- Demonstrated ability to work with others in a collaborative, objective, and professional manner on natural resource and environmental issues.
- Working knowledge of Western water law desired.
- Experience or coursework in evolutionary biology or fish genetics is a plus.
- Demonstrated proficiency in all MS Office applications, primarily Word, Excel, and PowerPoint, and familiarity with cloud-based tools (similar to Box, Smartsheet or Sharepoint).

Interested applicants should submit a letter of interest, resume, writing sample, and references by **June 7, 2016**, to:

Sharon Ossmann
Director of Administration
Northwest Power and Conservation Council
851 SW Sixth Avenue, Suite 1100
Portland, OR 97204

or by email to sossmann@nwcouncil.org. If using e-mail, please submit all documents in Microsoft Word or PDF format.