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January 3, 2018

MEMORANDUM

TO: Fish and Wildlife Committee members

FROM: Tony Grover

SUBJECT: Columbia Basin Partnership Task Force process report

BACKGROUND:

The Columbia Basin Partnership (CBP) Task Force, a task force organized under NOAA Fisheries' Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee, will be making recommendations to the Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee on common goals for long-term recovery of both ESA-listed and non-listed salmon and steelhead in the Columbia Basin. The CBP Task Force will recommend a shared vision for Columbia Basin salmon and steelhead, as well as qualitative and quantitative goals to meet conservation needs and provide harvest opportunities in the future.

Presenters: Council members and staff, participants on the CBP Task Force.

Summary: The CBP Task Force is scheduled to complete its first set of recommendations on goals by January 2019. The possibility of the Task Force continuing its work after January 2019 is also open.

Relevance: The Council's 2014 Fish and Wildlife Program (Page 31) calls for a collaborative regional effort to survey, collect, identify, and refine a realistic set of quantitative objectives for program focal species, beginning with adult salmon and steelhead. The CBP Task Force has very similar goals using a similar process. On February 3, 2015, the Council decided to merge the Council's salmon and steelhead objectives process with NOAA's CBP Task Force process. Several Council members serve as members of the CBP Task Force, and Council staff also participate in the process.

DISCUSSION:

CBP Task Force [participants](#) represent a wide range of sovereigns and stakeholders in the Columbia River Basin and beyond. Since being convened in January of 2017, the task force itself has met five times, while subgroups and work teams have met numerous additional times to develop content to support the process. Five additional meetings are planned for the full task force in 2018. The CBP Task Force is scheduled to complete a report with recommendations for long-term goals in January 2019.

The task force is working on a number of inter-related products, all of which exist in some stage of draft at this time. Since these products are iterative, they are likely to continue in draft form until later in the process. Current draft products include:

[Vision Statement](#). The current working draft vision statement includes concepts such as thriving salmon and steelhead, a robust economy, and vibrant cultural and spiritual traditions.

[Guiding Principles](#). The draft guiding principles identify fundamental attitudes that the CBP Task Force participants want to be reflected in the process (e.g., fairness, transparency, innovation, etc.).

[Qualitative Goals](#). The draft qualitative goals describe more specifically what the future could look like for fish conservation/sustainability, harvest, and hatcheries in the Columbia Basin, and also include aspirations related to social, economic, and cultural considerations.

[Quantitative Goals](#). Several subgroups have been working on selected salmon and steelhead stocks as prototypes for setting numerical goals for fish conservation/sustainability, fisheries, and hatcheries. The following prototypes were selected to represent a range of fish species, geography, and ESA status:

- [Chum](#) salmon
- [Coho](#) salmon
- [Mid-Columbia steelhead](#)
- [Upper Columbia River Summer Chinook](#) salmon
- [Snake River Spring/Summer Chinook](#) salmon

Subgroups have collected existing data on historical ranges, current status, harvest rates, hatchery influences, and habitat capacity for each of these species. Technical staff from states, Tribes, the Mid-Columbia PUDs, NGOs, the NPCC, and others organized relevant data in a usable and accessible format. This exercise drew heavily from the Council's fish objectives database work. The subgroups also proposed draft quantitative goals for full CBP Task Force consideration and discussion. Following this approach, NOAA Fisheries will be working with many of the same technical staff to complete the rest of the species profiles by April, 2018.

[Integration](#). A subgroup of CBP Task Force members is working to develop ideas about how to integrate the outcomes of all the separate discussions within the CBP Task Force. That subgroup shared some initial concepts and questions, with more to follow at

the February meeting. Integration of goals across species is key to the success of the CBP Task Force.

Issues. CBP Task Force members have also identified a number of issues related to the future of Columbia Basin salmon and steelhead.

The issues identified for further discussion were:

- Tributary habitat considerations
- Reintroduction (above and below blocked areas) considerations
- Fishery/harvest considerations
- Hatchery considerations
- Hydrosystem considerations
- Other ecological considerations
- Full life-cycle integration
- Social, cultural, and economic impacts
- Basinwide integration

A series of discussions on these issues is being scheduled for CBP Task Force meetings. These discussions are intended to inform setting of long-term goals for salmon and steelhead but not to resolve disagreements or develop strategies for meeting the goals (although those latter topics may be undertaken in a potential future phase of the CBP Task Force process).

Tributary habitat considerations, reintroduction, and harvest were discussed in detail at the December 2017 CBP Task Force meeting. Each topic was introduced with a summary presentation followed by a group discussion, or by more detailed presentations about particular aspects of the topic, followed by a group discussion. Conversations on the issues will continue until the task force final report and recommendations are prepared in January 2019. (See the next page for additional information on the issues discussed at the December 2017 CBP Task Force meeting.)

The next meeting of the CBP Task Force will be in Boise on February 20 and 21, 2018. All CBP Task Force meetings are open to the public.

More Info: [Columbia Basin Partnership Task Force web page](#)

**SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL ON ISSUES DISCUSSED AT DECEMBER 2017
CBP TASK FORCE MEETING:**

Habitat Capacity: Tributary habitat capacity includes in-basin and out-of-basin factors that limit smolt production despite increasing numbers of spawning adult fish. The challenge is to determine what can be reasonably done to improve habitat conditions that will promote increased fish abundance (see this [presentation](#)).

Note: Habitat capacity is closely related to density dependence, which was the subject of a detailed [report](#) by the ISAB in 2015. The ISAB concluded that nearly all salmon and steelhead populations in the Columbia Basin experience density dependence limitations on productivity to a greater or lesser degree. Life-cycle modeling, currently under development, and also recently [reviewed by the ISAB](#), holds some eventual promise for predicting habitat capacity limitations for a population of fish under a given set of environmental circumstances.

Reintroduction: Reintroduction into other blocked areas of the Columbia River Basin was discussed in some detail, as mentioned above, at the December CBP Task Force meeting. Presentations on behalf of the [Upper Snake River Tribes](#), the [Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation](#) and the [Spokane Tribe of Indians](#), inspired a lengthy discussion of reintroduction above Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee dams and above the Hells Canyon Complex of dams, as they relate to setting long-term goals for conservation and harvest. Those discussions will continue among the CBP Task Force participants.

Note: Reintroduction of extirpated salmon and steelhead can occur in many parts of the Columbia River Basin, including above [blocked areas](#). The Yakama Nation's [mid-Columbia Coho Restoration Program](#) has been reviewed by the ISRP eight times since 2000, most recently in October of 2017; and represents a thoroughly documented approach to reintroduction in a non-blocked area.

Within the Columbia River Basin reintroduction of spring Chinook and steelhead has been underway at the [Pelton Round Butte Hydroelectric Project](#) since a 2005 NOAA Biological Opinion supported FERC issuing a new license for the project in 2005.

In the Willamette subbasin, a NOAA [Biological Opinion](#) requires the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Bonneville Power Administration, and Bureau of Reclamation (action agencies), to implement reintroduction via fish passage and temperature control at several high head dams. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers identified a series of related actions in their [Configuration and Operations Plan \(COP\) Phase II](#).

Harvest: A [fisheries goals presentation](#) by NOAA Fisheries' consultant Ray Beamesderfer introduced the concepts of qualitative harvest goals, which serve to guide and explain quantitative harvest goals. The concepts of maximum sustained yield, sustainable production, escapement and conservation management, constraining stocks and the current management tool of abundance based harvest rates were discussed with the group. Discussions about harvest goals will continue among the CBP Task Force participants.