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June 4, 2019

MEMORANDUM

TO: Fish and Wildlife Committee Members

FROM: Laura Robinson

SUBJECT: Fish and Wildlife Program public outreach discussion

BACKGROUND:

Presenter: Council staff

Summary: The Northwest Power Act (Act) calls for the Council to hold public hearings and consultations during the public comment period on the draft program amendments. During the comment period, the Council members are encouraged to meet with their constituents on issues related to the Council's Fish and Wildlife Program and submit notes from the meeting into the administrative record. Council staff is preparing for the release of the draft 2020 Addendum to the 2014 Program and will discuss the plan for receiving public comment with the Committee at the June meeting.

Public Outreach Plan

Given the focused nature of the draft Addendum and the emphasis on program performance, staff sees a benefit in holding a few group consultations focused around specific Program topics or sections of the Addendum. These group consultations would be open to the public but aimed to allow state and federal fish and wildlife agencies and tribes to jointly discuss with the Council members any thoughts and concerns on new concepts in the draft Addendum, such as the program performance section. These meetings would be held in central areas of the Basin (i.e., Spokane, Boise, Portland, Missoula) and would be in addition to hearings

in each state and any private consultations that the tribes, states, customers, and other interested parties may request.

Staff intends to discuss the outreach plan with the Regional Coordination Group (RCG) at their August 12 meeting. At that time, the agencies and tribes should have had a few weeks to read the Addendum. Staff will seek the RCG's input on the high priority issues, topics, or Addendum sections that should be a focus for the group consultations.

Scheduling

After the release of the draft Addendum, the Council will begin a 90-day public comment period. For the first few weeks of the comment period, no hearings and consultations will be scheduled so as to provide time for the region to digest the draft Addendum.

Should the Council decide to release the draft at the July Council meeting, public hearings and consultations will likely begin mid-August and run through mid-October. Following the June Committee meeting, state and central staff will work together to arrange schedules and secure locations for each hearing and consultation. Staff will keep the Council members aware of the details for each hearing and consultation via email and at the July Council meeting, as necessary.

As possible, to ease travel for Council members, staff, and the region, we will aim to schedule the hearings and consultations around other meetings in the Basin. Staff will likely align hearings and consultations around the August Council meeting in Portland, the September meeting in Corvallis, and the October meeting in Seattle, as well as other meetings such as the Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee (MAFAC).

Relevance: Draft 2020 Addendum to the 2014 Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program

Workplan: March 2019 Fish and Wildlife Division Workplan item *Program amendment: hearings and consultations with states, tribes, federal agencies, and public*

Background: According to the Act, “the Council shall develop a program on the basis of such recommendations, supporting documents, and views and information obtained through public comment and participation, and consultation with the agencies, tribes, and customers.” The Act also calls for at least one hearing in each of the four states prior to adopting the Program.

In the 2013/2014 amendment process, we held two or three hearings per state (10 total):

Oregon: Astoria, Pendleton, Portland

Washington: Olympia, Spokane, Yakima

Montana: Kalispell, Missoula
Idaho: Boise, Lewiston

Also in the 2013/2014 amendment process, consultations with the Council members were scheduled with whomever requested consultation with the Council members (particularly tribes, states, and customer groups).