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June 4, 2019

MEMORANDUM

TO: Fish and Wildlife Committee Members

FROM: Stacy Horton and Laura Robinson

SUBJECT: Upper Columbia United Tribes (UCUT) submittal *Fish Passage and Reintroduction Phase 1 Report: Investigations Upstream of Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee Dams.*

BACKGROUND:

Presenters: Conor Giorgi, Anadromous Program Manager, Spokane Tribe of Indians; Casey Baldwin, Sr. Research Scientist, Fish & Wildlife Department, Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation; Thomas Biladeau, Habitat Restoration Biologist, Coeur d'Alene Tribe Fisheries

Summary: The 2014 Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program contains the *Anadromous fish mitigation in blocked areas* strategy. One of the measures under this strategy is: *reintroduction of anadromous fish above Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee dams to mainstem reaches and tributaries in the United States.* This measure calls for a science-based and phased approach to investigating the reintroduction of anadromous fish above Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee dams including juvenile and adult passage at the dams.

With the submittal of the Upper Columbia United Tribes (UCUT) report: *Fish Passage and Reintroduction Phase 1 Report: Investigations Upstream of Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee Dams* from UCUT, most of the investigations the Council called for in the Phase 1 report have been

completed. This UCUT report is a compilation of the investigations the Council requested, including habitat assessments, donor stocks and risk assessment, life cycle modeling and salmon survival potential in habitats above Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee dams. The Council stated that Phase 1 “might include’ selective releases of salmon and steelhead”, which has not occurred. Council staff also completed the [Review of Fish Passage Technologies at High Head Dams](#) which evaluates information from passage studies at Grand Coulee, Chief Joseph, and other dams and blockages (Council document 2016-14).

According to the Council’s 2014 Program, Phase 2 is to be based on the results of Phase 1, with the Council working with relevant parties about how to proceed. The Fish and Wildlife Program calls on Bonneville and the relevant federal actions agencies, working in collaboration with state and federal fish and wildlife agencies and tribes, to fund work required for Phase 2 activities, based on Council recommendations.

Relevance: This work addresses the 2014 Program’s Anadromous fish mitigation in blocked areas strategy and Emerging Priority #4: *Investigate blocked area mitigation options through reintroduction, passage and habitat improvement, and implement if warranted.*

Workplan: 2019 Fish and Wildlife Division work plan: Phase I Upper Columbia Habitat Assessment above Chief Joseph dam report submittal

Background: In 2015 the Council put out a [request for proposal](#) (RFP) to assess habitat availability and suitability above Grand Coulee and Chief Joseph dams. The Spokane Tribe of Indians proposed to implement the RFP in collaboration with its other regional co-managers: the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, Coeur d’Alene Tribe of Indians, and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. The U.S. Geological Survey Columbia River Research Laboratory and NOAA Fisheries were also part of the collaborative group and would provide technical support.

The ISRP reviewed the Spokane Tribe of Indians’ proposal to assess the potential availability and suitability of habitat for anadromous salmon and steelhead survival in the U.S. portion of the Columbia River and its tributaries above Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee dams, from river mile 545.1 to river mile 745. The ISRP’s recommendation was that the proposed work ‘Meets Scientific Review Criteria (Qualified).’ (ISRP 2016-1). Qualifications included a consideration of future suitability, and a more detailed description of the Intrinsic Potential model approach, assumptions, limitations and specific metrics.

In April 2016, the Council recommended that Bonneville fund the Spokane’s habitat assessment project ([2016-003-00](#)). Upon completion, the ISRP reviewed the completed work during the [2018 Research Projects](#)

[Review](#). The ISRP recommended that all parties involved in the completion of Phase 1 work to consider the ISRP comments for future work. The Council recommended that the comprehensive set of Phase 1 results, as well as successive phases, receive science review by the ISRP.

At the [September 2017 Council meeting in Spokane](#), UCUT technical staff from the Spokane Tribe and Colville Confederated Tribes provided a report to the Fish Committee on Phase 1 regarding habitat investigations, risk assessment, and donor stocks. (See links below for PowerPoint presentations.)

The recently released Phase 1 UCUT report is a fully developed and detailed report submitted to meet Council requirements for Phase 1.

More Info: September 2017 UCUT technical staff slides

[An Assessment of Salmon and Steelhead Habitat in the Blocked Area of the Upper Columbia River for the Suitability of Anadromous Reintroduction](#)

[Donor Stock and Risk Assessment for the Reintroduction of Salmon and Steelhead Upstream of Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee dams](#)

[Identification of Potential Habitats for Blocked Area Reintroduction](#)