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January 7, 2020

MEMORANDUM

TO: Fish and Wildlife Committee Members

FROM: Council Staff

SUBJECT: Update on Habitat Research, Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy

BACKGROUND:

Presenter: Leslie Bach, Patty O'Toole, John Shurts, Mark Fritsch

Summary: Staff will provide a brief update on the status of the Habitat research, monitoring and evaluation strategy.

Relevance: This work focuses on implementing the Council's 2013 conditions and recommendations for ensuring a cost-effective approach to tributary habitat monitoring and evaluation, as defined in Programmatic Issue #2 (i.e., *Habitat effectiveness monitoring and evaluation*) from the 2010-11 review of RME and AP Category of projects.

Background: In 2013, the Council requested a framework for habitat research and monitoring (RM&E) to support evaluation of the effectiveness of habitat projects. Although some products and updates were provided over the years, the analytical framework was never completed. At the [July 2017 meeting](#), the Council directed staff to work with the region's fish and wildlife managers and Bonneville to develop a tributary habitat monitoring strategy. In 2017 and 2018 staff held a series of webinars and workshops, and developed a preliminary strategy based on the outcomes from those meetings and review by the region.

The last update to the Fish and Wildlife Committee was August 2019.
Since that time:

- In September, Council staff, in conjunction with Bonneville and NOAA-Fisheries, sent out an updated draft strategy to the fish and wildlife managers
- The strategy had a number of pieces that still needed significant work; the intention was to work with the fish and wildlife managers to flesh out those pieces
- Staff conducted a series of meetings around the region to get input and feedback, identify issues and concerns, and receive technical edits. To date, there have been five geographically-dispersed meetings.
- The meetings were well attended and very productive from a technical standpoint
- During that time Council staff were contacted by representatives from the Columbia Basin Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (CRITFC) and its member tribes with concerns about the process and direction of the document. Inclusivity was one of the specific concerns.
- CRITFC and the tribes asked that the Council, Bonneville and NOAA take more time to address the identified legal and policy issues and to determine next steps in the process.
- Currently Council staff are working with legal and policy staff from these entities to address the concerns and determine a path forward. That group will be meeting in mid-January to continue discussions.