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## Northwest **Power** and **Conservation** Council

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November 9, 2021

### **MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Fish and Wildlife Committee members

**FROM:** Patty O'Toole, Fish and Wildlife Division Director

**SUBJECT:** Staff report on status of Program Priorities

### **BACKGROUND:**

**Presenter:** Council staff

**Summary:** Council staff will provide an update on the progress made in implementing the Council's Fish and Wildlife Program priorities as defined in the 2014 Fish and Wildlife Program and its 2020 Addendum. Staff will review each of 10 priorities called out for particular attention in the Program and discuss the accomplishments over the last seven years.

**Relevance:** The Council identifies several important new measures for priority implementation in its 2014 Program and the 2020 Addendum, in addition to the ongoing Program activities.

**Workplan:** Implementation: G. Implement 2014 Program and 2020 Program Addendum, and priorities

**Background:**

In the 2014 Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program (Program), the Council included an Investment Strategy consisting of principles and priorities to provide clear expectations for implementing 2014 Program strategies and measures. Seven emerging priorities were identified at that time (general priority topics 1-7 below), including an important priority to address non-recurring maintenance needs for hatcheries, screens and lands to ensure longevity and integrity of the Program's past investments. For some of the priority measures, implementation happens through existing funding by Bonneville, but for some priorities the Program calls for enhanced or additional funding

beyond what was implemented in 2014. In some instances, priority measures are to be addressed by others such as the Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Reclamation, or the Council itself.

The Investment Strategy notes that the Program should be sized appropriately to provide equitable treatment to priority fish and wildlife measures, regardless of whether or not they are identified in a biological opinion or in an accord, while also accommodating yearly budget limitations. The Program calls on Bonneville to fund any new or additional obligations in the Council's list of priorities from identifying savings within the current program and, as necessary, from additional expenditures and to report annually on progress. All new funding to implement the emerging priorities Council's 2014 Program has come so far only from reductions in existing project expenses. In 2015, the Council formed a Cost Savings Workgroup to identify savings, based on a programmatic methodology for guidance and accountability. The role of the CSW workgroup expanded during 2016 and 2017 to include preparing funding recommendations to the Council for implementation. The process sunset in 2017 per its charter.

In the Council's 2020 Addendum to the 2014 Fish and Wildlife Program, the Council reasserted that the emerging priority measures in the 2014 program remain a priority and added emphasis to some, while also adding a few new priority measures (general priority topics 8-10 below). The Addendum also called for the development of an improved public process to find cost savings in the existing budget and stated that the Council expects the savings will be reinvested in the program in a manner subject to Council recommendations.

### **Status update**

Below are the emerging and recently identified priority topics identified in the 2014 Program and the 2020 Addendum. At the November Committee meeting, the staff will provide a reminder of the specific priority measures along with an update on what has occurred since 2014 for each priority.

- 1-assets & investments
- 2-adaptive management/climate
- 3-predators, toxics, non-native/invasive
- 4-blocked area mitigation
- 5-sturgeon & lamprey
- 6-subbasin plans
- 7-improve flood plain habitat
8. Estuary
9. Ocean
10. Mainstem hydrosystem flow and passage operations

Additional information:

- 2014 Fish and Wildlife Program [Investment Strategy](#)
- 2020 Fish and Wildlife Program [Addendum](#)