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## Northwest Power and Conservation Council

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April 5, 2016

### DECISION MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Council members

**FROM:** Mark Fritsch, project implementation manager

**SUBJECT:** Quarterly review action for Project #1994-043-00, *Lake Roosevelt Data Collection* for funds associated with removal of Northern Pike in Lake Roosevelt.

**PROPOSED ACTION:** The Council staff recommends that the Council support the implementation of this proposed action through 2018, conditioned on the ISRP qualifications being addressed in contracting.

**SIGNIFICANCE:** The proposed action will address conditions that the Council placed on the project in previous reviews. On February 9, 2016, the Council based on past support (2015) and the priority that this suppression effort may address in the 2014 Fish and Wildlife Program<sup>1</sup> recommended support for only for the March 2016 gill netting effort and condition any other support in 2016 on the Spokane Tribe of Indians receiving favorable ISRP and Council review for all remaining efforts associated with the removal of northern pike.

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<sup>1</sup> Emerging priority #3 - Preserve program effectiveness by supporting: (1) expanded management of predators; (2) mapping and determining hotspots for toxic contaminants; and (3) aggressively addressing non-native and invasive species

## BUDGETARY/ECONOMIC IMPACTS

The Fiscal Year 2015 expense budget for the project is \$1,322,706 and has a performance period of August 1, 2015 to July 31, 2016. In addition, there is a contract request for \$1,314,199 (CR-295392) for Fiscal Year 2016. The expense budget proposed in the new action for the project for Fiscal year 2016 is \$69,529. If approved, the amount would be taken from the Fiscal Year 2016 with-in year placeholder<sup>2</sup>. Cost in years 2017, and 2018 will be addressed by Bonneville in the projects start-of-year budget and is expected to be approximately \$40,000<sup>3</sup>.

## BACKGROUND

Northern pike have been found with increasing frequency in Lake Roosevelt since 2009. They are a non-native predator known to be able to quickly establish and alter the native aquatic species assemblage. In early 2015 in association with Annual Fall Walleye Index Sampling (FWIN) and juvenile white sturgeon sampling an alarming increase in pike abundance caused concern among co-managers (Spokane Tribe of Indians, Colville Confederated Tribes and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife). Concurrently, the 2015 spring angler catch rates increased significantly and anglers now routinely capture pike in the shallow bays in the Columbia River near Kettle Falls and on the Kettle River. The co-managers are concerned about the continued expansion of pike in Lake Roosevelt, especially to the Spokane and Sanpoil rivers where native redband trout populations are already hindered by non-native Walleye predation. In addition, pike pose an enormous threat to salmon and steelhead recovery efforts below Chief Joseph Dam on the Columbia River.

At its June 3, 2015 meeting, BOG reviewed a request<sup>4</sup> from the Spokane Tribe of Indians (STOI) to fund a multi-agency action to assist in the removal northern pike from Lake Roosevelt. The request was for \$28,531 (Fiscal Year 2015) to begin work immediately<sup>5</sup>. The BOG deemed the request a scope change for the project and due to the urgent nature of the request elevated it to the BOG Management Group. On June 6, 2015 Council members supported this request, but conditioned further funding in FY2016 be contingent on favorable ISRP Review.

At the December 2, 2015 BOG meeting the STOI presented their findings from the 2015 field season associated with the northern pike removal action approved in June and submitted the lake Roosevelt Northern Pike Suppression Plan for future activities for ISRP review, as per conditioned by the Council's June decision. The suppression plan was submitted to the ISRP for review.

On January 25, 2016 the ISRP found that they needed additional detail and information before their review can be completed. The ISRP requested a response on eight issues

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<sup>2</sup>The balance for the within-year placeholder at the end of the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2016 is \$750,000 (out of \$1,000,000).

<sup>3</sup> The reduced amount in Fiscal year 2017 and 2018 reflects just staff time and contracted services since equipment was secured in the Fiscal Year 2016 request.

<sup>4</sup> Project #1994-043-00, *Lake Roosevelt Data Collection*

<sup>5</sup>Immediate purchase of equipment and associated increase in operational costs associated with a pilot Pike removal program that was implemented in the summer of 2015 by the three co-managers.

and concerns from the STOI ([ISRP document 2016-2](#)). The ISRP found that they needed clearly defined hypotheses about several northern pike suppression activities, as well as additional detail and information regarding methods being proposed and time deliverable objectives. In addition, the ISRP needs to understand the benefit the proposed effort would have to the Columbia River Basin. The STOI appreciated the review and suggestions to improve the credibility of their effort to suppress northern pike.

In an effort to proceed with the suppression effort until the science review is complete, the STOI requested that they be allowed to continue the gill netting effort (March 2016) as supported last summer by the Council. The cost associated this effort is \$8,507. All other elements associated with the northern pike suppression effort would be dependent on a favorable science review. In addition, the STOI state that if they receive a favorable review from the ISRP and they are able to fully implement their suppression effort they will at the end of the 2018 field season request an ISRP review to determine if benefit and objectives have been met and determine at what level suppression efforts need to be moving forward.

On February 9, 2016 the Council recommended support only for the March 2016 gill netting effort and condition any other support in 2016 on the STOI receiving favorable ISRP and Council review for all remaining efforts associated with the removal of northern pike..

On February 25, 2016 the Council received a submittal that was intended to address the ISRP's previous review, *Response Requested* ([ISRP document 2016-2](#)), and the action taken by the Council at their February meeting. The submittal included specific responses to the ISRP response request and a revised proposal. The submittal was sent to the ISRP on February 26, 2016.

On March 28, 2016 the ISRP provided their review ([ISRP document 2016-6](#)). The ISRP found that the revised project action meets scientific review criteria. The ISRP qualified their recommendation.

## **ANALYSIS**

The ISRP states that they appreciated the “gracious and constructive” path that the STOI took to address their questions, as part of the response requested. In addition, they felt the revisions made to the proposed action for the project was complete and expanded and clarified the justification for the proposed action. The ISRP also states that the qualifications can be addressed in contracting and future reviews.

The qualifications are intended to strengthen the study design and the associated objectives and provide the necessary detail to support the effort to reduce the numbers of northern pike in Lake Roosevelt.

Based on the ISRP review, past support and the priority that this suppression effort may address in the 2014 Fish and Wildlife Program<sup>6</sup>, the Council staff recommends supporting the implementation of this proposed action through 2018<sup>7</sup>. This recommendation is conditioned on the ISRP qualifications being addressed in contracting. Support beyond the Fiscal Year 2018 field season would be dependent on ISRP and Council review.

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<sup>6</sup> Emerging priority #3 - Preserve program effectiveness by supporting: (1) expanded management of predators; (2) mapping and determining hotspots for toxic contaminants; and (3) aggressively addressing non-native and invasive species

<sup>7</sup> The costs in Fiscal Year 2016 will come from the with-in year placeholder (BOG), and in Fiscal Years 2017 and 2018 will be addressed by Bonneville in the projects start-of-year budget process.