

# Three-Step Review Process

Fish and Wildlife Committee

March 10, 2015

# Background

- The 1996 the Northwest Power Act was amended to formally establish routine independent scientific review of Program projects for their scientific merit and consistency with the Program and to make recommendations to the Council based on their reviews.
- Their initial review (ISRP document 97-1) for projects recommended a comprehensive basin wide review of AP and recommended that until completion of that review, the Council “not approve funding for the construction and operation of new artificial propagation programs,” with this exception:

“To prevent a complete moratorium on new production, the ISRP recommends that the Council permit funding for an individual project only if the project proponents can demonstrate they have taken measures 7.0D, 7.1A, 7.1C, and 7.1F into account in the program design and the Council concurs. To ensure that standard is met, the individual projects should be funded only after a positive recommendation from an independent peer review panel.”
- At the September 1997 meeting the Council adopted a policy calling for “new production initiatives” to go through a basic development process that has three main steps or components.

# Background (cont.)

- This development process was built upon the existing multi-step design and review process recognized in earlier programs and used by Bonneville for the design, review, approval and implementation of new production initiatives.
- The process included sponsor's responses to technical questions and responses relating to: (1) master planning requirements according to Section 7.4B of the 1994 Program, (2) questions identified in the FY 1998 AIWP, (3) questions involving the Fish and Wildlife Program language identified by the Independent Scientific Review Panel in 1998, (4) development schedule and estimated cost expenditures and future needs, and (5) APR policies and standards.
- An important part of the review process is the independent scientific review of the responses to the technical elements and the full explanation of how the project is consistent with these elements. These elements reflect and refer to specific elements delineated under relevant sections in the fish and wildlife program and supplemented with issues raised in previous reviews.

# Steps - Decision Points

## Sequenced Review

### Step 1 - Conceptual

- Master Plan (submittal) that incorporates all relevant review elements
- basic assessment at all levels (science milestone, costs and permitting)

### Step 2 - Progress Review/Preliminary

- Preliminary design and cost
- NEPA compliance
- ESA review

### Step 3 - Detailed/Final Milestone

- Final design and costs for implementation
- detailed out-year cost associated with O&M and M&E.

# Step Evolution

- Originally the three-step review was developed as an interim process until the Artificial Production Review (APR) was completed.
- In 2001 the Council found that the step review process provided an orderly way to develop complex and large projects. Linking environmental review (i.e. NEPA) and funding commitments to specific phases has allowed the project sponsor and the Council to move from the conceptual to final design in steps, avoiding over commitment of resources at the early stages.
- The Three-Step Review Process has been updated several times and incorporated into the Fish and Wildlife Program.

# Triggers for Review

## Artificial Production Initiatives

- Construct new production facilities
- Begin planting fish in waters not planted before
- Increase significantly the number of fish being introduced
- Change stocks or the number of stocks
- Change the location of the production facility

## Other Project Initiatives (may request a review based on the following)

- construct a facility that costs more than \$1,000,000 during the fiscal year
- phased engineering designs are required for contractual purposes
- proposed actions address the entire watershed
- action is a multi-agency and multi-contractual effort
- new proposal that is outside the current solicitation and review cycle
- additional review or fix-it-loop is requested
- the action is a substantial deviation from the adopted subbasin plan

# Review and Decision

- 9 to 18 week review period
- feedback (response) mechanism
- Preliminary Recommendation (staff)
- Fish and Wildlife Committee Approval
- Council Recommendation

# Current Status

- Council staff tracks 56 projects for step related triggers
- 12 projects complete (22 reviews) to implementation
- 18 projects are in planning and design (nine projects are in pre-submittal (planning), four projects are in Step 1, and five are in Step 2/3)
- Nine projects were provided initial planning funds – no submittal ever received and are no longer funded
- Four projects have concluded (with 7 reviews) with a recommendation to not implement
- 15 projects implemented prior to step review



# Features and Benefits of Step Review

- Sequential
- Transparent
- Regional and Public Input
- Decision points