

Melinda S. Eden
Chair
Oregon

Joan M. Dukes
Oregon

Frank L. Cassidy Jr.
"Larry"
Washington

Tom Karier
Washington



Jim Kempton
Vice-Chair
Idaho

Judi Danielson
Idaho

Bruce A. Measure
Montana

Rhonda Whiting
Montana

Council Meeting Vancouver, WA

January 18-19, 2005

Minutes

All were present. The meeting was called to order by Council chair Judi Danielson at 8:15 am on January 19 and adjourned at 4:55 pm on January 19.

Melinda Eden moved that the Council meet in executive session at the call of the chair to discuss matters subject to the internal personnel exception. Larry Cassidy seconded, and the motion passed unanimously on a roll-call vote.

Reports from Fish and Wildlife, Power and Public Affairs committee chairs:

Judi Danielson, acting chair, fish and wildlife committee; Jim Kempton, chair, power committee; and Larry Cassidy, chair, public affairs committee.

Jim Kempton, chair of the Power Committee, said the committee discussed the funding requirements to meet the conservation targets in the Fifth Power Plan. There is a lot of debate about whether the targets can be achieved, he noted. The committee also talked about carrying out the action plan from the Power Plan and reviewed edits made to the final version of the plan, Kempton stated. We also met with Paul Norman of Bonneville to discuss the regional dialogue on the future role of Bonneville, he said, adding that Bonneville will release its report on that at the end of the week. The document follows almost exactly what the Council recommended to Bonneville, he added.

Danielson, who chaired the Fish and Wildlife Committee, said that the committee discussed Fiscal Year 2006 project review and selection, the next provincial review process, and the Klickitat Subbasin Fishery Master Plan. Also on the agenda was a discussion on habitat and production objectives integration, an update on subbasin planning and schedules, and a presentation on Bonneville's process improvement initiative, she said.

Cassidy, chair of the Public Affairs Committee, reported the Council's "Pocket Guide" was recently completed and distributed. He described the contents of the next issue of the Council's

Quarterly and noted that the Council is waiting for Bonneville's comments on its annual report to Congress.

1. Council decision on within-year project funding adjustments for implementation:

– Project 2005-002-00 Lower Granite Dam Adult Trap Improvements

Staffer Mark Fritsch presented a proposal for \$300,000 in capital funds for adult trap improvements at Lower Granite Dam, noting it is a new project to do design work to the trap to increase its capacity and allow for broodstock collection. I support this project, but I want Bonneville to negotiate additional funding for it with the Corps of Engineers so we don't have to pick up the additional funding later in our expense budget, said Cassidy. Tom Karier suggested going ahead with the design phase of the project, but asking the Independent Scientific Review Panel (ISRP) to review the project while the design is being done. Bill Maslen of Bonneville said Bonneville would meet with the Corps about the project's funding and that Bonneville is "committed to work extra hard" so that the project doesn't get picked up in the expense budget.

Eden moved that the Council recommend that Bonneville adjust the Fiscal Year 2005 capital funds budget for Project 2005-002-00, Lower Granite Dam Adult Trap Improvements, in an amount not to exceed \$300,000, for the design of improvements at the Lower Granite Dam adult trap, and conditioned on ISRP review simultaneous with the design phase. Cassidy seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

– Project 1983-319-00 New Marking and Monitoring Techniques for fish

[Not Discussed]

– Project 2001-033-00 Implement Wildlife Habitat Protection and Restoration on the Coeur d'Alene Indian Reservation: Hangman Watershed

Mark Fritsch presented a proposal for a within-year funding adjustment for the Hangman Watershed on the Coeur d'Alene Indian Reservation. The project involves the purchase of three parcels of land for habitat protection, he said. Eden moved that the Council recommend that Bonneville adjust the Fiscal Year 2005 expense budget for Project 2001-033-00, Wildlife Habitat Protection and Restoration on the Coeur d'Alene Reservation: Hangman Watershed, in an amount not to exceed \$76,800, to develop a management plan for the parcels being purchased and to conduct initial operation and maintenance and baseline monitoring and evaluation. Cassidy seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

2. Briefing on Fiscal Year 2006 project review process:

Patty O'Toole, program implementation manager.

Staffers Doug Marker and Patty O'Toole led a discussion of how to put together the Fiscal Year 2006 fish and wildlife project funding budget, given that recommendations for all projects from the provincial reviews, except for mainstem and systemwide projects, will expire at the end of Fiscal Year 2005. One question is when to re-open new project selection, Marker said. Another element of the discussion is the fact that Bonneville is overhauling its financial management

system and instituting the Pisces system, he noted. As a result of that, it is still not entirely clear when we will have information about all the projects currently being funded, Marker said. The staff's recommendation is that Fiscal Year 2006 be used as a transition year in which we review the accomplishments, deliverables, and scope of existing projects, and then open a new project selection in Fiscal Year 2007, he stated.

O'Toole outlined a schedule to develop a work plan and budget for Fiscal Year 2006, including a review of existing projects for consistency with subbasin plans and accomplishments achieved, which would take place before March of this year, followed by public comment through April 15. The goal is to present a set of Fiscal Year 2006 project funding recommendations to the Council at its July meeting, she said.

As part of our review of existing projects, we would work with Bonneville staff to identify projects ready "to come to closure," O'Toole told the Council. We propose to look at every project, especially the projects identified last year as having "issues" that need further examination, she said. As a result of the review, we hope we can identify some savings because we will also be facing new costs to implement the new Biological Opinion (BiOp), O'Toole noted. We are asking today for the Council to confirm this is the right approach to take to prepare the Fiscal Year 2006 work plan, she said.

I don't like rolling over budgets -- there should always be a decision on whether a project needs to be done or not, said Karier. "We are coming perilously close to abrogating our responsibility to review these projects," he stated. I'd rather see a comprehensive project review this year, Karier said, adding there needs to be a check against the subbasin plans. The subbasin planners need to look at the projects against the plans they wrote and consider whether each project is a priority or not, he stated. We need to ask project sponsors what they have accomplished, Karier continued. Those kinds of activities are overdue, and I'm uncomfortable with just rolling over budgets, he said.

We are not just rolling over budgets, responded Marker. We are working with Bonneville to focus on projects with three-year completion deadlines, and we can look at projects that need to compete for renewal of their funding, he said. We are going to look at project performance using Bonneville's new information tools, Marker added.

Some projects are five years out without some kind of review, either by the ISRP or just against subbasin plans, said Karier. Lots of projects are stuck in Phase One, he added. A staff review is not adequate -- the project sponsors need to articulate what they've done and will do, Karier stated. We've been working with Bonneville on their financial structure and accounting to be sure that we are able to look at different projects consistently, Marker said. Bonneville is urging us to support them in overhauling their contracting process, he added. We can push harder to get performance information from Bonneville and to review projects against subbasin plans, Marker said.

We need to review all the projects because all of their funding requirements have changed, Karier stated. Eden agreed, noting that "we all feel discomfort" with projects that have been going for years and years. But I thought the comprehensive staff review of the projects this year would include reviewing goals and accomplishments and identifying if there are project components that don't need to be done, she said. Yes, it depends on what is meant by a comprehensive review, stated O'Toole. There are some constraints; for example, we are limited

by the amount of information Bonneville can provide, she said. Bonneville products that would really help us aren't up and running yet and won't be until this summer, O'Toole pointed out.

I heard at the fish and wildlife Committee that Bonneville is committed to working to help this review happen, said Eden. She noted that the "bow wave" of projects hasn't disappeared and that while some projects may be done, there are others that were "crammed into the bow wave" because Bonneville put constraints on spending. Eden suggested the full Council be briefed on Bonneville's financial management process, including the Pisces system.

She noted that staff had indicated Bonneville might request \$10 million for activities related to the new BiOp and said if that is so, subbasin plan funding will be decreasing. We are not just a BiOp organization, Eden said. We need to get the project reviews done, and Bonneville needs to cooperate in that, she stated.

Cassidy said the project review "isn't rocket science." Subbasin planners in Washington could review the list of projects against their subbasin plans within two weeks, he stated. You should do a review, but the bottom line is what when it is over, we need to have something that "comes out of the Bonneville tube" that leaves us with some Fiscal Year 2006 funding, Cassidy said.

We will ask project sponsors to provide us with what they've accomplished, said O'Toole. How many projects are there? Joan Dukes asked. Between 200 and 250, but Bonneville breaks some of those into several contracts, so there are about 450 contracts, replied Marker. How many of the projects are under three-year contracts that are expiring? Dukes asked. It is a question of when the scope of work for the project is done, replied Marker.

Why would you give someone a three-year contract without a way to review the accomplishments? Dukes asked. Tom Iverson of the Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Authority (CBFWA) said a lot of what the Council is asking for is being done. CBFWA is doing project reviews of all the projects, and contract managers have access to that information, he said. We are trying to get through the installation of the Pisces system, and that's why we are treating this year as a transition year, Iverson stated. Danielson asked him to send the CBFWA review information to the new Council members.

Marker explained how the staff plans to go through all the contracts, noting it would be a "needs-based or zero-based budgeting exercise." It will be a more narrow and manageable review than we've done in the past, he stated. Taking the questions asked by Council members today into account, we'll flesh out more on how the review will be done and report to you again next month, Marker told the Council.

3. Presentation on shad in the lower Columbia:

Dr. James Petersen, U.S. Geological Service.

Dr. James Petersen of the U.S. Geological Survey's Western Fisheries Research Center explained that American shad are anadromous fish native to eastern North America that were transplanted to the West in 1872 and were first noticed in the Columbia River in 1876. Since 1960, their numbers have increased dramatically, he pointed out, noting that a record run of over 5.2 million adult shad passed Bonneville Dam in 2004.

The reservoirs at the dams are an ideal spawning habitat for shad, Petersen noted. There is a fishery for shad, but the number of fish being caught is small compared to the number coming back, he said.

There are four ways the shad may be affecting salmon and the ecosystem, Petersen explained. The first is competition -- adult shad may feed in the estuary and lower Columbia River and compete with outmigrating juvenile salmon for food, and juvenile shad may compete with juvenile fall chinook for food or rearing space, he said. Second, shad provide food for species that are predators on salmon, such as northern pikeminnow and smallmouth bass, Petersen noted. The shad may be increasing the rate of growth of these predators and increasing their impact on juvenile salmon, he said. On the positive side, since adult shad are abundant below dams, they may be an important part of the diet of adult white sturgeon, Petersen pointed out.

Third, the mortality of adult shad puts nutrients in the mainstem Columbia River, which may cause higher production of plankton, potentially a positive benefit to salmon, Petersen said. Finally, shad may transmit diseases to other marine fish, he stated.

Given that “the Columbia River is such a huge system, could shad really matter?” Petersen asked. His reply: these types of fish, when they come in as invaders, can affect the plankton supply that other fish eat, and they can affect the growth rates of predators at the top of the system. “It’s something we need to be very concerned about,” Petersen told the Council.

He recommended improved monitoring of shad populations and their competition with juvenile salmon. There needs to be research on the impact of shad larvae as food for juvenile salmon, and of shad as food for other fish and birds, Petersen suggested. Research should also look at the shad’s role in redistributing nutrients and carrying disease, he said.

Karier asked about instances of shad blocking fish ladders at the dams and causing modifications to be made to the ladders. That was done in the 1970s, after the shad numbers started going up in the 1960s, Petersen explained. The modifications to the ladders undoubtedly increased the rate of passage and may have facilitated the shad population increases, he said. Rock Peters of the Corps of Engineers confirmed that the Corps did modify the ladders in order to get shad over them, but he said studies the Corps did “in a cursory way” in the last two years have found it doesn’t appear the shad are slowing down the passage of salmon, at least in the lower river.

Given the concern we have about salmon recovery, would you say we have a crisis building with respect to shad? Danielson asked. I wouldn’t say there isn’t, but what we have is a tremendous lack of information, Petersen replied. “I’d volunteer to take a plate of shad to the Caspian terns - - maybe we could get them on a new diet,” quipped Cassidy. The terns don’t appear to feed on shad -- the bird predation would be from gulls and cormorants, Petersen noted.

If budgets were not an issue, what would be the next piece of research on shad to be done? asked Eden. Probably monitoring in the lower river, replied Petersen. It would be good to know that invasive species are not counteracting all the good work being done in the lower river, he said.

If shad are determined to be a problem, what is one to do? Eden asked. You could encourage more shad fisheries, Petersen suggested. You could take restrictions off gillnet fishing, but that could cause problems for salmon, he said. You can block them fairly easily at the dams, but that will cause other management issues, Petersen noted.

4. Presentation on Columbia River fisheries management:

Eric Redman, Heller, Ehrman.

Seattle attorney Eric Redman began his presentation on “Salmon Fishing vs. Salmon Spawning: Reconciling the Goals of Recovery Planning” by noting that before there were any Endangered Species Act (ESA) listings, salmon were protected as a renewable resource, and “we focused on who would get to kill the fish and keep the benefits.” We can get back to treating salmon as a resource once listed salmon are recovered and delisted, he said. Recovering salmon to harvestable levels is a shared regional goal, and this is also widely accepted as a legal obligation owed the Treaty tribes, Redman stated.

The ESA listings require us to protect the fish, not the fishery, he said. Under the ESA, a listed fish is a wild animal to be protected from human harm, and “recovery to harvestable levels” has nothing to do with the ESA, Redman stated. Under the law, threatened and endangered animals can’t be harvested on purpose, he noted, adding that “this is a key conceptual and substantive issue in recovery planning for salmon.” It is not merely a semantic issue of “incidental” v. “deliberate” takings, Redman said.

Since the salmon reproduces only once, “if we catch and kill it, it dies a virgin, making no contribution to recovery,” he stated. Recovery is measured by the number of adults that return from the sea and spawn, Redman said. Getting more juveniles to sea without more adults returning to spawn produces no recovery benefit, he added.

At sea, salmon swim in mixed stocks, and ESA-listed fish mingle and die with others, Redman said. We can use “ESA-friendly” fishing methods, but generally we don’t, he noted. Terminal fisheries, which are often run by tribes, are managed to spare ESA-listed salmon, and selective fishing is possible with fish marking and the right gear, Redman said. Such measures are potentially very cost-effective for ESA recovery purposes, but instead high-seas, ocean-intercept, and other mixed-stock fishing still predominates, he stated. My point is that we should handle harvest differently, at least temporarily, while the fish remain listed, Redman told the Council.

He compared the treatment of salmon with other ESA-listed animals, noting that most were never hunted, and that “we stopped hunting those that were.” Redman used the example of the Columbia white-tail deer, pointing out that hunting of the species is strictly prohibited. “Trains and cars kill deer accidentally, yet no one suggests tearing out railroad tracks and highways to protect the deer so that hunters can kill them instead,” he said.

With other depleted fish, including anadromous ones, we limit or stop the catch, and “rested” stocks usually rebound quickly, Redman stated, citing the example of the Bristol Bay salmon. He described five “stated reasons for sidestepping harvest in ESA recovery planning” and “why they don’t add up.”

“Harvest is not a significant factor in the mortality of ESA-listed salmon.” Redman said “this is false” because harvest kills many ESA-listed, spawning-ready salmon. The total harvest for the Snake River fall chinook has ranged from 40 percent to 70 percent of adults, and the catch in Canada of Puget Sound chinook increased 36 percent in 2003, after tribes cut back, he indicated. NOAA Fisheries is proposing to triple the “incidental take” of ESA-listed steelhead in the Columbia fishery, Redman said.

“We don’t target ESA-listed salmon in our sport or commercial harvest.” This, he stated, is an example of “lack of candor in public discourse.” We do target the abundant salmon with which the ESA-listed salmon swim, and doing so “hammers” the weak, ESA-listed fish in mixed-stock fisheries, according to Redman.

“Our treaties with Canada and Northwest tribes mean we can’t limit harvest.” The fact that treaties exist should be a starting point for analysis, not the end, he said. I believe in treaties and the rights of tribes, but not in using them as an excuse for not analyzing the situation, Redman stated. Not all salmon fishing is treaty-protected, he noted, adding that recovery would be faster and less costly if non-treaty fishing were suspended and/or “re-invented” in an ESA-friendly manner during the recovery period. This would be true even if we left treaty harvest undisturbed, Redman said. Since non-treaty harvest takes fish from Treaty tribes, using the treaties to justify non-treaty fishing is illogical, and perhaps even cynical, he stated. For treaty-protected harvests, the issue is whether we can make them more ESA-friendly, according to Redman. We have the technology, know-how, and funds to do this, and some tribes are leading the way on this issue, he pointed out.

“Harvest has been restricted too much already. It’s time for others to sacrifice.” This reason proves the adage “where you stand depends on where you sit,” Redman said. There is a widespread perception that serious harvest reform is neglected in recovery planning, and ratepayers, taxpayers, and landowners think they are paying to save the fish, not the fishery, he stated. This claim also ignores the wild animal status of ESA-listed fish, Redman continued. Once ESA-listed, the animals are not to be treated as economic resources anymore, they are to be protected, he said. The allowed harvest of other ESA-listed animals is zero, pending recovery and delisting, Redman noted. Harvested salmon do not aid recovery, and “to an ESA-listed salmon, dying at a fisherman’s hands is no better, and may be worse, than dying at an earlier point in the salmon’s life cycle, he stated. At another level, however, it is true that more fish could be harvested because salmon as a whole are plentiful, Redman said. Some abundant stocks are now under-fished, he added.

“We can control habitat, but not harvest -- only the Federal government can do that.” This is heard most often from local governments taking steps for ESA recovery, but many of them are now facing lawsuits on ESA habitat measures, Redman said. Within a year, he predicted that local governments would be saying “There’s no ESA point in our spending millions, and getting sued, to save spawning habitat if you the Federal government don’t take steps to get more adults back to spawn.” As for the states, they co-manage harvest and “sit at the table,” Redman said. Federal agencies could do more to enforce the ESA for listed salmon as they do for other listed species, such as having the Customs Service stop people who try to bring ESA-listed fish caught in Canada back to the U.S. without a permit, he stated. The Council could direct Bonneville spending to develop and implement selective fishing and help the tribes make gear changes, Redman said. The Council, he added, has a key voice in recovery plans and could insist that harvest be integrated with the other H’s into the plans.

The reasons to deal with harvest are compelling, Redman told the Council. In ESA recovery terms, everything spent on a listed fish that’s harvested is wasted, he said. Recovery is about getting spawning pairs back to their native streams alive, Redman added.

We have the ability to make harvest more selective and ESA-friendly, he said, noting that many sports fishermen have “catch and release” experience already and that commercial fishing techniques can be adapted to that too. With fin-clipping or other marking techniques, abundant hatchery fish can be targeted for harvest while ESA-listed and other unmarked fish are released, Redman stated. We can afford to pay for it, including compensation where warranted, he said. We already pay a lot for less direct recovery measures, according to Redman. “The notion that we can’t re-invent how we harvest salmon at sea is silly,” he added.

The ethical issues involved are practical ones too, Redman stated, noting that recovery requires public support and that the public believes the costs are to protect the fish, not the fishery. If ESA recovery measures, such as hydro operations and habitat improvement, have the practical effect of improving salmon harvest rather than salmon recovery, the public is very largely being deceived and its sentiments taken advantage of, he said. Resistance will only grow if harvest issues are not addressed squarely and openly in ESA recovery planning, Redman added.

He pointed out that in the past, salmon protection efforts were funded by ratepayers, but now funding from taxpayers and landowners is being required. King County, Washington is starting to see lawsuits based on the taking of private property for salmon protection, Redman said. We can’t impose requirements on our citizens without telling them how many fish we will get back, he stated. I am urging the Council to take the position that harvest is an integral part of recovery planning, get involved in how harvest can be re-invented and made more selective, and allocate the dollars needed, Redman concluded.

What about the *U.S. v. Oregon* process? Judi Danielson asked. The principal thing about it is that it’s a totally closed process, replied Redman. It is a forum where no one can get in and ask questions, and agreements are being hammered out that don’t include participation from ratepayers, taxpayers, or landowners, he said.

Danielson asked about his statement that NOAA Fisheries is tripling the incidental take of steelhead. This is one of the things that creates cynicism among ratepayers and taxpayers, replied Redman. There are counties in the Puget Sound area trying to protect fish and then they read that the federal government is tripling the number of ESA-listed fish that can be killed, he said.

Kempton asked about the lawsuits being filed in King County. To satisfy the ESA, through its land use laws, King County is restricting what people can do on their property, and that affects people’s ability to develop property along rivers, for example, replied Redman.

These kinds of discussions can be inflammatory -- we have a responsibility to present a balanced viewpoint, but your comments lack balance, Larry Cassidy told Redman. I am on the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission that deals with the high-seas interception of salmon, he noted. We are arresting and seizing vessels and working hard to protect anadromous fish, Cassidy said. There are things going on that you could have mentioned that would have given your presentation some balance, he stated.

Your comments bring value to this important issue, but you should have pointed out some of the good work that is going on, Cassidy said. It would be less inflammatory if we try to get everyone pulling together, he added. It’s hard for people on the outside when they’ve been told

“to go away and mind their own business,” said Redman. In King County, I urge you to talk with people about how they have been treated by NOAA Fisheries, he stated.

Whiting asked him to expand on his ideas that harvest can be done in a more ESA-friendly way. Some tribes have been leaders in selective fishing, and they have invested a lot in it, Redman replied, citing efforts along the Nooksack River in Washington. With uniform mass-marking, you could have traps instead of big nets, he said. Some tribes might be willing to do that, if they were able to get the funding and given the understanding that this change of gear is a temporary method, Redman stated. There are some things we cannot do because of treaties, but we should try to find things we can do, not just take the issue off the table, he said.

The Council has supported terminal fisheries and efforts to use tangle nets and asked for a report on fin-clipping in the Columbia Basin, noted Karier. Doesn't *U.S. v. Oregon* have to make decisions that are compatible with ESA listing of the fish? he asked. *U.S. v. Oregon* is a case about salmon as a resource, responded Redman. Over 20 years ago, when the Power Act was written, no one believed you could have both ESA listings and harvest at the same time, he said. One of “the greatest pieces of sleight of hand” that has occurred since then has been NOAA Fisheries listings of the fish and also declaring harvest as an incidental take, Redman stated.

It takes a lot of courage to talk about the fourth H in the four H's, observed Danielson. I appreciate your ideas on how to recover fish, she said.

Gerald Danzuka of the Warm Springs Tribes said the tribes have been managing fisheries for 700 generations. We've made mistakes, but we've learned from them and moved on, he stated. Harvesting is our livelihood, Danzuka said. We agree we need to work in a comprehensive manner to recover resources, and we suggest a balancing act with tribes as a partner, he said. The reason some of these problems have come about is that the tribes have been kept out of some of these decisions in the past, Danzuka stated. Non-ESA-listed fish take up the bulk of our management, but the ESA takes more of our resources to deal with, he said.

Fighting against each other won't help the situation, he stated. Even if we don't agree, that shouldn't mean we can't sit down at the table and talk, Danzuka said. We could talk about this issue for days, he added.

Bill Tweit of the Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) suggested the Council take a deeper look at this complicated issue by inviting a panel representing all the different viewpoints to discuss it. I was offended to hear in the presentation that harvest is the “H” we can't talk about, he said. I've been in lots of meetings talking about harvest, Tweit stated. WDFW's policy is to continue to look for new and innovative ways to manage harvest, and we've come a long way, he said. I was also bothered by the presentation's suggestion that harvest is “an all or nothing” -- it's a sliding scale, Tweit stated. The presentation presented strictly the downside and not the positive, he added.

5. Presentation on habitat and production objectives integration:

Bruce Suzumoto, manager, special projects.

Staffer Bruce Suzumoto explained an approach for producing integrated fish production plans in the Columbia Basin that would use an “All-H Analyzer” (AHA) model. He said the Council has received numerous comments on the need to aggregate subbasin plan objectives at a provincial and basinwide scale and to adopt fish population and habitat objectives at these higher program levels. This higher level “roll-up” of objectives will help define priorities for the Council’s fish and wildlife program, guide the allocation of Bonneville funding, define the next project selection process, and support recovery planning, according to Suzumoto.

Producing integrated fish production plans would develop tools to provide biological objectives for each stock and watershed and a basis for monitoring and evaluation, he said. It would also provide a way to integrate natural and artificial production in recovery plans, Suzumoto stated.

The subbasin plans did a good job of assessing habitat potential, but in most subbasins, hatchery and natural production were treated separately, he explained. In this process, we propose to bring natural and hatchery production together, Suzumoto said. The bottom line of this “technical exercise,” he stated, is that we plan to deliver actual numbers for natural escapement.

There is difficulty getting agreement on natural escapement goals, said Karier. Will you give us a natural escapement goal for each subbasin? he asked. Yes, we will work with the co-managers and subbasin planners to determine those numbers, replied Suzumoto.

If you’ve done pilot projects in two subbasins, have you generated numbers and have we seen them? Eden asked. Would NOAA Fisheries be willing to pay half the cost of this effort since it is expensive and will benefit NOAA Fisheries? she queried. We will get the numbers from the pilots to you after we have cleared them with the people in the pilot areas, replied Suzumoto.

The Council spent money on this project so we should see the results, said Eden. I’m also concerned about having a scientific review of this effort, she added. I agree this model should go through the Independent Scientific Review Panel (ISRP), said Karier. We’ve developed lots of good models and analysis, but we still can’t agree on things like natural escapement goals, he noted. You should think about what kind of commitment we can get so we don’t just have another model, Karier added.

The AHA model came from work being done in Washington state, Suzumoto said. We propose to use the model to get at the biological objectives, he stated. Once we employ this method in each subbasin, we can aggregate numbers into provincial objectives and then up to basinwide objectives -- that’s the roll-up, Suzumoto explained.

In talking with people, I’ve found it’s unanimous that something like this is necessary, he continued. We will continue to work to improve the tool and database and then bring a work plan and budget to you in February, he told the Council.

A weakness in the Council’s fish and wildlife program has been that we have not had a set of hard, quantified habitat and population goals that can be used to measure progress and as a basis for monitoring and evaluation, said staffer John Shurts. Now we have the capability to set those

kinds of objectives, he noted. For the time being, this just applies to anadromous fish, but in the future, I expect this to be adaptable to resident fish, said Danielson.

My goal is to try to produce draft federal recovery plans for every ESA-listed species this year, said Rob Walton of NOAA Fisheries. This is partly in recognition of the “growing salmon funding fatigue” on the part of Congress and state legislatures, he stated. They want to know what they are getting for the money they are spending, Walton said.

I support the use of AHA -- we do need something like this, he said. It has been used extensively in the Puget Sound, Walton pointed out. Thus far, our scientists think this tool is useful, he said. I see it as an “interview tool” that can help us clarify what fish and wildlife managers and others think natural and hatchery production goals should be, Walton explained. AHA doesn’t tell them that, it asks them that, he stated.

The AHA methodology suggests “where in the spectrum a program is now,” and it is an effective tool for raising questions like, do we have enough habitat, or do we have too many hatchery fish, Walton said. It is the first tool that presents a simple approach to asking the right questions about habitat, hatcheries, and harvest, and enabling us to integrate the answers, he added.

As to whether NOAA Fisheries would pay half of the costs, we don’t know yet what our budget is, Walton said. Today I endorse the use of AHA, but I’m not endorsing a budget for it, he stated. I’d like to see the results of the pilot projects first, among other things, Walton added.

I think we should move forward with this and have a science review of it later on down the road, said Danielson. Eden said her intent in asking for a science review is not to slow the effort down, but to have the review done by February so the Council has all the information it needs before making a decision on whether to “spend a great deal of money” on this tool.

Shurts said staff would try to have a science review done by the February meeting.

6. Possible report on regional data management, including DART, Fish Passage Center, and Streamnet issues:

Jim Tanner, administrative officer; and Peter Paquet, manager, wildlife and resident fish.

In November, the Council approved a \$10,000 contract for an independent analysis of the costs associated with various data management functions in the region, including the Fish Passage Center (FPC), StreamNet, and the Data Access in Real Time (DART) program at the University of Washington, recounted staffer Peter Paquet. He reported that Council staff worked with the Moss-Adams firm to develop a spreadsheet of categories of information the consultant might use in the study and sent a draft of the spreadsheet to the FPC. A meeting was held with FPC director Michele DeHart and Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Authority (CBFWA) staff to discuss the spreadsheet, and it is now being revised because there were concerns some of its categories weren’t applicable, Paquet said.

We are waiting to get the revised spreadsheet back from the FPC and CBFWA, he noted. We hope to have something more to report to you at the February meeting, Paquet said.

7. Report on Washington Recovery Board experience with subbasin planning:

Jeff Breckel, Executive Director, Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board.

Jeff Breckel, executive director of the Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board (LCFRB), and LCFRB member Bill Dygert gave a report on the LCFRB's experience with subbasin planning. Dygert said the LCFRB was established by state statute in 1998 to oversee and coordinate salmon recovery efforts in the lower Columbia. He described the board and its technical advisory committee and said the LCFRB region encompasses 5,704 square miles, or 7.2 percent of the state, as well as 18 major subbasins with 73 distinct salmon populations. The LCFRB was the first to complete a recovery plan in the state of Washington, Dygert noted. The plan's goal is to have healthy, harvestable salmon populations within 25 years and to enhance other resident fish and wildlife species, he said.

Breckel described how the LCFRB used a bottom-up approach to recovery planning and their work using the EDT model to get "a scientifically sound plan that would work for both people and fish." He said the plan was submitted to Washington's governor on December 15 and that they are now working with NOAA Fisheries to secure its adoption. They are also developing implementation plans and trying to secure commitments for the actions in the plan, Breckel told the Council. We expect to commence implementation in July of this year, he said. Implementation issues, according to Breckel, include broadening public participation, monitoring and adaptive management, and obtaining resources to get the work done and maintain the relationships in the region that have been built.

Karier asked if the Council were to give them a list of proposed fish and wildlife projects in their area, whether the LCFRB could review them for compatibility with their recovery plan. We can do that, Breckel replied. Our intention is to identify key projects in our region to be accomplished in the next six years that all agree to, he said. In six months, we hope to have a specific list of ranked projects for each subbasin in our area available, Breckel stated.

8. Presentation on the EKO-System data system:

James Nall, CEO, Paladin Data Systems.

James Nall and Dave Mastin of Paladin Data Systems made a presentation on the company's EKO-System, a Web-based suite of software designed for natural resource managers to use to manage all aspects of conservation projects, such as setting objectives, tracking expenditures, storing data, and generating reports. Nall demonstrated how the system works and how it can be used. Rhonda Whiting asked if users can upload and manage the system themselves, and Nall replied yes. Whiting asked about security and whether there is a help desk. Eventually, we will have 24/7 help desk, Nall said. As for security, each user gets a log-in and password, and there are 10 security levels, he noted.

Cassidy asked about the cost of their services. We are negotiating a contract for all 48 conservation districts in Washington and that contract will be for about \$400,000, Nall replied. This is useful for the Council to be able to use as a standard of comparison with Bonneville's Pisces system, said Karier. Bonneville needs to strive to the level you've demonstrated here, he added.

9. Report by editing committee on Fifth Power Plan:

Dick Watson, director, power division.

We held an editing session on the Fifth Power Plan last week, staffer Dick Watson reported. We'll soon be sending out the sections of the document that have been edited, and our goal is to get the plan up on our website by the end of the month, he told the Council.

10. Presentation on Fifth Power Plan action items:

Dick Watson.

He described the work plan for the Council's Power Division that flows out of the new power plan. The first area Watson described was conservation, noting that work on the strategic plan for conservation acquisition "needs to move quickly." He said the end of March is the target for reaching agreement on allocation of resources by mechanism and preparing a preliminary assessment of budget requirements. June 30 is the target for reaching agreement on governance and management, and the plan is to have a functioning process, including reporting and tracking, by January of next year, Watson stated.

He laid out schedules for assessing the commercial progress of coal gasification combined-cycle technology, resolving the uncertainties associated with large-scale wind energy development, and improving the integration of resource and transmission planning. Watson said an Adequacy Forum to begin the work to establish adequacy standards for the Northwest would start meeting this quarter. Workshops and work with utilities to improve the consideration of risk in utility Integrated Resource Plans will begin in the third quarter, he noted.

We'll report back to the Power Committee on our progress in achieving the milestones we've laid out every six months, Watson said. We may be one staff person short to accomplish all you've described, stated Kempton. The Power Committee will work with Steve Crow and may bring back something to the full Council about the need to hire another staffer to get this work done, he said.

11. Update on long-term fish and wildlife funding agreement:

Doug Marker, director, fish and wildlife division.

Staffer Doug Marker updated the Council on efforts to develop a long-term fish and wildlife (fish and wildlife) funding agreement, including a three-year budget number. He said Bonneville has announced a Power Function Review (PFR) public involvement process aimed at establishing fish and wildlife costs for Bonneville's 2007 power rate case. Bonneville will incorporate the fish and wildlife costs into the revenue requirement the agency will use to develop its initial power rates proposal for the rate case that begins this fall, Marker explained. As part of the PFR, Bonneville will hold briefings on its various cost centers, he noted. The workshop on April 5 that deals with funding agreements for Corps and Reclamation fish and wildlife O&M expenses, capital investments, and modeling assumptions for fish and wildlife operations to be used in the hydro regulation studies is of particular interest, Marker said.

He recounted how the four Northwest governors asked the Council in 2003 to negotiate a new long-term fish and wildlife funding agreement and said that Council staff has looked at the current fish and wildlife program's fixed costs and estimated them to be about \$70 million a year. We've been trying to look at various cost drivers and how they will influence costs up or down, said staffer Patty O'Toole. We have looked at the effect on costs of the Council's fish and wildlife program and of the new Biological Opinion (BiOp), she stated.

Bonneville has told us it wants to have more money directed to on-the-ground projects, and we support that, but we need to see the details, O'Toole noted. We are ready to brief the Council on the assumptions we've been using, she said.

Since Bonneville will be making its initial recommendations on fish and wildlife numbers in February, we need to determine before then what the Council wants to recommend to Bonneville, Marker said. We need to decide whether to recommend a number or decide how to evaluate numbers that come from Bonneville, he told the Council.

We have exchanged draft MOA documents with Bonneville, but have yet to reach a common draft, Marker noted. We are going to schedule meetings with individual Council members to discuss these issues, and we are looking to the Council for recommendations on "how to come to closure" on this, he added.

12. Council business:

– Adoption of minutes

Eden moved to approve the minutes for the December 15-16, 2004 meeting held in Portland, Oregon. Cassidy seconded, and the motion passed with six members voting aye. Bruce Measure and Rhonda Whiting abstained from the vote.

– Election of officers

At the Council's annual election, Karier nominated Kempton to be the vice-chair, stating that Kempton had done an outstanding job overseeing preparation of the Fifth Power Plan and noting that he is "hardworking and fearless in the face of overwhelming detail." Cassidy seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. Kempton nominated Eden to be the next chair, outlining the qualities the Council's chair needs and stating that Eden will be a good fit for the job. Cassidy seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. Eden thanked outgoing Council chair Danielson for her hard work and congratulated her on an extremely successful past two years as chair.

Approved February 16, 2005

/s/ Jim Kempton

Vice-Chair