

Tom Karier
Chair
Washington

Frank L. Cassidy Jr.
"Larry"
Washington

Jim Kempton
Idaho

Judi Danielson
Idaho



Joan M. Dukes
Vice-Chair
Oregon

Melinda S. Eden
Oregon

Bruce A. Measure
Montana

Rhonda Whiting
Montana

Council Meeting Coeur d'Alene, ID

November 14-15, 2006

Minutes

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

Rhonda Whiting, chair, fish and wildlife committee. Jim Kempton, chair, power committee; and Larry Cassidy, chair, public affairs committee.

Jim Kempton reported that the Power Committee discussed the resource adequacy implementation paper and elements of the Fifth Power Plan that may require updating. The committee heard a presentation on the implications of Washington Initiative 937 and how it might affect the Council's Power Plan, he said. We talked about other generating technologies and the role of Bonneville, Kempton stated, pointing out that Bonneville expects to make a decision on the Regional Dialogue in January.

Rhonda Whiting reported that the Fish and Wildlife Committee discussed the Comparative Survival Study review and heard from a panel on fish and wildlife manager coordination funding. We also went over Bonneville's in-lieu policy and a schedule for innovative project solicitations, she said, and discussed the next steps in our effort to set provincial objectives and our work with the fish and wildlife managers in this process.

Larry Cassidy reported the Public Affairs Committee had decided that instead of a luncheon on December 14, the Council will host a reception on the evening of December 13th to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Northwest Power Act.

1. Presentation and Council decision on fish and wildlife manager coordination funding:

Lynn Palensky, subbasin planning project manager; Brian Lipscomb, CBFWA; Jaime Pinkham, CRITFC, Mary Verner, UCUTs; and representatives from the Spokane and Kalispel tribes.

Rhonda Whiting said the Council's Fish and Wildlife Committee had approved \$2,481,044 to fund five fish and wildlife manager coordination proposals from the Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Authority (CBFWA), Upper Columbia United Tribes (UCUTs), Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (CRITFC), Spokane Tribes, and the Kalispel Tribe. Last month, the Council set aside \$2,351,044 as a placeholder for coordination projects, she noted. The committee recommends that the difference in costs be made up through FY 2007-2009 unallocated funds, Whiting stated. There were three yes votes on the fish and wildlife Committee, she reported, noting that she had not voted because a family member has a contract with CBFWA.

Whiting said as part of the approval, the fish and wildlife Committee asked for the fish and wildlife managers to report quarterly and provide deliverables.

Dukes moved, with Cassidy seconding, that the Council recommend Bonneville fund the following coordination projects for one year, with quarterly reports due to the Council from each entity: CBFWA, not to exceed \$2,071,450; UCUTs, not to exceed \$69,594; CRITFC, not to exceed \$210,000; Spokane Tribes, not to exceed \$65,000; and Kalispel Tribe, not to exceed \$65,000. The motion passed, with Eden voting no, and Whiting abstaining from the vote.

2. Council decision on Comparative Survival Study review:

Jim Ruff, manager, mainstem passage and river operations.

In October, the Council deferred a FY 2007-2009 funding recommendation for the Comparative Survival Study (CSS) project until staff could look into what it would take to do a 10-year retrospective report on the CSS while still doing the PIT-tagging that is at the heart of the project, said staffer Doug Marker. The project sponsor told us it would take six months to put together a draft report, which would include an in-depth description of the methods, analytical approaches, and interpretation of all the past data, according to staffer Jim Ruff. If the work began in December, the draft would be done next May, he stated.

During the summer, there would be regional review of the draft, and then the Independent Scientific Advisory Board (ISAB) would review the final report, Ruff said. In October 2007, the ISAB would brief the Council on its review, he explained. In November, the Council would make a recommendation for the out-year funding and scope of the project, Ruff said. The CSS project sponsor estimates it will cost \$125,000 to prepare the retrospective report and respond to comments, he noted.

Dukes moved that the Council recommend that Bonneville fund in an amount not to exceed \$915,444, a retrospective summary report on the CSS and continued CSS PIT-tagging in FY 2007, with ISAB review of the report. Larry Cassidy seconded, and the motion passed.

3. Council decision on adoption of resource adequacy implementation paper (Council Document 2006-17):

Terry Morlan, director, power division; and John Fazio, senior power systems analyst.

Staffer John Fazio presented a paper describing the role the Council will take and the Council's expectations of the roles others will take in the Pacific Northwest Resource Adequacy Implementation Plan. He noted the Council adopted an energy standard for the Northwest in May, and that work is under way to put together a pilot metric and target for capacity in December.

Kempton moved that the Council adopt the Resource Adequacy Warning Implementation Plan for the Northwest, as set out in the paper presented by the staff and as recommended by the Power Committee. Eden seconded, and the motion passed.

4. Council decision on Implementation of Model Conservation Standards for new commercial buildings:

Charlie Grist, senior analyst.

Staffer Terry Morlan explained that the Council sent out the proposed Model Conservation Standards (MCS) for new commercial buildings for public comment and very few responses were received. Do

these standards conflict with what's going on in any of the states? Danielson asked. These are what the Council thinks would be good to have in all the states, replied staffer Charlie Grist. None of the states' standards for commercial buildings are up to what is contained in the Council's draft MCS, he added.

Dukes moved that the Council adopt the implementation specifications for Model Conservation Standards for new commercial buildings, as presented by staff, and direct staff to give appropriate notice. Bruce Measure seconded, and the motion passed.

5. Public comment on resource adequacy capacity metric and target (Council Document 2006-18):
John Fazio.

Steve Weiss of NWEA commented that the "takeaway" from the region's work on defining resource adequacy is that we have found we are capacity-constrained and peak in the summer. That's our worst problem now, he said. In the past in the Northwest, we've always been energy-constrained and had problems in the winter, according to Weiss.

The summer peak is now the controlling factor, and that's a shift in viewpoint, he stated. It means that efforts to promote demand-side management, load shifting, and other such actions, are much more valuable than they were in the past, Weiss said.

6. Briefing on display and use of subbasin planning data:
Phil Roger, Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission.

Phil Roger of CRITFC briefed the Council on efforts to compile and archive fish and wildlife data produced during the subbasin planning process. We concentrated on archiving watershed assessment information from the plans, he said. We assembled biological information and can now create summary reports for each fish population, Roger explained.

We have linked habitat assessments to fish populations, which allows us to categorize stream reaches by priorities for protection, restoration, or both, he said. We can relate habitat problems to proposed remedies and can compare habitat programs, Roger added.

7. Report on status of abundance monitoring for focal species:
Doug Marker; Peter Paquet, manager, wildlife and resident fish; and Steve Waste, manager, program analysis and evaluation.

Marker said as part of the effort to define data collection priorities for the fish and wildlife program, staff is working on a pilot project using fish population abundance as a core indicator of program success. Last month CBFWA presented its draft *Status of the Resource* report to the Council, and now work has begun to compare the fish species reports in each subbasin to the focal species targeted in the project proposals the Council recommended for funding in FY 2007-2009, he explained. This is a first step to try to identify data gaps in the fish and wildlife program, Marker noted.

We wanted to see if we have abundance data for focal species we identified in subbasin planning, Paquet said. The majority of data on abundance isn't collected through Bonneville, but through other projects operated by states and tribes, he noted.

Staffer Steve Waste presented tables correlating subbasin information with the focal species for which abundance information has been collected. He said 177 fish and wildlife projects are reporting abundance data on focal species and 108 fish and wildlife projects are not.

8. Update on wildlife O&M data report:

Ben Zelinsky, Bonneville Power Administration.

Bonneville staff presented an analysis of the costs of operations and maintenance (O&M) for wildlife mitigation projects using data from the Pisces system. Ben Zelinsky of Bonneville said the analysis showed substantial variation among projects with respect to wildlife management cost per acre. In FY 2007, Bonneville will expand its ability to track wildlife crediting and wildlife project metrics, he stated.

Karier said he would work with Bonneville to come up with a proposal to do more analysis of wildlife projects. I'll bring a proposal on next steps back to you, he told the Council.

9. Presentation on coordination of Council program with the Biological Opinion:

Bob Lohn, regional administrator, NOAA Fisheries.

NOAA Fisheries Regional Administrator Bob Lohn said the Council's subbasin planning effort was "the most comprehensive biological assessment of riparian areas in the world" and that the plans have been critical to his agency's salmon recovery work. We couldn't have made meaningful progress without the subbasin plans, he stated.

I'm optimistic about recovery – I see "fixable causes" that vary among fish populations, Lohn told the Council. We now have the Columbia River Hatchery Reform effort looking at the 189 hatchery programs in the basin and how hatcheries affect recovery efforts, he said. One question being addressed for each hatchery is "are those the right fish for that particular place?" Lohn noted. The hatchery review will take another year to year-and-a-half to reveal the choices we need to make, he said.

I see "a brighter future" in which salmon runs move convincingly closer to recovery, Lohn stated. I think that some runs will reach recovery in the not distant future, and that harvest in some cases can go up, he said.

Lohn pointed out that Save Our Wild Salmon had just released a new report that argues it would be cheaper to remove the Lower Snake dams than to continue with salmon recovery efforts. "The report glosses over underlying facts and confuses the numbers," he stated. It argues that if you remove the Lower Snake dams, the federal government would save \$600 million per year, but that would also mean ceasing the Council's fish and wildlife program, no Mitchell Act, and the end of many other federal activities aimed at fish protection, according to Lohn.

Moving to another topic, Lohn said he had asked his Science Center to develop a predictor based on ocean conditions that would indicate what fish returns are likely to be. We will make an announcement about that in a few days, he stated.

Cassidy asked Lohn about the Northeast Oregon Hatchery project, which the Council approved to provide supplementation for spring chinook. Bonneville has refused to fund the project until NOAA Fisheries works out what credit toward recovery it would provide, he said. When will you give us that information? Cassidy asked. We support the hatchery, replied Lohn. Bonneville asked us what value this would have under the Biological Opinion (BiOp), but until there's agreement about recovery in that particular area, none of us can say what precisely the value is, he said.

Cassidy asked Lohn about his views on supplementation in general. Our policy is that when fish are added to supplement a population and return as adults, they are counted as members of the population, as are their progeny, Lohn replied. The question is whether there is a science basis that says hatcheries can be expected to contribute long term, he added.

Karier asked if NOAA Fisheries might put a cap on the number of years or generations that supplementation can count as a benefit to recovery. Our Science Center is looking at that – the science is incomplete now, replied Lohn.

What are you doing about lamprey? Dukes asked. They fall under the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, but we are very concerned about them, replied Lohn.

Danielson asked about mortality occurring between dams. The benefit of PIT tags is that they allow us to see where fish are disappearing, replied Lohn. The story for each group of fish is a little different, and it may be, given the predators, there's a level of losses that is unavoidable, he stated.

Karier noted that in its FY 2007-2009 funding recommendations, the Council put aside a budget reserve for future Endangered Species Act (ESA) projects. What's the current schedule for the new BiOp? he asked. With respect to the future BiOp, the opportunity for the region at this time is to decide whether the problem we are solving in these discussions is the recovery of listed stocks or the long-term recovery of salmon in the Columbia Basin, replied Lohn.

There is a great opportunity for the Council to increase its role in this area, depending on: one, Bonneville's willingness to use the Council for this purpose, and two, the Council's willingness to step up and force these hard issues, he said.

10. Update on 2006 fish runs and fisheries:

Cindy LeFleur, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Cindy LeFleur of the Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) presented a preliminary review of 2006 fish runs and fisheries. Our forecast for upriver spring chinook returns this year was 88,400, and the actual return was about 132,000, she said.

For Upper Columbia summer chinook, the forecast was 49,000, with actual returns of 78,600, she continued.

We forecasted 473,900 Columbia River fall chinook returns, with an actual return of about 424,300, LeFleur reported. For the Upriver Bright fall chinook, which includes the listed Snake River fall chinook, the forecast this year was 249,100, with an actual return of about 225,900, she said. WDFW forecasted returns of 86,600 for the Mid-Columbia Bright fall chinook, and the actual return was about 76,400, according to LeFleur. Both of these stocks had good returns, but lower than in 2004 and 2005, she noted.

The forecast for Bonneville Pool Hatchery fall chinook (tules) was 51,800, with an actual return of 35,600, which LeFleur called a "drastic decline." She noted that for the past five to six years, Columbia River fisheries have kept below ESA impact limits.

11. Council decision to approve decision document for FY 2007-2009 fish and wildlife funding recommendations:

John Shurts, general counsel; Doug Marker, director, fish and wildlife division; and Patty O'Toole, program implementation manager.

Staffer John Shurts described the decision document for the Council's FY 2007-2009 fish and wildlife project funding recommendations, noting that it is an important part of completing the fish and wildlife project review process. The document, which is required by the Northwest Power Act, describes the whole process and its rationale in one package, he explained.

The document is required by the statute to discuss: reasons for deviations from recommendations made by the Independent Scientific Review Panel; the impact of ocean conditions; and how projects use cost-effective means to meet program objectives, according to Shurts. We've worked with the Independent Economic Analysis Board (IEAB) on how to address the latter requirement, and what we did this year is consistent with what we've done in previous years, he noted. The document also includes responses to comments on large process issues, Shurts said.

Dukes moved that the Council complete the FY 2007-2009 fish and wildlife Program project recommendation process by adopting the final decision document that explains the Council's recommendations and acknowledge the staff correction of minor errors and problems discovered in the process of publishing the project tables, with changes adopted at today's meeting, and Cassidy seconded.

Eden said she would abstain because Oregon voted against some of the major provisions in the fish and wildlife funding recommendations, and this document describes the Council's rationale for those recommendations. The motion passed on a roll-call vote, with Cassidy, Karier, Whiting, Measure, Kempton, and Danielson voting yes. Eden and Dukes abstained.

Dukes moved that the Council approve the Fish and Wildlife Program FY 2007-2009 Budget Tracking and Adjustment Process, as presented by staff. Cassidy seconded, and the motion passed.

12. Update on NEPA compliance for fish and wildlife projects:

Greg Delwiche, Bonneville Power Administration.

Greg Delwiche of Bonneville told the Council it has become harder and harder for Bonneville to keep up with the growing workload associated with doing NEPA compliance for fish and wildlife projects, especially doing "robust analysis" of complex projects. A year ago, we began searching for a better way and came up with a new strategy for NEPA analysis for routine projects, he said. We have decided to cover NEPA analysis for some projects programmatically, Delwiche stated, adding that the decision will save money and be more efficient. For the more controversial projects, Bonneville will continue to have project-specific NEPA analysis done, he said.

13. Council business:

– Adoption of minutes

Dukes moved to approve the minutes for the October 17-18, 2006 Council meeting held in Helena, Montana. Eden seconded, and the motion passed.

– Release proposed IEAB member appointments for comment

Morlan said there were six applications from people to serve as members of the IEAB and that four of those came from incumbent members whose terms have expired. The nominating committee for IEAB members has recommended that the four incumbents be re-appointed, he told the Council. Staff would like approval to send those names out for public comment so the Council can make the appointments in December, Morlan stated.

Dukes moved that the Council release for public comment the IEAB nominations, and Cassidy seconded. Measure suggested the Council send out all six names for public review, and he amended the motion to

that effect. Cassidy seconded, and the amendment was approved. The original motion, as amended, for the Council to release for public comment the four recommended nominations, as well as the names of the two other applicants for the IEAB, passed unanimously.

Approved December _____, 2006

Vice Chair

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