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MEMORANDUM

TO: Council Members

FROM: John Ogan

SUBJECT: Staff Recommendation for Mainstem/Systemwide Projects

I. Introduction and Action Requested

The Mainstem/Systemwide (MSSW) projects group is the final "area" to be dealt with in the first round of the new Province based project review and recommendation format. Once the Council makes its recommendations for the MSSW projects, all ongoing projects and new proposals will have been subject to the modified review process described in the 2000 Program. The staff is providing its recommendations for projects and funding levels for Fiscal Years 2004 through 2006 to the Fish and Wildlife Committee at the June meeting in Boise. Because this funding recommendation has been deferred several months, and because it believes this recommendation is ready for Council decision, the staff is recommending that the Fish and Wildlife Committee make a funding recommendation to the full Council the following day.

II. Explanation of the Process and Considerations Guiding the Staff Recommendation

A. Funding Allocation for the Mainstem/Systemwide

The total Bonneville funding for each province, and now for the MSSW projects group, is determined based upon historical spending using Fiscal Year 2001 as the base year. In prior project funding recommendations the Council has developed its funding recommendations within the province's pro rata share of \$186 million (expense and capital combined) as a planning budget. This past winter, Bonneville advised the Council that it was changing its accounting procedures for the fish and wildlife program from a planning or obligations basis to one that was based on actual spending for the expense portion of the fish and wildlife program. Bonneville further advised that it intended to limit actual spending in the coming fiscal years, beginning with Fiscal Year 2003, to \$139 million in expense spending each year. Bonneville staff has advised Council staff that it will limit its actual contract obligations in the coming fiscal years to that \$139 million level each year. That is, Bonneville staff has advised Council staff that, beginning with Fiscal Year 2003, it would not would not "plan to \$150 million", expecting

to spend only \$139 million as originally conceived and described the Administrator in December 2001. The Council has not officially agreed or rejected the application new accounting rules beyond Fiscal Year 2003. However, the staff recommendation does use those parameters described by Bonneville.

The MSSW expense budget allocation is approximately \$31 million and is calculated as follows:

\$139 million expense/year committed by BPA - (placeholders = subbasin planning [\$10 million]; ISRP/ISAB [\$0.9 million]; Water Marketing/RPA 151 [\$5 million]; BPA overhead [\$12 million]) = \$111.1 million expense budget basinwide.

\$111.1 million expense budget basinwide X (MSSW historical pro rata basinwide funding =27.9%) = \$30.913 million.

The staff recommendation does not attempt to “make-up” any shortfalls for Fiscal Year 2004 funding within the MSSW allocation. The \$31 million allocation is what is available in light of Bonneville’s funding commitment and currently applied accounting rules. Capital spending may augment the expense budget, and the staff recommendation does include capital projects totaling just under \$ 3 million. The total staff recommended funding package, therefore, is approximately \$34 million for Fiscal Years 2004 through 2006.

B. Project Prioritization Considerations

In the fall of 2001, and as part of its Columbia Plateau province decision, the Council adopted a suite of criteria or considerations that it would employ to prioritize projects for purposes of making funding recommendations to Bonneville. Prioritization criteria have been necessary because there are more qualified projects than available funding can support. The criteria are:

1. As a matter of first priority, maintain adequate funding for the operation, maintenance, monitoring and evaluation of **ongoing projects**;
2. As a second-level priority, provide funding to multi-step or phased **ongoing projects** that are prepared to take the next anticipated and logical step in their development;
3. As a second-level priority (co-equal with 2 above), provide funds to **new and ongoing projects** that protect currently productive, high quality habitat, and/or provide connections to historic habitat;
4. Also as a second-level priority (co-equal with 2 and 3 above) provide funds to those **new and ongoing projects** that can be shown to respond to Reasonable and Prudent Alternative action items in the 2000 Biological Opinion on Hydrosystem Operations for which Bonneville has been assigned responsibility;
5. As a second-level priority (co-equal with 2, 3 and 4 above) where there are new projects that have been developed and coordinated with a broad coalition of local interests including, for

example, local governments, tribes, state agencies, agriculture interests and others, and there is consensus support, fund the projects;

6. As a third-level priority, provide funding for proposed **new** projects that present an opportunity to protect, mitigate or enhance fish and wildlife that will be lost if delayed until after subbasin plans are completed (next 1-4 years);

7. Finally, the Council likely will not support funding **new or expanded** research initiatives.

The staff continued to use these same criteria in developing its MSSW recommendations, but the *priority of the considerations was modified*. Specifically, based on comments from Bonneville and NOAA representatives that the FCRPS Biological Opinion implementation put significant reliance on the MSSW project group, the staff made Biological Opinion implementation (criterion #4) a consideration that was on par with preserving the existing investment of ongoing projects (criterion #1). In addition, because a significant amount of this Biological Opinion work could be characterized as research, the staff believed that it could not continue to treat research as disfavored (criterion #7) while meeting Biological Opinion needs. This approach of using the same prioritization criteria, but with a different priority than as applied in the tributary areas, is similar to the approach applied by the Council in the Estuary and Lower Columbia Provinces where substantial new Biological Opinion based work was required.

The staff continued to take into account the prioritization recommendations of CBFWA, and the scientific reviews of the ISRP. The staff reviewed and considered comments submitted by NOAA Fisheries on January 21, 2003 that related projects to RPA's of the Biological Opinion, comments from Bonneville dated February 19, 2003, and a joint NOAA/Bonneville letter that evaluated the criticality of projects specifically for the Biological Opinion 2003 "check-in." The staff also reviewed and considered numerous project-specific comments in developing its recommendation. All of these comments helped the staff make determinations with regard to how each project in the MSSW group responded to the criteria listed above.

As an aid in applying the prioritization criteria outlined above to the MSSW projects, the staff sorted projects into "tiers." Tier 1 projects were rated by the ISRP as "Fundable", given a priority rank in the BPA/NOAA "critical Biological Opinion projects" comments (ranked as a 1 or 2), and were identified as "core" or "urgent" by CBFWA. Tier 2 projects were those that continued to be ranked "Fundable" or "Fundable in Part" by the ISRP, were ranked by BPA/NOAA as not-immediately critical for Biological Opinion implementation (ranked 3 or not ranked), and were in the lower CBFWA prioritization categories of "High Priority," "Recommended Action" or "Do Not Fund". Tier 3 were all remaining proposals that did not qualify for Tier 2 or higher. The staff developed workbooks that showed how projects fell into these three tiers and shared them with Bonneville, project sponsors, and CBFWA.

C. Council Preliminary Review and Guidance Regarding Staff Project Prioritization

At its meeting in Walla Walla in May, the staff shared the MSSW projects workbook with the Fish and Wildlife Committee, and described the considerations that went into its tiered approach.

The staff described how the funding allocation for the province had been developed, and explained how Biological Opinion implementation was being treated as a primary consideration in this project group. The staff, in a memorandum from Patty O'Toole, explained that there were several projects that were not in Tier 1 that staff believed were important for Fish and Wildlife Program implementation, and that the staff would continue to refine its recommendations by taking the following next steps:

- Reviewing the full suite of Bi-Op requirements with NOAA fisheries and Bonneville to determine duplication of effort that can be eliminated from project budgets
- Reviewing ISRP comments for less essential elements of major project budgets
- Reviewing scopes of work for ongoing projects that may be a lower priority for Bonneville funding given budget constraints.

The staff understood the Committee to support using \$31 million dollars as the available budget, and to support meeting Biological Opinion implementation critical needs as a primary prioritization criterion. However, the staff also understood that the Committee wanted to see if the staff, in following through with the next steps identified in the bullets above, could develop a recommendation that more evenly balanced new ESA based work with broader Fish and Wildlife Program projects, particularly the ongoing projects that continued to have ISRP and CBFWA support.

D. Bonneville Recommendations

Bonneville staff has expressed to the Council staff a preference that the final recommendations for the mainstem/systemwide projects be done in two phases. If the Council makes final recommendations on a \$31 million package in June, Bonneville urges the Council to use a subsequent tributary project status review to identify more funds to augment the mainstem/systemwide allocation and that the Council reserve a follow-on decision on funding of additional projects above the current target allocation for mainstem/systemwide projects (i.e., Bonneville Phase 2 projects, and potentially some in Phase 3). Bonneville provided the staff with accompanying tables and explanatory criteria to identify which alternative projects it recommends as priorities relative to the Council staff's recommendation of priorities. Bonneville staff will participate in the Council discussions to support its prioritization alternative and for deferring final Council recommendations.

Bonneville provided an alternative set of recommendations and has summarized those in a set of tables accompanying this memo. The essence of the alternative is a set of different projects to be funded in the first tier of the current allocation to the mainstem/systemwide projects. Then, a second list of additional priority projects was provided that require funding above the current allocation to mainstem/systemwide. A third list included the remaining projects, some of which warrant further regional discussion about priority, scope, and potential funding. The differences with the staff recommendation are in part differences in priority and in part differences in actual project planning budgets. Again, Bonneville recommends that a Council decision on a first set of projects be followed by work to look through other provincial

projects and budgets to identify funds that can be reprioritized to augment the mainstem/systemwide allocation. Bonneville also argues that the review of the provincial budgets could achieve efficiencies through improved integration of existing work relative to some of the remaining Bi-Op requirements.

Summary:

- Bonneville structured its project review in three “phases”, similar to the Council staff’s three “tiers”. The difference is that Bonneville presumes that both its “Phase 1” and “Phase 2” need funding to implement the Bi-Op and preserve the benefit of ongoing projects under the Program.
- Bonneville’s “Phase 1” totals approximately \$30 million in FY 2004; \$32.5 million in FY 2005 and \$30.2 million in FY 2006 (subject to further refinement based on regional discussion, and final development of work statements, improved integration, and contracting).
- The list of differences from the Council staff recommended “Tier 1” is summarized on the accompanying tables - “BPA Phase 1 Compared to NPPC” is the list of four additional projects and five proposed changes in recommended budgets. A few of the budget changes may be resolved before the Council meeting. The proposed additional projects and proposed changes are substantive issues for Council discussion.
- Bonneville proposes making 13 projects in the Council staff’s Tier 1 list either part of the second phase of projects to be funded in its recommended sequence or part of the third tier of lower priorities, some of which may also warrant further discussion for potential funding.

Bonneville defined its list of Phase 2 projects, analogous to but with a different priority than the Council staff’s Tier 2. The difference in priority is that Bonneville maintains that this list of additional projects must also be funded but can wait for some additional review before the end of the fiscal year. The Council staff’s Tier 2 is not elevated above other qualified projects in the region for prioritized funding as unallocated funds are identified. They have equal status, for example, with the second tier of projects identified by the provincial work groups in the Columbia Cascade that could not be funded within that province’s allocated budget.

Summary

- The list of phase 2 projects Bonneville recommends totals approximately \$12.5 million in FY 2004, \$13.4 million in 2005 and \$12.8 million in 2006 (these too, are subject to further refinement based on regional discussion, and final development of work statements, improved integration, and contracting).
- This list is a mix of seven ongoing projects the Council staff recommends in Tier 1 and additional projects the Council staff did not recommend as priorities. Bonneville’s criterion was that the Phase 2 projects are Bi-Op critical that provide data to support

decision making and other Bi-Op critical projects that received “do not fund” ratings from the ISRP but which are undergoing more development and further review.

- The remainder of mainstem/systemwide projects were included in Bonneville’s Phase 3 list; Bonneville has indicated that there are some ongoing projects appropriate for further regional discussion for potential funding.

III. Council Staff Recommendation for MSSW Projects

The staff recommendation is reflected in an accompanying Excel table. The staff recommends that the Council support Bonneville funding the Tier 1 projects at the levels identified. The projects in Tier 2 are prioritized if additional funds become available, but the staff recommendation is that these projects compete on an equal basis with other funding needs basinwide (for example, there is a second “tier” of projects in the Columbia Cascade province that has been prioritized should remaining funds become available that remain candidates for funding) if additional funding becomes available. The staff, at this time, cannot forecast if additional funding will be available for these Tier 2 projects or any other needs in the basin.

As outlined above, the staff and Committee discussed the next steps in developing a staff recommendation in Walla Walla that would go beyond the basic sort that had been used. This subsequent work changed the composition of Tier 1 from a reflection of the mechanical sorting of projects that met the ISRP-BPA/NOAA-CBFWA ratings discussed in B. above. These reasons changes are best discussed categorically.

Considerations that Led Staff to Remove Projects from Tier 1 in its Recommendation

1. The staff recommendation seeks to meet Biological Opinion needs first through ongoing work that is supported by ISRP and CBFWA, and does not recommend projects that appear redundant.

Throughout the provincial reviews, the Council has consistently asked that Bonneville and NOAA seek to define and implement the Biological Opinions’ requirements through the provincial review process, and that it would be most cost-effective to meet those needs with existing work.

Projects Affected

The staff recommendation dropped project 35041 from Tier 1 because the it believes that the basic the investigation proposed, relative fitness of hatchery and wild spring chinook that spawn naturally, is being conducted in other ongoing projects such as the Idaho Supplementation Studies, the YKFP, and others. These ongoing projects address the RPA that this project is aimed at (182). The NMFS genetic monitoring and evaluation project (198909600) also addresses RPA 182, and is being expanded in the staff recommendation. The staff recommendation also reserves a placeholder in Tier 1 for proposals that are being developed to address RPA 182. Neither Bonneville nor NOAA presented an explanation as to why additional investigations of hatchery v. wild spring chinook fitness are needed, (and that explanation would seemingly have needed to include a statement of why the information being gathered in the other areas of the basin is not “transferable”) and why there is presently an inadequate response to RPA 182.

The staff recommendation does not include project 35027. This is a USFWS project studying two captive rearing methods. The project responds to RPAs 182 and 184. There are several

ongoing projects that are recommended by the staff that address these RPAs, and several projects recommended by the Council in past provincial reviews address these RPAs. The staff recommendation also reserves a placeholder in Tier 1 for proposals that are being developed to address RPAs 182 and 184. Neither Bonneville nor NOAA presented a rationale for starting this new investigation in light of existing work addressing the RPAs it relates to. The staff is also not recommending this new captive broodstock strategy investigation in light of the ISRP's comments that the existing ongoing project in this area (NMFS 199305600), which is included in the staff recommendation, should be subject to an in depth review, clarification, and restructuring. The staff believed that the ISRP programmatic comments on captive broodstock research did not support starting this new investigation. (*See* ISRP 2002-14, p. 9).

2. The staff recommendation would not fund projects that have been found by the ISRP to be not scientifically sound or to provide minimal benefits.

The staff recommendation holds projects deemed to be critical to Biological Opinion implementation to the same scientific standards as other Fish and Wildlife program projects. They must meet the scientific standards established in the Northwest Power Act and applied by the ISRP.

Projects Affected

Project 35024 was modified by the sponsor to be more responsive to Biological Opinion requirements than as originally proposed. As modified, the ISRP rated the project as "Do Not Fund." The staff recommendation is to not fund the project, and it is not included in Tier 1. As originally proposed, it is only marginally applicable to the Biological Opinion (as evidenced by the need to modify it) and would not be priority new work at this time, and as modified, it is not scientifically supportable. Bonneville continues to list this as a project it supports in its Phase 2.

Bonneville supports projects 35016, 35020, and 35048 as part of its Phase 2 package. The staff recommendation does not include these in either its Tier 1 or Tier 2 recommendations, as all were rated "Do Not Fund" by the ISRP. The staff is very concerned that the Bonneville recommendation to fund these projects would seemingly require special treatment for these projects. Specifically, unless Bonneville is suggesting that these projects be funded over the objections of the ISRP, the projects would need to be modified and re-reviewed by the ISRP. The opportunity for yet another ISRP review for a select few projects raises serious fairness concerns for the staff.

Project 199105500 is the ongoing NMFS sponsored NATURES project. The ISRP final report wrote to this project and to the NATURES techniques extensively in its programmatic recommendations. While the ISRP found that the project itself met scientific standards, it concluded that many of the techniques have been adopted and are being implemented, and that the "relative benefits of NATURES rearing alone are likely to be relatively small." (ISRP 2002-14, pp. 8-9).

3. The staff recommendation does not include projects that are appropriately funded by other agencies.

There is a limited budget to meet the fish and wildlife program and ESA needs in the MSSW group. One of the best illustrations of this is that Bonneville is recommending that approximately \$42 million be allocated to the MSSW in each of the next three fiscal years when its pro rata allocation is \$31 million. In order to try to stay within the allocation, the staff recommendation does not include projects that would seem to have an alternative appropriate funding source.

Projects Affected

Project 35027 (also discussed previously above in item 1.) is proposed by the USFWS, and it evaluates two captive rearing methods for steelhead and coho. The project would respond to RPA 184. Because there are numerous ongoing projects that respond to RPA 184 that are recommended here or have been recommended for funding by the Council in prior provincial reviews. The staff has also reserved funding in its Tier 1 recommendation for studies that are under development to address RPA 182 and 184. The staff believes that Bonneville's response to its Biological Opinion obligations in this area is adequate at this time, and does not support Bonneville funding for this new project. The USFWS has expertise, management and regulatory responsibilities, and jurisdiction germane to the study proposed here. If this study is a USFWS priority, the staff believes that it should be conducted with its own funds. Again, if projects responding to the RPAs addressed by this research were absent or few, the staff recommendation may be different.

Project 199702400, researching avian predation on juvenile salmon is not recommended for funding. The staff believes that the basic uncertainties confronting the region in this arena have been sufficiently resolved by the research conducted through this project. As we have learned Caspian terns thrive in the habitat created, primarily by the Corps of Engineers, in the estuary, the predation on juvenile salmonids is significant and the predation impact is related to the number and location of the birds in the estuary. We have learned that dislocating the terns reduces predation in the lower Columbia. The USFWS has management jurisdiction over Caspian terns. The staff believes that the Corps and/or the USFWS more appropriately fund continuing research in this area. The ratepayer contribution to the research to date has been significant and well spent. However, unless and until actual significant management actions aimed at substantially reducing predation on juvenile salmon are implemented, the staff believes that Bonneville funding should be eliminated. The staff would recommend that the Council support funding for monitoring the effectiveness of management actions aimed at reducing predation, but it does not understand this proposal to have that focus, primarily because significant management actions are not permitted at this time.

Project 200100700, evaluating live capture (tangle net) methods for commercial Columbia River fisheries is not recommended. Bonneville has funded this project, originally an innovative project, for two years. The staff believes that although there have been some implementation difficulties in utilizing this gear (capture of non-target species -- wild steelhead and listed spring chinook) this project has demonstrated the effectiveness of this gear in this area for a commercial spring chinook fishery. The staff believes that, having proven the functionality of the gear, the obligation to fund the enforcement and monitoring of the fishery shifts to the state management

entities. The staff is not persuaded that the additional studies to investigate the reproductive success of released fish are a priority. The state fish and wildlife management agencies have employed catch and release fisheries for salmon and steelhead for many years, and have done so either without studying post-release impacts on reproductive success or have funded such studies themselves as an incident to its management choices. The staff believes that NOAA and Bonneville should determine that the RPAs that this project addressed have been satisfied, or work with appropriate parties to test live capture harvest with different gear and/or in different areas.

Projects 35046, 35064, and 34065 are projects that investigate how juvenile salmon utilize the plume and continental shelf. The ISRP considered these projects related, and gave them fundable ratings with significant qualifications and limitations. While the ISRPs reservations were a significant factor in the staff recommendation, a major consideration is our belief that this research is more appropriately funded by NOAA Fisheries as part of its coast wide investigations. While it is understandable how the plume study traces back to FCRPS operations, (the characteristics of the plume change depending on FCRPS operations) this package of research seems to have broader application germane to NOAA responsibilities. Bonneville's Phase 1 recommendation would dedicate approximately \$3.2 million to these three projects in Fiscal Year 2004 (we do not have out-year estimates for Bonneville's Phase 1 or 2 recommendations).

Projects that the Staff Recommend Remain in Tier 1 at Reduced Funding Levels

The staff reviewed the budgets of the ongoing projects that were in Tier 1 based on ISRP, CBFWA, and NOAA/BPA review (the package presented in Walla Walla) with an eye to making reductions that would permit funding more projects within the Tier 1 allocation of \$31 million. The basic approach was to review the project proposals to ensure that Objectives and Tasks proposed describe priority work and that they maintained essentially level funding from prior approvals. In some cases, especially with large projects, the staff recommends reduced funding.

At the meeting with project sponsors, the staff explained the budget reductions to the projects that it included in Tier 1. Most, if not all, of these objections were met with objections. The sponsors argued that many of these projects have been level funded for some time, and that this is actually leading to a loss of capacity. Some sponsors argued that the project objectives might not be achievable with the funding reductions proposed by staff.

Affected Projects

Projects 198201301 (coded wire tag -PSMFC); 19990301 (evaluate fall chinook and chum spawning); 1987120700 (smolt monitoring) were held at level budgets.

Project 199007700, the Northern Pikeminnow Management Program is reduced in the staff recommendation by 50%. This project is proposed for \$2.8 million in Fiscal Year 2004, increasing to approximately \$3.1 million in Fiscal Years 2005 and 2006. The staff is recommending that this project be reconfigured and downsized. The staff suggests that some

alternative year or alternating zone management construct be developed that can reduce the costs of the program by approximately 50%. Further, the staff is aware that this program has developed some very proficient pikeminnow anglers that could be engaged as sub-contractors as an alternative or in conjunction with alternative year management. Project sponsors and Bonneville have objected to this staff proposal, and seek full and increasing funding. If the objections persist without alternatives being offered, the staff recommends that Bonneville and the sponsors explain in writing why funding this project at approximately \$1.5 million/year over the next three fiscal years will not yield substantial biological benefits.

Projects that the Staff Recommendation Elevated to Tier 1

After taking the steps described in the above subsections, there was funding available within the \$31 million allocation for the MSSW projects. The Council staff elevated the following projects, and recommends them for funding at the levels described in the table because of their importance to the Council's Fish and Wildlife Program:

- Project 198810804 (Streamnet) The staff believes that this ongoing project remains critical to serving the data management needs of the program, and it is an important resource for the current subbasin planning work. The staff realizes that the region is engaged in discussions about the structure of a more integrated and comprehensive data management system, and recommends that this project will have to be an important component of whatever arrangement is developed if it is to maintain its funding support.
- Project 198906201 is the CBFWA base proposal and was not originally in Tier 1. The staff recommends elevating the proposal to Tier 1 because of the important coordination work traditionally provided through this project. The staff recommendation reduced the funding for the project by eliminating the funding associated with Objectives and Tasks that will not be required over the next three fiscal years. The staff recommends that the appropriate funding level for the CBFWA proposal be established by jointly developing a task based budget, and funding both CBFWA central staff and member time and travel against those tasks.
- Project 35010 is the Interactive Biodiversity Information System (IBIS). This project is important for the terrestrial elements of the current subbasin planning effort. NOAA rated the project as responding to RPA 198. CBFWA rated this project as core to the program. Like Streamnet, this project will have to find a niche in the data management arrangement that the region settles on for continued funding support in the future.
- Project 199800401 is funding for the Columbia Basin Bulletin. The staff recommends this project because of the coordination and information distribution it serves a region that is large and engaged in many fish and wildlife and natural resource activities. The cost to maintain this service is relatively modest at just under \$180,000/year.

- Project 35036 would advance work to identify the mechanisms of stranding of fall chinook in the Hanford Reach. The staff is aware of related work being done by the PUD, but is convinced that this work builds on, and is not duplicative, of that work. The staff is aware that stranding of this area was a live system management topic this year, has been in the past, and will likely be active in the future. Because of the potential to inform real management decisions about operations, the new study appears valuable.
- Project 35047 is a new project to investigate delayed (extra) mortality associated with passing Snake River dams. This NMFS research is related to RPAs 188 and 195, was rated as “Fundable” by the ISRP, and continues to be identified as a Biological Opinion priority.
- Project 199105100 is the University of Washington Monitoring and Statistical support project that Bonneville has traditionally insisted be funded. The project was rated “1” in the NOAA/BPA review. NOAA evaluated the project as addressing RPAs 185, 188, and 190. CBFWA recommended that the project not be funded.
- 198605000 is the ongoing white sturgeon mitigation and restoration project. The staff elevated this project as an important fish and wildlife program project, but recommends that it be reduced in scope and funding by eliminating the artificial production work included as a lower priority element of the proposal.
- Project 199705900 the Oregon Wildlife project, and funds to address the operations and monitoring and evaluation costs to associated with lands previously acquired are recommended for funding.
- Project 1996 01900 is a University of Washington data base support project that is traditionally insisted upon by Bonneville. NOAA comments indicate it addresses RPAs 198, 180, and 152. The ISRP rated in “Fundable.” CBFWA recommended that the project not be funded.
- Project 199803100 is the CRITFC proposal that support implementation of Wy-Kan-Ish-Mi Wa-Kish-Wit. NOAA comments are that the proposal addresses RPAs 152 and 154 and CBFWA rated it “core program.”
- Project 200002900 is an ongoing project focused on lampreys. The project is important to the coordination of the other work supported in prior provincial reviews, and was rated as “Urgent” by CBFWA.

Staff Tier 2 Projects

The accompanying table includes a Tier 2 group of projects that the staff believes are the next highest priorities within the MSSW, but cannot be funded within the available allocation. This Tier 2 includes all other projects rated by NOAA/BPA as 1 or 2 in terms of Biological Opinion “criticality”, and all other projects that rated “Urgent” by CBFWA.

The total cost of the Tier 2 projects is slightly more than \$3 million in Fiscal Year 2004 and approximately \$3.5 million in each of the next two fiscal years. Again, the staff recommends that *if* additional funding is available in Fiscal Year 2004, that these Tier 2 projects would have to compete on equal footing with any other funding needs now known or to be identified in the future.

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