

**Wildlife Advisory Committee
December 10, 2014
Portland, OR**

DRAFT Meeting Notes

Attendees: Peter Paquet (NPCC), Karl Weist (NPCC), Bob Austin (USRT), and Neil Ward (QW Consulting)

By Phone: Carl Scheeler (CTUIR), Jason Kesling (BPT), Paul Ashley (PSMFC), Norm Merz (KTOI), Dwight Bergeron (MFWP), Alan Wood (MFWP), Philip Key (BPA), Gregg Servheen (IDFG), Scott Soultz (KTOI), Sandra Fife (BPA), Mark Gaither (UCUT), John Sirois (UCUT), BJ Kieffer (STOI), Lawrence Schwabe (CTGR), and Grayson Carkner

Item 1	Introductions and Approval of Agenda
Item 2	<p>Briefing of the 2014 Fish and Wildlife Program – Implications of WAC</p> <p>The NPCC’s 2014 Columbia River Fish and Wildlife Program was adopted in October 2014. Peter Paquet led the participants in a review of the Wildlife Mitigation section (Section 11) of the 2014 Program and discussed the following key issues (highlighted text) that are a result of the amendment process.</p> <p><u>Page 72:</u> Rationale Development and operation of the hydrosystem resulted in wildlife losses, operational losses, and secondary losses. The program includes measures and implements projects to acquire and protect the habitat units identified in the loss assessments [see Appendix C, Table C-4], as mitigation for construction and inundation losses. The program maintains a commitment to mitigate for operational and secondary losses that have not been estimated or addressed. However, where operational or secondary losses already have been addressed in an existing wildlife mitigation agreement, the terms of that agreement will apply. <i>(Peter informed the participants that the highlighted information was a included in the previous Program)</i></p> <p>Principles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent of wildlife mitigation is of particular importance to agencies and tribes in blocked areas, where anadromous fish runs have been extirpated by development of the hydrosystem, and where full mitigation cannot be accomplished through resident fish substitution alone. Given the vision of this program, the strong scientific case for a more comprehensive, ecosystem-based approach, and the shift in focus to implementation through subbasin plans, the Council believes that wildlife mitigation projects should be integrated with fish mitigation projects as much as possible. In some cases, where resident fish goals cannot be accomplished, wildlife mitigation may substitute for resident fish mitigation. • Wildlife mitigation should replace habitat units lost to hydropower dam development and operation. Beginning in the 2000 Program, the Council called for these mitigation agreements to equal 200 percent of the remaining habitat units (2:1 ratio). The Council chose the 2:1 crediting ratio to address the inability to precisely determine the habitat units resulting from acquiring an interest in property that already has wildlife value or the additional losses represented by annualization of the losses. • The Council adopted and continues to endorse the 2:1 crediting ratio for the remaining habitat units. However, when loss estimates appear inaccurate due to

habitat unit stacking and those inaccuracies cannot be resolved through use of a different, cost-effective tool or approach recommended by the [Wildlife Crediting Forum](#) and approved by the Council, then the 2:1 ratio will not apply to the remaining stacked habitat units.

(In Peter's review of this section, the participants were informed that the NPCC, knowing that the WAC has been discussing this issue, essentially tasked the WAC with identifying solutions.)

- Mitigation agreements should be considered to settle operational losses in lieu of precise assessments of impacts.

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Specific measures for habitat units

- **Habitat units and the habitat evaluation procedure (HEP) methodology.** The Council will continue to endorse habitat units as the preferred unit of measurement for mitigation accounting and the HEP methodology as the preferred method for estimating habitat units lost and acquired. Parties to a wildlife mitigation agreement may develop and use another method for evaluating potential mitigation actions if, in the Council's opinion, that alternative method adequately takes into account both habitat quantity and quality adequate to mitigate for the identified losses.

(Peter informed the participants that the NPCC Continues to endorse the use of HEP and that the NPCC will continue to calculate losses based on HUs. Peter also indicated that relative to the new individual agreements, the NPCC will review them to determine if the acres designation is adequate.)

- **Allocation of habitat units.** Bonneville shall work with the agencies and tribes for habitat acquired as mitigation for lost habitat units identified in Table C-4, which shall be acquired in the subbasin in which the lost units were located unless otherwise agreed by the fish and wildlife agencies and tribes in that subbasin.
- **Habitat enhancement credits.** Habitat enhancement credits should be provided to Bonneville when habitat management activities funded by Bonneville lead to a net increase in habitat value when compared to the level identified in the baseline habitat inventory and subsequent habitat inventories. This determination shall be made through the periodic monitoring of the project site using the HEP methodology. Bonneville shall be credited for habitat enhancement efforts at a ratio of one habitat unit credited for every habitat unit gained.

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The Council recognizes the ongoing difficulties in addressing wildlife operational losses. At the same time the Council recognizes the progress that has been made in addressing this issue as the result of pilot projects on the Kootenai River. To address this issue the Council has directed its Wildlife Advisory Committee to examine the existing options and alternatives for providing mitigation for wildlife operational losses and to provide a recommendation to the Council for resolving the issue by **October 1, 2015**. In addition, the committee has been charged to make recommendations on the following issues:

- The need for additional HEP reports and future HEP Team funding
- The diminishing need for HEP on new acquisitions as Bonneville completes construction and inundation mitigation
- Current regional need for follow-up HEP capacity to track project agreement compliance on many properties. That need may be influenced by (1) long-term settlements for operation and maintenance, (2) technology advances that may allow the region to more cost effectively track changes in habitat conditions using remote sensing or other techniques, and (3) species responses.
- The need for new methods to assess operational losses that incorporate the results of ongoing pilot projects. This could include technical testing and evaluation of operational loss models and methodologies, or other alternative habitat evaluation

	<p>methods.</p> <p>Peter also reviewed wildlife-specific definitions that were included in the 2014 Program and specifically highlighted the following definitions:</p> <p>Construction and Inundation Losses - The wildlife losses that occurred as a direct result of construction of a dam and the flooding of the area upriver of the dam</p> <p>Habitat unit (HU) - A value derived from multiplying the Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) for an evaluation species by the size of the areas for which the HSI was calculated (HU = HSI x size of habitat)</p> <p>Stacking - A procedural step used to calculate the relationship between wildlife species and their habitat in the course of calculating Habitat Units (HUs) for the purposes of mitigating for wildlife losses. Stacking can produce varied results if inconsistent species or habitat types are used in the calculation.</p> <p>Peter informed the participants that missing from the 2014 Program are definitions for operational losses and secondary losses. Peter indicated that the NPCC envisions the WAC developing the definitions for operational and secondary losses. Peter suggested that before losses can be addressed, the definitions must first be developed no later than October 1, 2015. Following the submittal of the definitions, the NPCC will decide whether they are suitable for acceptance, potentially during the NPCC's November 2015 meeting.</p>
Item 3	Setting Schedules and Agendas for 2015
	See Attachment 1
Item 4	Other Issues and Next Steps
	Scott Soultis requested a summary of the issues that must be addressed by October 2015 and to identify what needs to be accomplished (i.e., what are the steps to get to the desired endpoint.)
Item 8	Next WAC Meeting
	<p>WAC Meeting January 15, 2015 Portland, OR</p>

Attachment 1

	Quarter 1			Quarter 2			Quarter 3			Quarter 4		
	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Meeting Date	15	12	12	9	7	11	16	13	17	15	17-18	
Meeting Location*	Portland	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	
WAC Meeting												
HEP Subgroup												
Operational Losses												
Council Meeting												

* Meeting locations will be in Portland, Spokane, Boise, and Missoula. Efforts will be made to ensure meeting locations align with Council meeting locations.