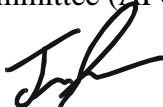




March 29, 2001

TO: Anadromous Fish Committee (AFC)
FROM: Gary James, Chair  for
SUBJECT: Draft Action Notes for March 21, 2001 AFC Meeting

If there are no objections within five days, these actions will be considered final.

**AFC Meeting
March 21, 2001
9a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

Action Notes

Attendees: Gary James (CTUIR, Chair), Phil Roger (CRITFC), John Palensky (NMFS), Ron Boyce (ODFW), Tom Giese and Tom Iverson (CBFWA)

By phone: Patty O'Toole (CTWSRO), Jim Nielsen (WDFW), Dave Statler (NPT), Bert Bowler (IDFG), and Kim Kratz (NMFS)

Time allocation:

Objective 1. 2002 Project Renewal	0%
Objective 2. Rolling Provincial Review and Subbasin Summaries	0%
Objective 3. 2001 W/in Year Adjustments	30%

Item 1: Review and Modify Agenda

Three additional topics were added under Agenda Item 1: Review AFC placeholder, Washington Department Fish & Wildlife (WDFW) Chumstick Creek culvert replacement within year request, and Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (CRITFC) Collaborative Center for Applied Fish Science (CCAFS/Hagerman) request. Also under Agenda Item 3 an update on the Northwest Power Planning Council (NWPPC) request for recommendations on the Mainstem Plan was added.

Action: The agenda was modified and approved.

Item 2: Report on BPA Quarterly Review

The results from the March 16, 2001 Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) quarterly review were presented by Tom Giese (provided by e-mail prior to the meeting). These numbers are very preliminary and should be expected to change as BPA corrects numerous errors in their accounting identified during the quarterly review. The best current estimation of the Anadromous Fish Placeholder, after funding all Columbia Gorge Province projects, is approximately \$7 million. There are currently three requests for anadromous fish placeholder funds that total \$5.304 million: CBFWA Coordination reinstatement (\$1.607 M), CRITFC Hagerman Research Center (\$3.04 M), and WDFW Chumstick Creek culvert replacement (\$0.657 M).

The Resident Fish Placeholder, after funding all Columbia Gorge and Inter-Mountain Province projects, totals approximately \$20,000. The Wildlife Placeholder totals approximately \$1 million without funding Columbia Gorge and Inter-Mountain Province projects (\$2,824 M) and not fully funding several other existing projects (\$ unknown).

BPA has indicated that no additional funds will be added to the Fish and Wildlife Program in FY 2001 until all existing funds are expended.

Item 2a: CRITFC Request for CCAFS

The CRITFC represents the fisheries management and conservation interests of the Columbia River treaty tribes. Within the CRITFC, the Fish Science Department is mandated to provide technical support for tribal recovery efforts. Emphasis in recent years has been on genetics and life history research and monitoring. Future endeavors will include pathology, nutrition, habitat use, and ecological interactions of hatchery and wild fish. Science staff are co-principal investigators on a number of BPA-funded projects on chinook and steelhead salmon population structure. Further, the tribes wish to significantly improve their education program for tribal members, with emphasis on advanced degrees in biological research.

The Hagerman Fish Culture Experiment Station (HFCES), part of the Aquaculture Research Institute (ARI) of the University of Idaho, has provided DNA assessment and interpretation services to the CRITFC regarding salmonid, sturgeon and lamprey population genetics for a number of years. In July 2000, the CRITFC and the University joined in a partnership through a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that will assemble key research and technical staff at the HFCES to form the CCAFS.

Under the MOA, the CCAFS will become a first class, applied regional center in fish genetics and other areas of artificial propagation. To achieve this goal, the CRITFC hopes to contribute to renovation and enhancement

of the facilities, share operating expenses, and provide up to five research staff and substantial equipment. This is of utmost interest to the Tribes, who wish to advance the science of recovery significantly and independently of political matters. It is also of interest to the university, which plans to devote their substantial resources for resolving scientific uncertainties pertaining to fish conservation issues.

Also of major significance are the educational opportunities that this partnership will offer to Tribal Members. The increasing lead role that the Tribes are taking in fish production and research and the MOA link to tribal production centers and programs is the building block for an education program that would be unlike any other, regionally or nationally.

In the High Priority funding decision, the CCAFS proposal (Project Number 23087) received a High Priority "B" ranking from CBFWA, meaning that it does not fit solicitation criteria but is needed for emergency or long term actions. It was assigned the letter "P" score, indicating that this proposal was a high priority for timeliness, and needed to be implemented this year. The Independent Scientific Review Panel (ISRP) did not rank the proposal, as it, in their opinion did not meet the High Priority criteria.

Project funding must be obtained in the present fiscal year in order to have the desired impact on ongoing technical activities related to Endangered Species Act (ESA) listing and to dovetail into University of Idaho construction schedules. Failure to do so will prevent or delay construction or increase significantly the costs of expansion of the HFCES to accommodate increased technical activities planned in the present year. Dovetailing into the University's construction schedule should result in savings of about \$1 million dollars. Further, this proposal will provide the critical technical support necessary for successful implementation of already-funded NWPPC programs.

CRITFC is requesting \$3.04M for this fiscal year which includes \$2.25M facilities improvement and capacity building, \$233K for operations and maintenance, \$400K to begin immediately working towards critical population management plans, Hatchery and Genetic Management Plans and ESA / Biological Opinions (BIOP) interaction, and \$150K for startup funding for the education component.

The outyear costs for this proposal are approximately \$2 M annually, although much of those costs would be absorbed in other existing projects. Therefore the actual outyear costs for this project are estimated at \$500,000 annually. The AFC expressed an interest in adding caveats to the education scholarships to insure that the knowledge gained through

this endeavor stays within the Columbia Basin to benefit fish and wildlife. They also recommended that a mechanism be considered to formally coordinate the work of the new CCAFS with that of other labs, including the National Marine Fisheries Service's (NMFS) Northwest Science Center, to ensure that there is no duplication of effort and that the separate capabilities of the facilities are put to the best possible use.

Action: The AFC approved funding the CRITFC request to establish a CCAFS for \$3.04 M from the anadromous fish placeholder and will forward the request to Members Management Group (MMG) for consideration.

Item 2b: WDFW Request for Chumstick Creek Culvert Replacement

WDFW is requesting \$656,625 for Project Number 199902300, *Chumstick Creek Culvert Fish Barrier Replacement Project*. This project was proposed to re-establish a historical run for ESA listed Threatened and Endangered salmonid species. This site has been a full block to spring chinook and bull trout and a partial block for steelhead for approximately 50 years. The existing culvert is the first fish barrier on Chumstick Creek upstream of its Wenatchee River confluence.

The original project description in the BPA Fish and Wildlife Program Fiscal Year 1999 Proposal Form called out for the replacement of the existing 10 foot diameter culvert with a 16 foot wide bottomless steel arch. The initial project cost estimate submitted and approved by the NWPPC in 1998 was \$171,000. The alternate culvert design cost estimate was revised to reflect design adjustments and is estimated at \$707,100.

Due to the delays in finalizing the design and the gross underestimation of cost, the BPA Project Manager requested an independent engineering review of project design and cost. That contract was awarded to Montgomery Watson Engineering (MW). In addition BPA requested an alternative design be recommended. The MW independent review compares very closely with Chelan County's.

Two additional alternatives were investigated: A steel bridge and a concrete bridge. The steel bridge option was rejected due to high ongoing maintenance costs imposed on the county. Considering the increased cost of the best culvert alternative approaches the cost of a bridge, and a bridge is the best long-term solution to fish passage, a concrete bridge would be a feasible alternative design. In addition, all environmental permits have been acquired including issuance of a biological opinion by NMFS where the preferred alternative was identified as a bridge for the best long-term success to pass fish, water and debris. A preliminary attempt at estimating the cost for the proposed concrete bridge design shows the cost at \$1,150,000 dollars. The final cost estimate will be complete on March 21, 2001.

The project objectives address what the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) has determined to be a primary limiting factor in Chumstick Creek – lack of unimpeded access to properly functioning spawning and rearing habitat. This project will complement USFWS and Chelan County Conservation District (CCCD) culvert removal projects upstream of the North Road crossing, and the Yakima Indian Nation’s proposal to reintroduce Coho to Chumstick Creek. The USFWS and the CCCD has obtained funding from BPA to improve habitat and replace 23 private culverts upstream of this project in 2001. Efforts by the County, CCCD and USFWS to eliminate these barriers would open approximately 78 square miles of good quality spawning and rearing habitat on Chumstick Creek.

There is approximately \$109,000 in carry forward for this project and non-BPA cost share funds amount to \$384,375.

The AFC had several questions that the WDFW representative was not able to answer and will be addressed at AFC:

Is there adequate flow in Chumstick Creek to merit this level of expenditure? What is the fish production potential of Chumstick Creek if this project moves forward? What is the current use of Chumstick Creek and what species are present?

Action: The AFC approved funding the WDFW request for \$656,625 to construct a concrete bridge under the Chumstick Creek Culvert Replacement project. Funds would come from the anadromous fish placeholder. The request will be forwarded to MMG for consideration.

Item 3: Rolling Provincial Review Update

Tom Iverson provided an update on the rolling provincial review. All information regarding the review process for each province is available on the CBFWA website at www.cbfwa.org.

Columbia Gorge and Inter-Mountain Provinces

On February 7, 2001 NWPPC recommended funding the Columbia Gorge and Inter-Mountain new and ongoing projects. BPA was waiting to take action on those projects until funds were identified in the quarterly review to fund them. The official NWPPC recommendation has not been formalized and sent over to BPA. That recommendation is expected soon and will be distributed to the CBFWA members when it becomes available.

Mountain Columbia Province

The Mountain Columbia project recommendations were forwarded to NWPPC on March 16, 2001. The NWPPC is expected to discuss those recommendations at their April 24 meeting in Wenatchee, WA. The province budget work group reconvened to provide a more thorough

review of project budgets and a budget addenda to the work plan will be sent over to NWPPC by April 6.

Columbia Plateau Province

The Columbia Plateau solicitation was released on March 7, 2001. Project proposals are due on April 13, 2001. The project review schedule is available on the CBFWA website and will be discussed in detail at future AFC meetings.

Mountain Snake and Blue Mountain Provinces

The Mountain Snake and Blue Mountain province reviews have been initiated. The subbasin summaries are due on May 18 and May 25, respectively.

Lower Columbia, Estuary, Middle Snake, Upper Snake, and Columbia Cascade Provinces

The Lower Columbia, Estuary, Middle Snake, Upper Snake, and Columbia Cascade Provinces are scheduled to begin in July 2001.

Mainstem and Systemwide

Although there has been very little discussion of the Mainstem and Systemwide Province Review, it appears most likely that the review will begin in November 2001 and follow a similar review pattern as all other province reviews.

Mainstem Operations Amendment to the Fish and Wildlife Program

See attached Amendment notice from NWPPC.

Item 4: NMFS Discussion of BiOp Needs in the Columbia Plateau Province

Kim Kratz made the following presentation to the AFC. NMFS has outlined an approach to habitat problems in the habitat section of the biological opinion. That approach seeks to build on and support ongoing fish and wildlife protection programs in several ways:

The approach in the opinion emphasizes the need for ecological context in habitat initiatives and project identification. For the most part, the opinion expects this context to be produced by scientifically sound subbasin and watershed assessments and plans and related recovery plans. For that reason, the opinion calls on BPA to support the continued development and implementation of the NWPPC's subbasin planning process. NMFS views this work as fundamental to the development and success of a long-term habitat program.

Pending these assessments and plans, the opinion calls for specific supportive initiatives to produce biological benefits in the short term:

- water solutions in priority subbasins,
- protect currently productive habitat (BPA habitat protection fund),

- test innovative mechanisms for habitat protection (water marketing demonstration project and leveraging for agricultural incentive programs),
- clear up important uncertainties (mainstem habitat program), and
- re-establish ecological function in the estuary.

The provincial review process is one of the ongoing processes on which the opinion seeks to build. The provincial reviews reflect the growing consensus on the importance of restoring ecological function. The reviews build on a credible scientific foundation found in the NWPPC's program, the considerable expertise in the fish and wildlife agencies and Tribes, and the scientific rigor of the ISRP review. The process plays an important role in salmon recovery that the biological opinion is not intended to duplicate.

In the provincial reviews, NMFS views are consistent with advice we see provided by the ISRP and the NWPPC. NMFS believes that there would not be additional value added to these efforts by imposing a further layer of project proposal review in the provincial review processes. Rather, NMFS will be actively engaged in ensuring the implementation of the initiatives outlined in the biological opinion: scientifically credible subbasin and watershed assessments and plans and the specific initiatives outlined above.

We do suggest that in the provincial reviews priority be given to proposals that:

- are based on at least a watershed assessment and identify, and provide rationale for, measurable benefits to specific salmonid life stages in a spatially explicit manner;
- protect and restore land and water habitat in ways that permanently address underlying ecosystem processes, reconnect isolated habitats or improve connections between habitats; and
- include, as appropriate, monitoring and evaluation consistent with the principles outlined in section 9.6.5.3 of biological opinion and Research, Monitoring and Evaluation RPA Actions 183 and 184.

Item 5: Update on Current River Operations

BPA is facing a financial crisis due to the predicted low water year and high cost of power purchases. This year is predicted to be the 2nd worst runoff since 1977 (53 million acre feet (MAF)). The current estimate for runoff for 2001 is 57 MAF. In order to meet the NMFS 2000 Hydrosystem Biological Opinion spill requirements, about 62 MAF is required. The Implementation Team and Technical Management Team have been meeting weekly to deal with operations in an atmosphere of

deteriorating runoff forecasts. The federal executives of the action agencies are meeting each Friday to make provide guidance to the teams relative to operations and have recently broadened participation to include state and Tribal representative as well. A list of operating priority alternatives is being developed and will be presented to the region in the next week or two.

Item 6: Next Meeting

The next AFC meeting is scheduled for April 18, 2001 in Portland, OR from 9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.