



COLUMBIA BASIN FISH AND WILDLIFE AUTHORITY

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Coordinating and promoting effective protection and restoration of fish, wildlife, and their habitat in the Columbia River Basin.

The Authority is comprised of the following tribes and government agencies:

Burns Paiute Tribe

Coeur d'Alene Tribe

Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation

Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation

Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation

Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation

Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation

Idaho Department of Fish and Game

Kootenai Tribe of Idaho

Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks

National Marine Fisheries Service

Nez Perce Tribe

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of Fort Hall

Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of Duck Valley

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Coordinating Agencies

Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission

Upper Columbia United Tribes

Compact of the Upper Snake River Tribes

DATE: May 14, 2009
TO: Resident Fish Advisory Committee (RFAC)
FROM: Neil Ward, CBFWA staff
SUBJECT: Final Action Notes for the April 28, 2009, RFAC Meeting

Resident Fish Advisory Committee Meeting
Tuesday, April 28, 2009
10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Portland, OR

Final Action Notes

Attendees: Christine Mallette (ODFW), Sheri Sears (CCT), Mike Faler (USFWS), Ron Peters (CDAT), and Neil Ward (CBFWA)

Phone: Dave Parrish (IDFG), Joe Maroney (KT), Jim Uehara (WDFW), Chad Abel (BPT), Jake Sellman (SPT), and Charlie Holderman (KTOI)

Time Allocation:

Objective 1. Committee Participation	100%
Objective 2. Technical Review	0%
Objective 3. Presentation	0%

ITEM 1: Review and Approve Agenda

Action: The agenda was reviewed and approved.

ITEM 2: Review and Approve March 17-18, 2009 Draft Action Notes

Action; The action notes for the March 17-18, 2009 RFAC meeting were approved as final.

ITEM 3: Review the Northwest Power Planning and Conservation Council's (NPCC/Council) Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program 2009 Amendments - Update

Discussion: During the March RFAC meeting, the RFAC tasked Neil Ward with contacting the NPCC to obtain clarification regarding the following Fish and Wildlife Program language:

“Complete the assessments of resident fish losses resulting from the development and operation of the hydrosystem, when and where there is agreement on the appropriate methodology and prioritization of an assessment. As these are available, the Council will consider adopting the loss assessments into the Program.”

Meeting participants expressed uncertainty regarding the meaning and intention of some of the words or phrases. Specifically, the RFAC expressed concern that they were unsure whether “these” refers to methodology, assessment, or both. In addition, participants indicated that there is a need for clarification regarding the phrase “when and where there is agreement on the appropriate methodology and prioritization of an assessment.”

Neil provided an update based on his discussions with the NPCC staff. The NPCC staff indicated that “these” refers to the assessments. The “when and where there is agreement on the appropriate methodology and prioritization of

an assessment” refers to general agreement on methodology and priority between the managers, NPCC, and Bonneville Power Administration in order to move forward. The NPCC indicated that they realize that in some areas “the cost of performing assessments may cause other work to be set aside for a while, so it is important to get that priority understood up front.”

ITEM 4: NPCC/Independent Scientific Review Panel’s (ISRP) Development of an Environmental Risk Assessment Method for Resident Fish

Discussion: Neil Ward led the RFAC in a discussion regarding the NPCC/Sir’s efforts to develop an environmental risk assessment method for resident fish. Per the 2009 amendments, “all proposals for ongoing or new resident fish substitution projects that involve or might involve a non-native species should include an environmental risk assessment of potential negative impacts on native fish species. The Independent Scientific Advisory Board recommended a template for such an environmental assessment. Starting with that template, the Council will work with the ISRP and the appropriate fish and wildlife agencies and Tribes to develop the final environmental risk assessment template. In developing the appropriate template, the Council will consider the criteria currently being used by managers to assess the consequences of substitution in the light of the Program’s subbasin and basinwide objectives.”

The RFAC decided the best approach to review the document would be to develop an ad hoc group to review the template and provide comments to the full RFAC for consideration during the June RFAC meeting. Joe Maroney, Jake Selman, Ron Peters and Neil Ward volunteered to review the template and provide comments.

ITEM 5: Resident Fish Losses: Development of Methodology to Assess Losses

Discussion: The 2009 Fish and Wildlife Program amendments provides the following objective to address resident fish losses: “Complete the assessments of resident fish losses resulting from the development and operation of the hydrosystem, when and where there is agreement on the appropriate methodology and prioritization of an assessment. As these are available, the Council will consider adopting the loss assessments in the Program” During the March RFAC meeting, representatives from Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks (MFWP) and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribe of the Flathead Reservation (CSKT) briefed the RFAC on the methods that they have used for assessing resident fish habitat lost due to the construction of hydroelectric facilities and subsequent inundation of mainstem and tributary habitats. To assess habitat losses in the Flathead Subbasin, the MFWP and CSKT implemented an approach that was linearly-based. The RFAC discussed the merits of this approach and in the process expressed concern regarding area, as well as length, lost due to inundation. Participants agreed that the comparison of results from tests using the linear and area protocols would be required before a decision could be made regarding the best methodology for estimating inundated habitat.

During the March RFAC meeting, Sheri Sears volunteered to identify inundation losses using a linear and area approach, for a test area (i.e., Rufus Woods), based on the metrics presented in Table 6 of the 1998 Technical Report for Fisheries Mitigation and Implementation Plan for Losses Attributable to the Construction and Operation of Libby Dam with the addition of a linear weighting system for area and an option to add focal species and habitat types.

Sheri presented the results of her effort (please see http://www.cbfwa.org/committee_rfacs.cfm to view the documents that Sheri presented and the RFAC discussed) to identify inundation losses and led the committee in a discussion regarding the process that she used, difficulties she encountered, and the next steps.

The RFAC agreed that the loss estimates need to be based on lost spawning, rearing, and migration habitat/areas (science-based) that would have been used by native resident fish prior to inundation. The RFAC continued to discuss whether area inundated was the most appropriate way, rather than length, to estimate habitat lost due to inundation. The RFAC expressed concern that, depending on reservoir bathymetry, implementation of a length or area approach could result in an underestimate of the amount of habitat lost due to inundation. The RFAC decided that neither approach should be eliminated until each method is applied to other areas in the basin. *Christine Mallette volunteered to test the methods in an effort to identify habitat lost, due to inundation, in the upper John Day Reservoir. Christine will report her findings during the June RFAC meeting.*

During the review, the RFAC determined the “historic habitat weighting loss” that Sheri developed should have a correction factor for quality habitat that has been lost. In addition, the RFAC suggested a 10 point system in which rearing and migration each have the potential of receiving 4 points (up to 2 each for juvenile and adult) and a potential of 2 points for spawning habitat. Besides habitat lost, the RFAC agreed that analyses must also include habitat types that gained as a result of inundation.

Sheri Sears presented a table of Operational Losses associated with the hydro-power facilities. Please see table at: http://www.cbfwa.org/committee_rfacs.cfm. RFAC Members were requested to review the loss table for any omissions applicable to their area and begin considering which biological indicators should be used to quantify the impacts to prepare for a discussion at the June 4th meeting time permitting.

NEXT RFAC MEETING

Thursday, June 4, 2009

CBFWA Office

Portland, OR

8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.