



August 3, 2001

Mr. Frank L. Cassidy Jr., Chair
Northwest Power Planning Council
851 SW 6th Ave., Suite 1100
Portland, OR 97204-1348

Dear Chairman Cassidy:

I am pleased to submit the Draft Fiscal Year (FY) 2002-2004 Province Work Plan (Plan) for the Columbia Plateau Province. This document is the result of the collaborative efforts of the Northwest Power Planning Council (NWPPC) staff, the Independent Scientific Review Panel (ISRP), the Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Authority (CBFWA) Members, other stakeholders, and the CBFWA staff. The Plan includes subbasin summaries which describe physical and biological characteristics of each subbasin, past accomplishments, gaps in knowledge, management objectives and strategies, and current needs, culminating in project and budget recommendations for FY 2002-2004.

The CBFWA process for providing these recommendations utilized the ISRP preliminary findings, project sponsors' responses to ISRP comments, and manager evaluations of the technical and management merits of the project proposals relative to anadromous fish, resident fish, and wildlife management needs, goals, and objectives identified in the subbasin summaries. The recommendations are the result of the project evaluations by the Regional Review Teams, the Wildlife, Resident Fish, Anadromous Fish committees, the Members Management Group and consent of all 19 CBFWA policy member agencies/ Tribes. A total of 166 project proposals were submitted and reviewed. The Plan recommendations (Appendices A and B) include 80 new and 61 ongoing project proposals totaling \$55 million.

An additional 16 project proposals (11 new and 5 ongoing) totaling \$26 million were identified as High Priority pending resolution of the crediting issue with the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) and the NWPPC. Although there is consensus on the merits of project proposals 25001, 25002, 25003, 25004, 25020, 25024, 25025, 25032, 25078, 25086, 25092, 199206200, 199705100, 200002300, 200002500, 200020116 (identified with an asterisk in Appendix A), we are unable to provide a consensus recommendation until the crediting issue is resolved; however, it should be noted that there is consensus on the "High Priority" rating of these projects should the crediting issues be resolved. In addition, we cannot support funding for any habitat enhancement proposal where credits may be applied by BPA against construction and inundation losses. This concern also applies to similar proposals in all provinces reviewed to date.

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There are two aspects to the crediting issue. First, there is great concern by CBFWA regarding BPA's apparent refusal to implement the 2:1 crediting ratio adopted by the NWPPC in its newly amended 2000 Fish and Wildlife Program. Second, there is concern that BPA intends to assign credits against terrestrial construction and inundation losses for projects intended primarily for anadromous fish habitat restoration. Lacking an appropriate crediting ledger could potentially wipe the wildlife losses crediting ledger clean without mitigating for construction and inundation losses in the manner contemplated by the Fish and Wildlife Program. Since there is agreement by the CBFWA fish and wildlife managers that all of these projects are High Priority for implementation in FY 2002, there is an urgent need to resolve the crediting issue as soon as possible.

There is also concern over inconsistency in BPA's use of in-lieu funding as the basis for denying funding of some proposals and an urgent need for the BPA to provide the region with a working definition of in-lieu. We will be forwarding, to the BPA and NWPPC under separate cover, a request for a policy level meeting to address the crediting and in-lieu issues.

The CBFWA project recommendations address needs identified in the subbasin summaries. If there is insufficient funding to fully support the CBFWA recommendation during FY 2002-2004, we request the opportunity to modify our recommendation once a specific budget is identified for each province.

We would like to thank the NWPPC staff and the ISRP for their assistance and we look forward to continuing our mutual efforts as we continue the Rolling Provincial Review.

If you have questions, please call Brian Allee or Tom Iverson at (503) 229-0191.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Rodney W. Sando, Chairman
Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Authority

cc: Bob Lohn, Doug Marker, NWPPC
Bob Austin, BPA