
Guide to Within-year Modification Requests

August 2002

INTRODUCTION

The within-year budget modification process has been developed to allow all project sponsors an opportunity to modify, outside the Rolling Provincial Review, existing projects that have been funded through the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) Direct Fish and Wildlife Program. The intent of the within-year budget modification process is to provide project sponsors with an opportunity to secure funds (requests that are less than 10% of the existing budget are exempt from this process as these needs are within the discretion of BPA's project management staff) from the BPA Direct Fish and Wildlife Program "Unallocated Placeholder" to (1) address emergency situations, (2) modify existing objectives/tasks, (3) change the scope of the project, and/or (4) address increased costs (e.g., equipment costs increase since initial quote) that are beyond the control of the project sponsor.

These guidelines are provided to assist and guide individuals or groups preparing within-year modification requests for funding consideration through the Unallocated Placeholder of the BPA's Fish and Wildlife Program. Unlike proposal solicitation during the Rolling Provincial Review, within-year modification requests may be submitted for *all* provinces. All project sponsors submitting within-year modification requests must prepare a formal request according to these guidelines contained in this document.

The implementation of project sponsor requests requires a "fund" recommendation from the Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Authority (CBFWA) and Northwest Power Planning Council (NWPPC). A within-year modification request will be reviewed for (1) technical and management deficiencies, (2) ability to address needs identified in the subbasin summaries/plans, (3) consistency with the NWPPC Fish and Wildlife Program and Endangered Species Act Biological Opinions/Recovery Plans, and (4) budget constraints, before it is submitted to BPA with a "fund" recommendation.

What is a within-year modification request?

A within-year modification request is a formal description of a modification to an existing project that will enable the project sponsor to continue to address objectives in their existing proposal. Proposed modifications must be consistent with the NWPPC's Fish and Wildlife Program as well as meet the needs identified in the relevant subbasin summary/plan (available on the CBFWA website: www.cbfwa.org/province.htm).

A within-year modification request contains information such as the phased project objectives being addressed, nature of the proposed work, methods, relationships to existing projects, and phased costs. The request must be complete to enable reviewers to understand what is being proposed and how it fits in relation to needs for information or action and its relationships to other work. The formal written within-year modification request is the administrative record of a modified project plan, the substantive background for the BPA's Statement of Work contract, and a basis for subsequent performance reviews of the project.

Who may submit a within-year modification request?

Submission of a within-year modification request is open to project sponsors of existing projects. All project sponsors must follow the guidelines described in this document and prepare a formal within-year modification request for evaluation.

Why are formal within-year modification request required?

The written request is the primary basis by which a project modification is recommended for funding. Recommendation or rejection will depend on the completeness and persuasiveness of the formal request. Information explained and referenced in the request form the basis of the funding decision.

Review and recommendation of a within-year modification request is accomplished most fairly and effectively when modifications are proposed in a clear and uniform manner. A primary objective of formal requests and their review is to maintain a high level of technical and management quality. Another objective is to ensure that projects selected for funding demonstrate that BPA funds are used wisely and efficiently to meet the goals of the NWPPC's Fish and Wildlife Program. There is a continuing need for a thorough evaluation of the technical soundness and management benefits of all modifications, particularly in light of funding constraints and the large number of requests that are submitted.

When and how can within-year modifications be submitted?

To submit a within-year modifications request, the appropriate forms, guidelines, and instructions can be downloaded at www.cbfwa.org. If you cannot download these materials, please contact Amy Langston at (503) 229-0191 or amy@cbfwa.org.

The within-year modification request form must be completely filled out with complete answers to every question. If you are uncertain how to fill out the enclosed form, please contact Neil Ward at the CBFWA at (503) 229-0191 or neil@cbfwa.org. Failure to follow each specific step or meet the specific deadline detailed below and in the application form, may prevent your request from being considered. Only complete applications will be reviewed. To complete the application process:

- An electronic copy of the request should be emailed to Amy Langston at amy@cbfwa.org and a paper copy mailed to:

**Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Authority
Attention: Amy Langston
Within-Year Modification Request
2501 SW First Avenue, Suite 200
Portland, Oregon 97201**

- Please contact the CBFWA office ((503) 229-0191) as soon as possible if you have difficulties meeting these requirements.

Key technical background material cited and summarized in the proposal should be submitted for the peer-reviewers to reference during their review. The preferred method of submittal is a web address to the document or an electronic copy of the document. If an electronic copy of the document is not available hard copies should be submitted. The References section of the narrative part of the form provides a location to specify web addresses for supporting documents.

Please check the log file on the CBFWA website: www.cbfwa.org for confirmation that the request was received. This log will be updated daily to reflect requests that have been received and entered into the tracking system. Please allow two days for the request to be entered into the system following receipt by the CBFWA. If after that time your request is not listed, or you are unable to access the log file, you should contact Amy Langston at (503) 229-0191.

How is a within-year modification request evaluated and selected?

Requests are evaluated and recommended by a combination of professional peer review and administrative evaluation. The evaluation occurs through the following:

1. Administrative Review

All requests are initially reviewed by CBFWA staff to ensure that the requested information has been provided. Lack of completeness of the request may be a basis for eliminating the request from further consideration. Copies of the request will be distributed to CBFWA committees (i.e., Resident Fish, Anadromous Fish, and Wildlife). At the same time, this information will be posted on the web at www.cbfga.org and updated periodically.

2. CBFWA Review

Standard formats and criteria are applied to all requests to ensure a consistent and fair evaluation of a request. These criteria are included in the “Proposal Preparation” section of these guidelines.

At least one CBFWA committee (i.e., Resident Fish, Anadromous Fish, and Wildlife) will conduct a technical and management review using the CBFWA review guidelines. The committees will provide a recommendation (non-consensus) to the CBFWA Members Management Group (MMG). All CBFWA MMG recommendations will be reached by consensus and subsequently submitted to the CBFWA Members for consensus prior to being submitted to the NWPPC (submittal will include all information received). During the reviews, project sponsors, the BPA COTR, and NWPPC staff are encouraged to attend the meetings to answer questions/concerns.

For the CBFWA’s past reviews and comments on within-year modification requests (including support material) go to the CBFWA’s website at www.cbfga.org.

3. CBFWA Final Recommendation

The CBFWA will provide a final recommendation to the NWPPC that takes into account the request’s technical/management merits, ability to meet the criteria, project sponsor’s response, and the project sponsor’s response to CBFWA questions/concerns.

Preparation of Within-year Modification Requests

What information should a within-year modification request contain?

Project sponsors are able to provide necessary information most effectively when they know the type of information that is desired and the form in which it is preferred. Similarly, reviewers can most efficiently evaluate proposals when all information is in a predictable location. Thus, the CBFWA has established a standard format for proposals. The forms and instructions are available at www.cbfga.org. The within-year modification request form is designed for easy preparation using Microsoft Word. This allows requests to be made available electronically and selected information can be retrieved, sorted, and presented in various formats.

Modification requests should not be presented in a fragmented fashion but instead exhibit coherent thought that provides a persuasive justification for the work and synthesis of relevant information. Reviewers will expect to see a logical and thorough presentation of the case for supporting the proposed modification. It is imperative that requests thoroughly explain the

circumstances or conditions that have changed since their proposal was considered and approved in the provincial review process, which necessitate the proposed modification.

CBFWA Within-year Modification Request Review Guidelines

The CBFWA review will first determine whether modification is for:

- (1) An unanticipated need that fits within the existing scope of an ongoing project;
- (2) A project that was previously recommended for funding by both CBFWA and the NWPPC, but was not funded by BPA;
- (3) An unanticipated and urgent need (i.e., immediate action is required) for new work (either an expansion in scope of an ongoing project or a new project) when solicitation for the applicable province is not open;
- (4) An unanticipated, but not urgent, need for new work when solicitation for the applicable province is not open.

Unanticipated need fits within the existing scope of an ongoing project

Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Authority recommendations are based on a determination that the modification request:

1. Can be funded through the Unallocated Placeholder (i.e., there are sufficient funds available);
2. Is based on sound science and management methods and principles;
3. Has clearly defined objectives and outcomes;
4. Cannot be deferred to the next Rolling Review;
5. If addressing an immediate threat to a federally listed (Threatened or Endangered) species, that was not previously identified in the proposal, the work that is being proposed must address a habitat/population/mechanical/structural condition that has developed in the existing study area (i.e., the site identified in the original proposal and contract);
6. Is essential to achieving the existing biological objectives that were proposed and accepted in the original proposal;
7. Does not create an adverse impact outyear budgets and/or create a “bow wave” for funding in the Province.

Project that was previously recommended for funding by both CBFWA and the NWPPC, but was not funded by BPA

The CBFWA recommendations are based on a determination that the modification request:

1. Can be funded through the Unallocated Placeholder (i.e., there are sufficient funds available).

Unanticipated and urgent need for new work (either an expansion in scope of an ongoing project or a new project) when solicitation for the applicable province is not open

The CBFWA recommendations are based on a determination that the modification request:

1. Can be funded through the Unallocated Placeholder (i.e., there are sufficient funds available);
2. Cannot be deferred to a later date (i.e., request is the result of a catastrophic/emergency situation that occurred after the contract was signed with BPA);
3. Addresses an immediate threat to a native fish, resident fish substitution species, and wildlife species and habitat (the modification must propose the initiation of work that addresses a habitat/population/mechanical/structural condition that has developed);
4. Is based on sound science and management methods and principles;
5. Has clearly defined objectives and outcomes;

In addition to the above CBFWA criteria, the proposal must undergo the same rigorous technical review that occurs during the Provincial Review process. The ISRP should be asked to conduct a review and make recommendations concerning technical merits of the proposed work. The appropriate technical committee (AFC, RFC, or WC), and the appropriate subregional team within CBFWA should also conduct reviews and make recommendations.

Unanticipated but not urgent need for new work when solicitation for the applicable province is not open

The CBFWA will recommend that the modification be deferred until solicitation for the applicable province is open.

Project sponsors should use the above CBFWA criteria as a checklist to ensure that their proposal addresses the criteria and, if not, to describe why a particular criterion does not apply. In addition, project sponsors should ensure that their request addresses the following questions:

1. Technical and Management Background

Is there an identified problem related to fish and wildlife in the Columbia River Basin? Does the request adequately explain the technical and management background (with references) and logical need to address the problem to benefit fish or wildlife?

A. Objectives

Does the proposed modification have clearly defined and measurable objectives (whenever possible in terms of measurable benefits to fish and wildlife) with specific timelines?

B. Methods

Are the methods adequately described and appropriate (i.e., based on sound scientific principles)? Does the request employ the best available scientific information and techniques? Is the modification's experimental design reasonable and defensible in techniques and resources?

C. Monitoring and Evaluation

Does the request include provisions for monitoring and evaluation of results (in the context of the objectives) that apply at the project level (whether the M&E is provided in this proposal or a directly related project)?

2. Rationale and Significance to Subbasin Summary/Plan and Regional Programs

Does the request demonstrate a clear relationship to specific objectives of the subbasin summary/plan and specific parts of the Fish and Wildlife Program, NMFS/USFWS Biological Opinions or other plans?

3. Relationships to Other Projects

Does the request put the modification into the context of other work funded through the BPA Fish and Wildlife Program and described in the subbasin summary/plan? Does this request represent collaborative efforts with similar projects, even if not part of an overall joint plan? If this modification is intended as an integrated component of a set of studies, is the rationale for that set and any time sequencing explained and documented?

4. Project History

Is the history of the existing project adequately described, including relationship to the proposed modification? Does the request represent adaptive management due to successes or failures of existing work?

5. Benefit to Fish and Wildlife (Modification as a whole)

Will the proposed modification benefit target species/indicator populations, as an individual project or as a critical link in a set of projects? Will the benefits persist over the long-term and not be compromised by other activities in the basin? Will the modification affect other non-target species? Does the request demonstrate that all “reasonable” precautions have been taken, based on the best available science, to not adversely affect habitat/populations of native biota?

Additional CBFWA Review Elements

Project sponsors with the following types of requests should address the related request-type questions fully in the appropriate section of the request form.

1. Habitat restoration request

- Have restoration decisions been preceded by a watershed-scale assessment?
- Does the request provide reasonable evidence that restoration activities will improve factors limiting natural production?
- Will the modification correct a limiting factor that has been identified as limiting natural production?
- Are steps being taken within the watershed to correct the sources of problems?
- Are modifications being proposed for the right location, given the distribution of species of interest (i.e., was the project sited correctly relative to the behavior and distribution of the organism(s) of interest)?
- Does the modification promote the restoration of natural ecological processes within the watershed?
- Does the request describe the consideration of passive restoration (e.g., letting the stream or riparian zone restore itself through successional habitat recovery) vs. active restoration (assisting the recovery process through intervention activities such as riparian plantings or instream structure placement)?
- Does the request take existing information into account?
- Has the full range of watershed uses by stakeholders been documented?
- How does the modification relate to other restoration efforts within the watershed?

For watershed council proposals;

- Have the appropriate set of regulatory authorities affecting the watershed been identified?
- Is there a balance of local, state, tribal, and federal participants in the modification?
- Are the full range of watershed interests (stakeholders) represented on the watershed council?

2. Construction request

- Has the value added been described adequately?
- Is there a clear description of the need for the modification, including the expected benefits relative to the costs of construction and long-term maintenance?
- Does the request describe the approval steps already taken and received prior to the request for construction funds?
- Does the request describe the qualifications of the builders, and what contingencies have been included to prevent excessive cost overruns?
- Is the construction schedule reasonable and does it include provisions for delays?

3. Wildlife habitat acquisition request

- Has the need for acquiring the property in question been justified (e.g., through gap analysis)?
- Has there been a clearly demonstrated need for acquiring more of this type of habitat, as opposed to other types?
- Will habitat improvement measures be necessary to achieve the desired wildlife values? If so, does the request adequately describe those measures, their timeframe, and an associated monitoring and evaluation protocol needed to assess the habitat improvement actions?
- Has the property being considered for acquisition been surveyed to determine what habitat types exist?
- What wildlife species will benefit from the acquisition? Will there be benefits to fishery resources as well?
- Does the request clearly explain the acquisition process and whether the property will be dedicated to a wildlife reserve in perpetuity?
- Is the cost reasonable?

Contact Points

Question or Problem	Contact
Need a form, guidance documents, instructions, or criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All materials are posted on CBFWA's website at www.cbfgwa.org • Amy Langston at (503) 229-0191 or amy@cbfgwa.org
Technical problems obtaining or using the form	Amy Langston at (503) 229-0191 or amy@cbfgwa.org
Content questions regarding the form (i.e. budget, appropriate answers)	Neil Ward at (503) 229-0191 or neil@cbfgwa.org
Application of CBFWA criteria	Neil Ward at (503) 229-0191 or neil@cbfgwa.org
Confirmation that proposal has been received	Check the log file at www.cbfgwa.org
Need assistance or information to complete budget tables, especially regarding NEPA, construction, PIT tags, etc. or other tables within the form	Contact your BPA COTR
Misplaced your proposal and would like to use it for reference	CBFWA's Project Finder tool at www.cbfgwa.org/projects
Need a subbasin summary	CBFWA's subbasin summaries page: www.cbfgwa.org/files/province
Other procedural questions	Neil Ward at (503) 229-0191 or Neil@cbfgwa.org

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