

Discussion Materials
Related to Regional Issues and Decision Processes
Members' Meeting
August 2-3, 2005
Bozeman, Montana

The Fish and Wildlife Agencies and Tribes (F&W agencies & Tribes) are facing several important initiatives in the near term that will affect the implementation of the F&W Program over the next five years or more.

- **Northwest Power and Conservation Council (NPCC) F&W Program amendments and the 2007-2009 project selection process.**

The NPCC is considering amending its F&W Program to address system-wide issues, set detailed objectives, and provide a framework for implementing subbasin plans. The F&W agencies & Tribes have specific legal standing in the F&W Program amendment process and the Program must be consistent with the plans of the F&W agencies & Tribes. The NPCC cannot implement the Program without the F&W agencies & Tribes. The NPCC will also decide on the process for selecting projects for FY 2007 – FY 2009. In developing this process, the NPCC will set priorities and allocation of effort in carrying out its Program.
- **National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) development of recovery plans.**

The NOAA staff is under a tight deadline to finish draft recovery plans for listed salmon by December 31, 2005. The F&W agencies & Tribes will be the major implementers and their input will improve the plans.
- **Federal agencies' redraft of the Biological Opinion.**

The federal agencies (BPA, NOAA, ACE, & BOR) will likely be required to redraft their Biological Opinion on the hydropower system as a result of the suit before Judge Redden's court. Judge Redden has called for a collaborative redraft that may include operational and structural changes to the hydropower system and additional mainstem and off-site mitigation. These will affect the implementation of the F&W Program.
- **Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) F&W funding decision in its rate case.**

BPA has set a preliminary level of \$143 million per year (plus capital) for its direct F&W budget. This amount will limit the rate of F&W Program implementation during the FY 2007-FY 2009 rate period and will put BPA in the position of choosing among the projects to be carried out.

The Members are the only entities with management authority for fish and wildlife. The central question before the Members is: *How do the Fish and Wildlife Managers want to participate in these and other near-term challenges?*