



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 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: March 19, 2009
TO: Resident Fish Advisory Committee (RFAC)
FROM: Neil Ward
SUBJECT: Final Action Notes for the March 17-18, 2009 RFAC Meeting

Resident Fish Advisory Committee Meeting
Tuesday, March 17, 2009 9:00am-4:00pm
Wednesday, March 18, 2009 9:00am-12:00pm
Grouse Mountain Lodge, Whitefish, MT
[RFAC webpage](#)

Final Action Notes

Tuesday, March 17, 2009

Attendees: Christine Mallette (ODFW), Sheri Sears (CCT), Mike Faler (USFWS), Jim Uehara (WDFW), Chad Abel (BPT), Jake Sellman (SPT), Ron Peters (CDAT), Brian Marotz (MFWP), Joel Tohtz (MFWP), Charlie Holderman (KTOI), Clint Muhlfeld (USGS), Chris Downs (NPS), Barry Hansen (CSKT), Neil Ward (CBFWA)

Phone: Hunter Osborn (SBT), Dave Parrish (IDFG), Joe Maroney (KT), Deanne Pavlik-Kunkel (STOI), Sue Ireland (KTOI)

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

ITEM 1: Review and Approve Agenda

The agenda was reviewed and approved.

ITEM 2: Review the Northwest Power Planning and Conservation Council's (NPCC) Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program 2009 Amendments

During the Member Advisory Group's (MAG) February meeting, the MAG directed the technical committees to review the NPCC's Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program 2009 Amendments for the purpose of determining how well the NPCC incorporated the recommendations that the CBFWA submitted. The MAG requested that the technical committees provide reports to the MAG during an upcoming MAG meeting.

Neil Ward led the RFAC in a review of the amended Fish and Wildlife Program. The RFAC chose to focus their review on the "Resident Fish Losses" section located on page 24 of the document. In particular, participants were concerned about the following directive:

"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."

ACTION: *Neil Ward will contact the NPCC to obtain clarification regarding what "these" refers to as well as an explanation describing the intent of the "when and where there is agreement on the appropriate methodology and prioritization of an assessment" phrase.*

ITEM 3: MAG Meeting – Technical Committee Reports

Because of a scheduling overlap, continuation of the RFAC meeting was delayed until 1:00 PM to allow attendees an opportunity to participate in the MAG meeting. Due to pressing issues regarding the CBFWA budget, the CBFWA technical committees were not requested to provide their reports to the MAG; however, it is expected that these reports will be presented during an upcoming meeting.

ITEM 4: NPCC/Independent Scientific Review Panel’s (ISRP) Development of 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.” Due to concerns about a sufficient amount of time to discuss resident fish loss methodology, the RFAC decided to discuss this task during the next meeting.

ITEM 5: Resident Fish Losses: Development of Methodology to Assess Losses (Inundation)

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.” Representatives from the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribe of the Flathead Reservation (CSKT) and Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks (MFWP), 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.

ACTION: *Sheri Sears will 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.*

Recommended Timeline-

Early-April – RFAC reviews product and modifies, if needed, the procedure to ensure the approach can be applied across the basin

Mid-April – RFAC presents, to the MAG, proposed method to identify inundation losses

Early-May – RFAC presents proposal to the Members

June – CBFWA presents proposal to NPCC Fish and Wildlife Committee

Wednesday, March 18, 2009

Attendees: Christine Mallette (ODFW), Sheri Sears (CCT), Mike Faler (USFWS), Jim Uehara (WDFW), Chad Abel (BPT), Jake Sellman (SPT), Ron Peters (CDAT), Brian Marotz (MFWP), Charlie Holderman (KTOI), Neil Ward (CBFWA)

Phone: Sue Ireland (KTOI), Scott Soultz (KTOI)

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

ITEM 1: Resident Fish Loss Methodology

Sheri Sears led the RFAC in a discussion regarding the development of methodology for annual resident fish losses associated with the construction and operation of the facilities. During this discussion, the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho provided a presentation that highlighted their current loss assessment project that evaluates the loss of ecological processes resulting from hydroelectric facility operations.

Due to time limitations, participants were unable to thoroughly evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the methods that have been used and those that are currently being developed. Because the RFAC will be focusing on the development of methodology for inundation losses, the committee will not focus on fish losses until after mid-April. The RFAC requested that the KTOI provide a presentation to the committee in May. It is expected that following the KTOI's presentation, the RFAC will begin to develop this resident fish loss methodology.

ACTION: Sheri Sears will conduct a "pilot study" to evaluate the physical, hydrological, chemical, and biological (resident fish losses) impacts of annual hydro-operations on Lake Roosevelt and Rufus Woods and provide the results during the April RFAC meeting.

Meeting adjourned.