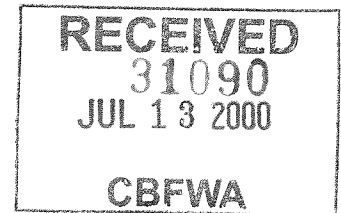




**COLUMBIA
BASIN
FISH & WILDLIFE
AUTHORITY**



July 6, 2000

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

Dear Chairman Cassidy:

CBFWA is requesting Council support for BPA to fund wildlife projects that received inadequate funding in FY00. CBFWA contends that historical funding of wildlife projects is inadequate to mitigate losses to wildlife at a sustainable rate. With the upcoming end of the current MOA, we see an opportunity to catch up with ever-accumulating losses and to set the stage for an effective mitigation program in the future. Whether this funding is to come through the early implementation process or through reallocation of existing Direct Program funds, we are committed to working with the Council and BPA to see that additional dollars are spent protecting habitat.

Over 260,000 acres of riparian, riverine, wetland, and upland habitat have been permanently protected in the 10 years since wildlife projects have been funded under the Council's Fish and Wildlife Program. Despite the excellent progress, we are losing ground as progress is constrained by limited funding. The Council recognizes in its Fish and Wildlife Program that losses to wildlife from the construction and operation of the hydrosystem accumulate over time and that these accumulated losses remain unmitigated. Furthermore, permanent protection of land requires adequate operation and maintenance (O&M) funding. As more lands are protected and enhanced, a greater proportion of wildlife money is dedicated to O&M, thus chipping away at our ability to progress towards full mitigation. Essentially, we are failing to keep up with inflation.

Many projects that would be implemented with this additional funding would benefit habitat for both wildlife and fish. We understand the emphasis on "early actions" for anadromous fish and the "new" emphasis on habitat. The wildlife managers' approach to mitigating impacts of the hydropower system has always been habitat-driven with measurable, on-the-ground benefits to both terrestrial and aquatic systems. During the past 10 years, we have also refined the methodologies and techniques used to permanently protect terrestrial and aquatic habitats/resources.

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COORDINATING AND PROMOTING EFFECTIVE PROTECTION AND RESTORATION
OF FISH, WILDLIFE AND THEIR HABITAT IN THE COLUMBIA RIVER BASIN

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Wildlife projects often address habitat issues for ESA-listed species and species of special concern, such as bald eagles, pygmy rabbits, and Columbian sharp-tailed grouse. There have been very few projects recommended for funding that did not have at least three listed threatened, endangered, or sensitive terrestrial or aquatic species that occur on the property. Our work also is intended to prevent further listings of terrestrial and aquatic plants and animals. The listing of sage grouse, cutthroat trout, or spotted frogs would have significant implications for terrestrial land uses that impact aquatic systems; this again amplifies the need to manage with a ridgetop-to-ridgetop, habitat-based approach.

The projects outlined below were reviewed and recommended by CBFWA in the FY00 AIWP, passed the ISRP review, and were approved by the Council. Projects were not funded in full because the Council's 70-15-15 split among anadromous, resident, and wildlife programs limited wildlife project funding to a total of \$14,473,634. Underfunding wildlife projects means that real life opportunities to permanently protect key habitat are lost to the open market. Full funding of these projects would total \$12,728,131 as summarized below:

Project #	Project Title	Sponsor	FY00 Requested	FY00 Allocated	FY00 Unfunded
9705900	Securing Wildlife Mitigation Sites -- Oregon	Oregon Wildlife Coalition	5,000,000	3,980,685	1,019,315
9206200	Yakama Nation -- Riparian/Wetlands Restoration	Yakama Nation	1,750,000	1,550,000	200,000
9206100	Albeni Falls Wildlife Mitigation	Albeni Falls Working Group	4,417,686	2,302,912	2,114,774
9506700	Colville Credits for Habitat	Colville Confederated Tribes	1,500,000	498,774	1,001,226
20074	Eagle Lakes Ranch	USFWS	853,500	0	853,500
9505700	Southern Idaho Wildlife Mitigation	Idaho Fish and Game and Shoshone-Bannock Tribes	4,334,510	1,153,964	3,180,546
9205900	Amazon Basin, Phase II	The Nature Conservancy	2,376,020	50,000	2,326,020
20081	STOI Wildlife Land Acquisition and Enhancement	Spokane Tribe	2,032,750	0	2,032,750
TOTAL			22,264,466	9,536,335	12,728,131

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Although less than four months remain in FY00, these projects are ongoing and all have requested continued funding for FY01. Furthermore, all except one are ongoing, "programmatic" habitat acquisition and enhancement projects. Present inadequate annual funding strategies make planning and implementation difficult.

Our understanding is that BPA is willing to spend unallocated and de-obligated funds in the Direct Program under the current MOA. If additional funding for wildlife projects is to come from the Direct Program, then we request that it not preclude existing, unobligated allocations (i.e., not yet contracted) for wildlife, resident fish, or anadromous fish projects from being obligated in the future. Again, CBFWA is asking the Council to request adequate funding from BPA for FY00 wildlife projects. This request makes sense: 1) wildlife losses are accumulating and they remain unmitigated; 2) wildlife projects address habitat needs for both fish and wildlife; 3) wildlife projects address existing ESA issues and hopefully prevent new listings; and 4) historical funding of wildlife projects is failing to "keep up with inflation". We hope you agree to move on this opportunity to make some headway towards fulfilling the intention of the Power Act.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lionel Boyer", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Lionel Boyer, Chair
Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Authority

cc: Bob Lohn, NWPPC
NWPPC Members
CBFWA Members