



November 30, 2001

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

Dear Chairman Cassidy:

On behalf of the Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Authority (CBFWA) Members, I am pleased to submit the Draft Fiscal Year (FY) 2002-2004 Province Work Plans (Plans) for the Blue Mountain and Mountain Snake Provinces. These documents are the result of the collaborative efforts of the Northwest Power Planning Council (NWPPC) staff, the Independent Scientific Review Panel (ISRP), the CBFWA Members and staff, and other stakeholders. The Plans include subbasin summaries which describe physical and biological characteristics of each subbasin, past accomplishments, gaps in knowledge, management objectives/strategies, and current needs, culminating in project and budget recommendations for FY 2002-2004.

The CBFWA project recommendations address needs identified in the subbasin summaries and represent consensus support from the regional fish and wildlife managers. In developing these recommendations CBFWA 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, and Anadromous Fish committees, the Members Management Group and consent of all 19 CBFWA policy member agencies/tribes. A total of 48 projects were submitted and reviewed for the Blue Mountain Province. The Plan recommendations include 22 new and 23 ongoing project proposals for the Blue Mountain Province totaling approximately \$27 million. A total of 95 project proposals were submitted and reviewed for the Mountain Snake Province. The Plan recommendations include 45 new and 38 ongoing project proposals for the Mountain Snake Province totaling \$61 million.

The Members of CBFWA recommend that the NWPPC support immediate funding of all projects we have identified as high priority for both the Blue Mountain and the Mountain Snake Provinces. The CBFWA high priority project recommendations are grounded in the collective experience and expertise of the fishery and wildlife biologists who have the authority and responsibility for managing fish and wildlife populations in the Columbia River Basin. The CBFWA fish and wildlife managers judge that these high priority projects best implement the NWPPC Fish and Wildlife Program, which calls for the protection, mitigation and enhancement of fish and wildlife populations. However, if after the NWPPC considers and deliberates on the CBFWA recommendations it elects not to follow those recommendations, CBFWA requests two things. First, we request that the NWPPC provide an opportunity to review and comment on its preliminary decisions prior to submitting its recommendations to the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA). For the Columbia Plateau Province there was not sufficient time to comment on the staff recommendation and the NWPPC decision in real time on what amounts to a three-year funding commitment. In the future, the CBFWA Members recommend a 30-day

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comment period during which time the NWPPC can be sure that the public policy decisions made are in the best interest of the region's fish and wildlife populations. During this period, CBFWA requests that the NWPPC meet with us to explain the basis of its decisions and allow us an opportunity to provide you with our response. Second, if the NWPPC chooses to impose a funding constraint on its recommendations, we request that the NWPPC follow the funding strategy we outlined in our September 26, 2001 letter.

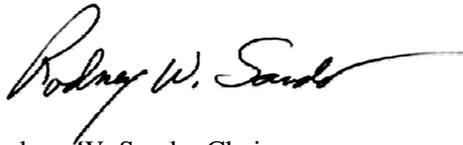
It is the CBFWA expectation that the NWPPC fund a balanced slate of projects, the scope of which would span wildlife, resident and anadromous fish reflecting the spirit and intent of the NWPPC 2000 Fish and Wildlife Program. We are concerned that the recent Columbia Plateau Province funding decisions for new projects which involve wildlife and resident fish and more specifically, listed resident fish, were given a lower priority than listed anadromous fish. These actions do not appear consistent with the requirement to protect, mitigate, and enhance all fish and wildlife impacted by the Federal Columbia River Power System (FCRPS). Clearly, funding decisions should provide a level of support for wildlife and resident fish projects determined to be necessary to mitigate for FCRPS-related losses.

In conclusion, the CBFWA does not believe an interim budget of \$186 million is adequate or sufficient to fund projects necessary to meet critical needs for the protection, mitigation, and enhancement of fish and wildlife affected by the FCRPS. We outlined our reasons in our September 26, 2001 letter to you and at in a presentation to you at the November 7, 2001 NWPPC meeting in Idaho Falls, Idaho. We thank you for agreeing to host a meeting to discuss this issue with the BPA, CBFWA and other stakeholders on December 11, 2001 in Portland and look forward to a comprehensive discussion of the appropriate budget level to fully fund the needs of the NWPPC Fish and Wildlife Program.

We would like to thank the NWPPC staff and the ISRP for their assistance in completing the project reviews in the Blue Mountain and Mountain Snake provinces. 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: Doug Marker, NWPPC
Sarah McNary and Bob Austin, BPA
Independent Scientific Review Panel
NWPPC Members and Staff
CBFWA Members and F&W Managers