



Independent Scientific Review Panel
for the Northwest Power Planning Council
851 SW 6th Avenue, Suite 1100
Portland, Oregon 97204
isrp@nwppc.org

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Council Members

FROM: Rick Williams, ISRP Chair; Chuck Coutant, Jack Griffith, Nancy Huntly, Lyman McDonald, Jack McIntyre

SUBJECT: Final Review of Fiscal Year 2001 Action Plan Proposals including Responses to ISRP Comments

This memorandum constitutes the ISRP's final review of Fiscal Year 2001 proposals. At the Council's request, the ISRP reviewed responses from project sponsors whose proposals were not recommended for funding in the ISRP's June 21 review of Action Plan proposals. The request specified that the responses be reviewed in the context of the original criteria for the Action Plan solicitation.

The ISRP received ten responses, including two received for the Columbia Plateau Provincial Review (see Table 1). The ISRP found two of the proposals (and responses; 23028 and 26031) fundable under the criteria of the Action Plan solicitation. One additional project (26005) was judged fundable under the Columbia Plateau provincial review as it only loosely fit the Action Plan criteria. Three proposals (23026, 23084, and 26019) were judged technically sound, but did not fit the Action Plan solicitation. The ISRP judged the remaining four proposals (26013, 26026, 26034, and 26035) as not fundable, with one of them (26026) deferred to the upcoming Mountain Snake provincial review.

Table 1. Project information and review outcome for the ten Action Plan proposals that submitted responses for additional ISRP review.

Project ID	Title	Sponsor	Province	Subbasin	Request	ISRP Response Recommendation
23028	Increase Naches River In-stream Flows By Purchasing Wapatox Water Right	YN	Columbia Plateau	Yakima	\$4,000,000	Fundable
26031	Improve Upstream Fish Passage in the Birch Creek Watershed	ODFW	Columbia Plateau	Umatilla	\$300,410	Fundable
26005	Yakima Tributary Access and Habitat Program (Objective 1: Early Actions)	Kittitas County Water Purveyors	Columbia Plateau	Yakima	\$1,588,000	Fundable under Columbia Plateau, loose fit to Action Plan solicitation
26019	South Fork Clearwater, Selway, and Salmon River Basins Monitoring and Evaluation of Spring / Summer Chinook Salmon Outplant Program	S.P. Cramer & Associates	Mountain Snake	Clearwater	\$75,200	Does not fit solicitation but technically sound.
23026	Klickitat Basin Key Habitat Acquisition	YN	Columbia Gorge	Klickitat	\$3,000,000	Does not fit solicitation but scientifically justified.
23084	Acquisition of Lower Desolation Creek, John Day Basin	CTUIR	Columbia Plateau	John Day	\$4,987,754	Does not fit solicitation but scientifically justified.
26013	Adult Spring/Summer Chinook and Steelhead Transport -- Snake River Basin -- Nez Perce Tribe	Nez Perce Tribe	Mountain Snake	Clearwater	\$195,267	Not fundable
26026	Transfer Lemhi Water Users (L-6 to Salmon River (S-14)	State of Idaho Office of Species Conservation	Mountain Snake	Salmon	\$2,860,000	Not fundable; defer to Mountain Snake Review.
26034	Kittitas Valley Reach Acquisitions	WDFW	Columbia Plateau	Yakima	\$2,000,000	Not fundable
26035	Taneum Creek Water Rights & Restoration	WDFW	Columbia Plateau	Yakima	\$530,000	Not fundable

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ISRP Final Recommendations and Comments on each Proposal

Fundable

Project ID: 23028

Increase Naches River In-stream Flows By Purchasing Wapatox Water Right

Sponsor: YN

Province: Columbia Plateau

Subbasin: Yakima

FY01 Request: \$4,000,000

Short Description: Cost share with Bureau of Reclamation to purchase and retire PacifiCorp's Wapatox Power Plant to benefit salmon and steelhead by increasing instream flows and enhance spawning and rearing habitat in the Naches River.

ISRP Comment:

Fundable under the Action Plan solicitation because it offers substantial streamflow increases. Consistently, the ISRP finds this proposal, after the response, also fundable in the Columbia Plateau Provincial review. The response makes the point that Wapatox is one part of a large program to significantly restore a large system whose ability to function naturally has been heavily reduced by a concerted human effort over a long period of time. As reviewers commented during the High Priority review process in which the project was ranked B, the project would benefit fish in that the portion of the river that is bypassed by the canal which at times is dry or otherwise inaccessible to spring chinook, steelhead and coho, as well as bull trout. Increased flow will lead to reconnection of the lower Naches River with upstream tributaries such as the American River.

As requested, the response attempts to clearly and quantitatively address benefits to fish. The reviewers were convinced that this project offers substantial and immediate gains for salmon and steelhead. The monitoring and evaluation component of the project was not adequately described in the response, perhaps this could be worked out by the Council and BPA in the Columbia Plateau project selection process.

There are obvious policy issues of who should fund this that extend beyond the ISRP purview.

Project ID: 26031

Improve Upstream Fish Passage in the Birch Creek Watershed

Sponsor: Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife

Province: Columbia Plateau

Subbasin: Umatilla

FY01 Request: \$300,410

Short Description: Improve upstream fish passage in the Birch Creek watershed (Umatilla River tributary) for the benefit of summer steelhead and redband trout by removing structures or building fishways over existing irrigation diversion dams.

ISRP Comments:

Fundable under the Action Plan and Columbia Plateau solicitations. The response was adequate. Fundable with added cost for monitoring and evaluation through the Columbia Plateau project selection process. The response clarified the objectives, tasks, and methods. The barrier sites were listed with their major characteristics. Alternative methods for removing barriers were discussed and the reasons given for selecting particular methods for particular projects. A monitoring and evaluation task was added (although with need for further funding). This follow-up monitoring seems needed to verify the project's success, even though the Oregon guidelines for such work will be followed (results may be useful for evaluating the guidelines, as well).

Final Columbia Plateau Comments: Fundable. A response was provided that adequately addressed the ISRP's concerns about the completeness of the original written proposal. The original proposal combined

with the response to the ISRP's preliminary comments provide an adequate basis for funding. There was an Action Plan submittal as well, focusing on different barriers in Birch Creek.

This is a straightforward proposal to remove migration barriers in a subbasin of the Umatilla River that is a high producer of summer steelhead and contains redband trout. Farming and irrigation have resulted in >5 major barriers to migration (and other smaller ones) due to obstructions and inadequate ladders. Fish-blocking dams were used instead of infiltration galleries or other fish-friendly alternatives. Despite these former abuses, Birch Creek has a wild stock of steelhead estimated at 30% of the Umatilla subbasin production, and is a focus of other habitat restoration work. The plan is to install stepped dams with lower heads, in series, with passage facilities, dealing with the worst cases first. The construction work would be subcontracted from the ODFW office, with oversight by ODFW staff.

The written proposal was incomplete in several respects, but adequately supplemented. The site visit, oral presentation, and response to the ISRP's preliminary comments helped alleviate most questions from the written proposal. The proposal's narrative provided good background, regional rationale, and relationships to other projects. The response clarified the objectives, tasks, and methods. The barrier sites were listed in the response, with their major characteristics. Alternative methods for removing barriers were discussed and the reasons given for selecting particular methods for particular projects. A monitoring and evaluation task was added in the response (although with professed need for further funding). This follow-up monitoring seems needed to verify that the projects are successful, even though the Oregon guidelines for such work will be followed (results of monitoring may be useful for evaluating the guidelines, as well). Although the proponents seemed to balk at the suggestion of the need for monitoring, the ISRP believes that the project must incorporate this (not necessarily additional) cost into their proposal. The proposed radio-tracking study to document passage may be excessively expensive (traditional mark-recapture techniques may suffice to document movement of juveniles upstream past previous barriers). It would be valuable to tie into an overall subbasin monitoring and evaluation effort that documents the changes in salmonid yield that can be related to their particular project, perhaps via smolt or adult sampling as well as a tagging process.

Birch Creek seems to be a good watershed on which to do remedial work for passage barriers in order to maintain and expand existing stocks of steelhead and trout. It could be a good model for other watersheds in the region.

Fundable under the Columbia Plateau

Project ID: 26005

Yakima Tributary Access and Habitat Program (Objective 1: Early Actions)

Sponsor: Kittitas County Water Purveyors

Province: Columbia Plateau

Subbasin: Yakima

FY01 Request: \$1,588,000

Short Description: Implement YTAHP Objective 1: Early Actions which include fish enhancements (fish passage screens and riparian habitat) at selected high priority locations on Yakima tributaries through a collaborative approach of local, state, federal & tribal interests.

ISRP Comments:

The ISRP review team found this proposal to be fundable in the Columbia Plateau review process. The response was very clear and showed that considerable effort went into its preparation. The proposal offers passage improvements that will likely benefit stocks targeted under the solicitation as specified in the Action Plan criteria. However, the proposal does not tightly fit the Action Plan criteria because it does not appear that actions will be achieved immediately in 2001. This project is most appropriately reviewed and selected for funding during the Columbia Plateau Province review where it can be evaluated relative to other competing proposals in the subbasin.

The ISRP's final comments from the Columbia Plateau Review:

Fundable. The well-written response to ISRP queries was helpful in clarifying how this large (and costly) proposed program, which has the potential to increase production of both anadromous and resident fish in several hundred miles of Yakima River tributaries, should be prioritized. Although the panel recognizes that it is not possible to precisely quantify the magnitude of potential fish benefits at this time, it views the effort as worthy of support.

Reasons for that support include:

1. the pro-active approach of KCWP staff and the organization's established track record of cooperation with federal agencies and the Yakama Nation,
2. the belief, based on experience elsewhere, that such a project should further bring together a variety of stakeholders, especially landowners, in a cooperative effort to restore fish passage and rearing,
3. evidence that there will be costsharing by KCWP participants, and evidence of a substantial commitment from the Yakama Nation, provided in the response to ISRP comments on project 199803400, to coordinate with KCWP to maximize fish benefits while minimizing project cost. Specifically, tributaries will be prioritized using a combination of EDT analysis and professional experience and judgment, the YN program to identify blocked and unscreened diversions will continue in coordination with KCWP, and YN staff indicate a willingness to attend monthly coordination meetings.

Technically Sound but Do Not Fit Action Plan Criteria

Project ID: 26019

South Fork Clearwater, Selway, and Salmon River Basins Monitoring and Evaluation of Spring / Summer Chinook Salmon Outplant Program

Sponsor: S.P. Cramer & Associates

Province: Mountain Snake

Subbasin: Clearwater

FY01 Request: \$75,200

Short Description: Conduct spawner survey of outplanted chinook salmon to determine spawner distribution, spawner ratio of hatchery to wild fish, and number of redds per fish stocked.

ISRP Comments:

This project is for monitoring and evaluation and as such does not meet the solicitation criteria for immediate, direct on-the-ground benefits. The Action Plan solicitation states, "*Proposals should clearly identify any required funding for ... monitoring and evaluation. Any funding of this sort that would be requested of BPA must be submitted for consideration in the appropriate Northwest Power Planning Council Provincial Review.*" Given this language, the ISRP found several other monitoring projects as "not fundable" under the Action Plan solicitation in our June 21 Report.

Notwithstanding the solicitation language, the response clearly addressed the ISRP's questions from the initial proposal review and appears technically sound. Uncertainty remains as to the exact locations and numbers of fish for the outplantings, but the response acknowledges this and describes a general survey protocol that will be sufficient. The response also lists a number of pertinent questions to be addressed through the surveys, which could provide useful information on hatchery-wild fish interactions. The questions this project proposes to address are important ones, and if large-scale outplanting will occur (or has already occurred), then it would be negligent not to investigate the effects, as this project proposes to do.

Project ID: 23026

Klickitat Basin Key Habitat Acquisition

Sponsor: YN

Province: Columbia Gorge

Subbasin: Klickitat

FY01 Request: \$3,000,000

Short Description: Purchase high priority lands for preservation of refugia habitat. Protection of stream channel and riparian habitats and associated uplands, which influence immediate riparian function and channel processes.

ISRP Comments:

This proposal does not tightly meet the Action Plan Criteria as it is primarily a land acquisition proposal and does not offer immediate passage improvement, flow increases, or diversion screening. However, it is scientifically justified and would benefit fish and wildlife. The response was convincing that this is a one-time cost associated with the purchase of the Logging Camp Creek property. The owner is intent on selling the property as soon as possible and in that sense the purchase is time sensitive. The proposal appropriately eliminated the request for funds to support infrastructure and future acquisitions. This proposal was initially submitted in the High Priority solicitation where the ISRP found it fundable and ranked it in the B-list. Although the Columbia Gorge Province project selection process is complete, the ISRP would have found this project to be fundable under that provincial review.

Project ID: 23084

Acquisition of Lower Desolation Creek, John Day Basin

Sponsor: CTUIR

Province: Columbia Plateau

Subbasin: John Day

FY01 Request: \$4,987,754

Short Description: Acquire and Restore Lower 11 miles of Desolation Creek and its tributaries. This would restore not less than 11 miles of anadromous streams.

ISRP Comments:

This proposal does not tightly meet the Action Plan Criteria as it is primarily a land acquisition proposal and does not offer immediate passage improvement, flow increases, or diversion screening. However, it is scientifically justified and would benefit fish and wildlife. This proposal is for acquisition of Lower Desolation Creek, John Day Basin to protect anadromous streams and upland habitat. This is a very good project in that acquisition would protect the majority of the associated watershed. This acquisition would protect 17 miles of anadromous streams within the Desolation Creek watershed.

The Columbia Plateau Province review is well underway and this proposal was not submitted as part of that process. However, in the context of the proposals reviewed in the Columbia Plateau, it is fundable. The response is convincing that purchase of the land will provide long-term benefits to threatened wild spring chinook and summer steelhead. Water temperatures are expected to decrease with improved riparian conditions and volume of water may also increase. There are no diversions on the property. The only request not addressed by the proponent was the need to describe a monitoring and evaluation program. If funded, the Council should require a detailed monitoring and evaluation program that uses a consistent, but finer scale sampling plan than the John Day monitoring projects (water quality, habitat, and fish) proposed, and found fundable, in the Columbia Plateau Province.

Not Fundable

Project ID: 26013

Adult Spring/Summer Chinook and Steelhead Transport -- Snake River Basin -- Nez Perce Tribe

Sponsor: Nez Perce Tribe

Province: Mountain Snake

Subbasin: Clearwater

FY01 Request: \$195,267

Short Description: U.S. v. OREGON "Applegate Process" coordinated use of surplus 2001 chinook/steelhead salmon by salmon managers in Snake River basin. Adults transported for natural spawning or broodstock, passage around dewatered areas, and to diminished population areas.

ISRP Comments:

Not fundable, the response did not address the ISRP concerns from the ISRP's initial Action Plan review. Those concerns are repeated below:

The proposal is to place many adults on the spawning grounds and, hopefully, achieve some of the results described in the proposal, particularly with respect to future genetic and abundance input into subsequent year classes. The proposal describes the expected benefits of the outplanting actions with general, but quite vague, statements. It is not possible to evaluate the proposal from a scientific or technical merit, as the goals, objectives, and tasks (p. 8, proposal narrative) contain insufficient detail for such review.

The proposal does not provide an adequate description of the pros and cons of its proposed actions. For example no information is provided on specific actions other than a list of participating hatcheries and satellite facilities and a list of target rivers. Given the tremendous concern and scrutiny that has been applied to stock specific actions in the upper basin, such as captive brood or supplementation, and the carefully measured processes that have been used to evaluate and determine actions there, large-scale actions such as proposed in this proposal have as much potential to do damage as good.

In the proposal, we are unable to determine which stocks will be collected and into what locations they will be transplanted. We are unable to determine whether stocks will be transferred within or among basins. Hatchery principles have undergone significant scrutiny and refinement over the last decade and stock transfers, except under very specific circumstances (which do not include excessive hatchery returning adults), have been universally recommended against.

We understand the immediacy of the proposed project and its associated actions. However, we are concerned that the enthusiasm for the larger-than-expected run and any actions taken in association with it not jeopardize the technical rigor of existing longer-standing management actions and research programs. If the proposal is funded in some fashion, we recommend in the strongest terms possible that monitoring and evaluation protocols be expanded or put in place so that the basin can adaptively learn from the actions taken.

The record run of chinook that is causing this problem raises some interesting questions. With the greatest run in recorded history (70 years), one might conclude that all available habitats will be seeded with eggs and fry. The proposal here suggests that the problem is too many fish to the hatcheries and not enough to the streams, therefore, the need to outplant the excess returning adults. Does this mean that outplanting in the past has not been successful and the only success is with fish released from hatcheries? What is the justification for outplanting these fish? If outplanted, they could cause disruption of the abundant (?) naturally spawning component of the population.

Project ID: 26026

Transfer Lemhi Water Users (L-6 to Salmon River (S-14)

Sponsor: State of Idaho Office of Species Conservation

Province: Mountain Snake

Subbasin: Salmon

FY01 Request: \$2,860,000

Short Description: The objective of this project is to change the source of water for these properties from the Lemhi River at L-6 diversion to the Salmon River at S-14 diversion. This would leave an additional 13 cfs of water flows through the critical reach of the Lemhi.

ISRP Comments:

Not fundable. This large-scale proposal is not adequately justified under this solicitation and is more appropriate for the upcoming Mountain Snake Provincial review. This is a proposal to provide tributary flow increase and passage improvements in the Lemhi River; as such the proposal meets the threshold criteria for this solicitation. This proposal would change the source of water for farming near the Lemhi confluence with the Salmon River from a Lemhi diversion to the main Salmon River. This would allow 13 cfs of water to continue down the critically water-short lower Lemhi, while the needed water is taken from the main Salmon, which is apparently less water-restricted. The Lemhi River diversion would be eliminated, thus aiding passage of adult chinook salmon into the Lemhi River.

Although the proposal and response do not provide fish data, the response is convincing that there is a problem with passage in the lower Lemhi River and that the removal of 13 cfs of water from the Salmon (300 CFS at record low flow) for a short distance (6.5 miles) will not significantly impact migration of salmon in the Salmon River.

However, the response raises additional issues on what flow is needed to ensure benefits to the fish in the context of what this project will provide. The response notes that the 13 cfs gained by the proposed actions would amount to one-third of the needed 39 cfs for summer passage into the Lemhi River by returning adult salmon. The response notes that this project coupled with other undefined actions would yield the requisite 39 cfs. Yet, the response also notes that summer flows have often been less than 1.0 cfs and were ~10 cfs in July and August 2000 (a reasonable water year). This means that the "undefined" actions will be required to provide somewhere between 13 cfs (as in 2000, for example) to 25 cfs during a low water year. Thus, success of the project (passage for salmon) depends on these other undefined actions. These undefined actions may be described or proposed in the upcoming provincial review. Perhaps, there is a less expensive and complicated alternative to this project. These issues indicate that the proposal would be best reviewed in the context of the suite of regional problems and actions.

The response indicates that the project will be ready to go once funding is available, but it still does not make an adequate case that this project can be implemented in time to yield benefits in 2001. Consequently, this project (with revisions) would be more appropriate for review in the Mountain Snake Province review. The context provided in the provincial review process is needed for a project of this scale and nature, and the project would benefit from the more considered review and presentation opportunities afforded in the ISRP's imminent review of the Salmon River subbasin.

Project ID: 26034

Kittitas Valley Reach Acquisitions

Sponsor: Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife**Province:** Columbia Plateau**Subbasin:** Yakima**FY01 Request:** \$2,000,000**Short Description:** Conservation purchases of key Yakima River floodplain properties in the Kittitas Valley reach.**ISRP Comments:**

Not fundable, inadequate proposal and response. This proposal does not tightly meet the Action Plan criteria, as the primary objective of the proposal is for land acquisition. Unlike the other land acquisition proposals reviewed for this memo, this proposal does offer immediate flow increases as requested in the Action Plan solicitation. However, the proposal and response are brief and lacking in sufficient detail for the technical review that the ISRP usually conducts. Specifically, although flow increases would be provided (600 acre-feet), that increase is not stated within the context of present discharge levels. Will 600 acre-feet produce a significant increase in existing flow? What are current summer low flows and what will the 600 acre-feet add?

Moreover, the brief response leaves the ISRP to take brief statements on face value. For example, "Willing sellers have been identified for a fee simple purchase." The monitoring plan is to "Monitor: Stream surveys, redd counts, measure restoration success." If funded, Council should review results of final negotiations carefully before release of funds and should require detailed operation and management and monitoring and evaluation plans that are consistent and at a finer scale than monitoring projects funded through the Columbia Plateau Province review. This proposal would have been more appropriate for the Columbia Plateau review, but it was not submitted under that solicitation.

Project ID: 26035

Taneum Creek Water Rights & Restoration

Sponsor: Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife**Province:** Columbia Plateau**Subbasin:** Yakima**FY01 Request:** \$530,000**Short Description:** Conservation purchases of key Yakima River floodplain properties in the Kittitas Valley reach.**ISRP Comments:**

Not fundable. The proposed action to acquire two water rights in the Yakima River floodplain is appropriate under the solicitation criteria and ESA-listed and non-listed species are in the creek. However, the proposal (and response) are deficient in identifying either the amount (cfs) of water that will be gained for instream flow or, if that is not known, identifying target goals (in cfs) for the project to convert to instream flow. Similarly, no description occurs for how much the added instream flows would contribute to limiting late summer flows. As such, the proposal is inadequate. Plans for placement of rootwads and vegetating planting do not fit the Action Plan solicitation, but would have been appropriate for the Columbia Plateau review. There is no monitoring and evaluation plan. A monitoring and evaluation plan is needed that would be consistent with and at a finer scale than monitoring projects funded during the Columbia Plateau Province Review. As it stands, the proposal is too brief regarding the assurances that any instream flow gains are possible, the basis for purchase and placement of rootwads, and the need for re-vegetation.