

## Backgrounder: Development of Multiyear Work plans for Fish and Wildlife Recovery Projects (Multiyear implementation planning)

**October 1996**

This will help ensure fish and wildlife projects meet clear objectives, are part of a comprehensive strategy, and are based on the best science.

Federal, state and tribal fishery managers and the Northwest Power Planning Council are working together to accelerate the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of fish and wildlife measures in the Columbia River Basin. A multiyear implementation plan will identify the needs of salmon and steelhead, resident fish, and wildlife.

The plan will consider all the components of the Northwest Power Planning Council's Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program, the requirements of the National Marine Fishery Service's Biological Opinions, the tribal salmon restoration plan adopted by the Nez Perce, Umatilla, Warm Springs and Yakama tribes, and other plans.

**This will help ensure fish and wildlife projects meet clear objectives, are part of a comprehensive strategy, and are based on the best science.**

This effort will identify areas where the federal, state and tribal restoration plans are similar or complementary to facilitate coordinated implementation. The process also will identify areas where there are differences among the plans and identify opportunities to resolve those differences. These areas will be reported back to the Council, the National Marine Fisheries Service and the fish and wildlife managers for their consideration of policy

direction.

To ensure the implementation plan is based on the best available science, this effort will integrate the work of the Independent Scientific Advisory Board and other scientific information into the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of fish and wildlife restoration activities. Fish and wildlife agencies and tribes also will request that the Independent Scientific Advisory Board review the draft implementation plan.

The multiyear implementation plan will provide a framework that includes ecological objectives and a schedule for key activities. The framework will identify the work that needs to be accomplished in each year. Fish and wildlife agencies and tribes will use this information to develop detailed annual work plans that can be used to solicit project proposals. This will help ensure that all fish and wildlife projects meet clear restoration objectives, are part of a comprehensive strategy, and are based on the best scientific knowledge. It will help ensure open access to the prioritization process, independent scientific review and completion of the work in as effective a manner as possible.

A public information and involvement effort will promote the participation of interested parties in this effort. The draft implementation plan will be completed this fall for public review and comment.

### Background

Since there are more opportunities for research, habitat restoration and production than money available, it is imperative that there be a coordinated regional plan that will optimize the use of available funds. An annual ranking process is in place to review projects for implementation each year, but the process has lacked a guiding framework. Development of this framework through multiyear work plans will be consistent with funding under the Memorandum of Agreement for Bonneville Power Administration fish and wildlife project funding recently signed by the Department of Energy, Department of Interior, Department of Commerce and the Department of the Army.

The Power Planning Council and the fish and wildlife agencies and tribes agreed to develop a multiyear implementation plan this fall for public review and comment. These agencies and tribes are working through an interagency steering committee to guide the planning efforts of technical teams of biologists, engineers, and other disciplines. The individual teams are developing a multiyear roadmap that will guide the region's investment in fish and wildlife by describing the work that needs to be done, identifying gaps in knowledge and assuring coordination of activities. The steering committee will compile the work of the individual groups into a single, coordinated work plan. Meetings of the steering committee are open to the public and there is opportunity for public comment at the end of each meeting. Steering committee meeting agendas and meeting summaries are available to anyone who is interested (see the attached instructions).

There is a great deal of commonality among the state, federal and tribal plans. The effort will focus on moving ahead in these areas of agreement and will frame issues in disagreement for subsequent resolution by regional policymakers. The Council, for example, anticipates using this effort to frame issues for possible amendments to its fish and wildlife program.

The Implementation Plan will consist of sections that parallel the emphasis of the several planning documents. The sections will contain statements of objectives of the work outlined and will identify research needs and an implementation schedule through the year 2001.

### Sections of the work plan

The **Mainstem Construction** section will consider alternative approaches to improve migration conditions for salmon and steelhead past the dams in the Columbia and Snake rivers. This work, being done by the System Configuration Team, will focus on the priority of construction activities funded through the Army Corps of Engineers' congressional appropriations, but also will be coordinated with mainstem research activities and needs funded by Bonneville, the Corps and other river operators.

The **Watershed Restoration and Production** section will identify production needs and watershed restoration opportunities together, resulting in basin-by-basin objectives and strategies to identify habitat and production actions for implementation. A combined watershed restoration and production team is overseeing the compilation of this section. The Watershed Restoration section will identify habitat restoration opportunities consistent with agency and tribal management objectives. A broad, regionally represented Watershed Restoration Team has been established and is working with the public, local entities and appropriate jurisdictions to identify needs, opportunities and other sources of funds, and to coordinate ongoing efforts. The production section will also clearly lay out time schedules and costs for each supplementation and production facility currently being considered. A team of state, federal and tribal managers will identify production objectives and strategies for the production subsection.

The **Research, Monitoring and Evaluation** section will identify the information gathering actions

that are needed to make key restoration decisions. It will also identify research needs to resolve critical uncertainties and to improve overall understanding of restoration strategies and their effectiveness.

The **River Operations** section will be developed by the Technical Management Team, an existing group that meets by telephone conference once a week from April to August to deal with real-time issues associated with operation of the Federal Columbia River Power System for anadromous fish. This section will highlight consistent recommendations in operation that are called for in the individual plans and identify policy direction needs where recommendations differ, including measures for resident fish. These issues are at the heart of continuing regional disagreement.

The **Resident Fish** section will address mitigation and enhancement measures for freshwater fish and measures to substitute resident fish for salmon populations permanently lost due to construction and operation of the federal hydropower system. The work plans will set out a schedule for implementing these measures over the coming years.

The **Wildlife** section will address wildlife measures responding to losses from construction and operation of the hydropower system. The work plans will include long-range implementation schedules for those measures

Other teams will assist this effort with budget analysis, public information and involvement and coordination.

The substantive sections of the implementation work plans -- Mainstem Construction, River Operations, Resident Fish, Wildlife, and Watershed Restoration and Production -- will include biological objectives, progress reports on ongoing actions, future actions needed to advance fish and wildlife restoration, schedules for these actions and the necessary monitoring and evaluation components. The implementation plan together with these and other elements will be used to develop solicitations for the work that needs to be accomplished each year.

The multiyear implementation plan will also serve as a guide for those submitting proposals for restoration work or research. The proposals will be evaluated in the annual ranking process based on objective criteria, including consistency with the multiyear implementation framework, scientific soundness and cost effectiveness. The evaluation process will be competitive in that the highest ranked projects will be considered for funding by the Council in its prioritization process. The fish and wildlife agencies and tribes will develop annual restoration work plans based on the implementation framework, the projects funded for that year, and the monitoring and evaluation results of the previous years' activities.

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