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COLUMBIA BASIN FISH & WILDLIFE AUTHORITY

March 24, 2004

Rob Walton
Chair, Federal Caucus
NOAA Fisheries
525 NE Oregon St. #420
Portland, OR 97232

Dear Mr. Walton:

The Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Authority (CBFWA) wishes to express our support for the formation of the Pacific Northwest Aquatic Monitoring Partnership (PNAMP). We believe that the stated purpose of PNAMP to share resources and data across regional organizations; provide increased scientific credibility; encourage cost effective use of limited funds; provide greater accountability to stakeholders; better inform public policy and resource management decisions; and contribute to meeting legal obligations is laudable. It is our view that this effort to coordinate regional monitoring activities is long overdue and we commend the staffs of the many state and federal entities that have made this organization possible.

We are especially interested in the success of PNAMP because it provides a forum for interaction at both the technical and policy levels for the Collaborative Systemwide Monitoring and Evaluation Project (CSMEP) being implemented by CBFWA. CSMEP's role will be to facilitate the involvement of CBFWA state, federal and tribal representatives in the development of standard protocols for BPA-funded projects in the Columbia River Basin consistent with the principles adopted by the PNAMP.

CBFWA is currently participating by having CSMEP members as co-chairs of the PNAMP Fish Population Monitoring Committee and CBFWA's Executive Director on the PNAMP Steering Committee. CSMEP's role and relationship to other regional research monitoring and evaluation coordination efforts are outlined in the attached document.

If you have any questions regarding this issue please contact Frank Young.

Sincerely,

Warren Seyler
Chair

cc: NPCC
CBFWA Members & MMG
Federal Caucus

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2501 SW First Avenue, Suite 200
Portland, Oregon 97201
503/229-0191 Fax 229-0443
www.cbfwf.org

DRAFT

Relationship of the CBFWA Collaborative System-wide Monitoring and Evaluation Project to other Research, Monitoring and Evaluation and Data Management Efforts in the Columbia River Basin

By Frank Young, CBFWA
03/18/04

Collaborative System-wide Monitoring and Evaluation Project (CSMEP)

This project proposes an integrated effort of state, tribal and federal fish and wildlife managers to catalogue, make available, critically assess and improve system-wide monitoring and evaluation activities for fish, wildlife and ecosystem status. It is a collaborative effort, led by the CBFWA and implemented by its members with the assistance of ESSA Technologies LTD, Eco Logical Research and StreamNet. This project focuses on system-wide monitoring and evaluation of fish status, addressing requirements of NMFS and USFWS biological opinions and recovery plans as well as the NPCC Fish and Wildlife Program. It proposes an integrated effort by fish and wildlife managers to:

1) Interact with federal, state and tribal programmatic and technical entities responsible for monitoring and evaluation of fish and wildlife, to ensure that quarterly work plans developed and executed under this project are well integrated with ongoing work by these entities;
2) Collaboratively inventory existing monitoring data that bear on the problem of evaluating the status of salmon, steelhead, bull trout and other species of regional importance across the U.S. portion of the Columbia Basin, and for selected parts of the Columbia Basin in Canada which affect the status of key fish stocks in the U.S. Columbia Basin (e.g. Okanagan sockeye);
3) Work with existing entities (e.g. StreamNet, NOAA Fisheries, NPCC) to make a subset of existing monitoring data available through the Internet, recognizing the continuing evolution of data management in the Columbia Basin;
4) Critically assess the strengths and weaknesses of existing monitoring data and associated evaluation methods for answering key questions at various spatial scales concerning the state of ecosystems and fish habitat , as well as fish distributions, stock status and responses to management actions;
5) Collaboratively design improved monitoring and evaluation methods that will fill information gaps and provide better answers to these questions in the future, by providing state and tribal fish agency participation and work products for multi-agency development of regionally coordinated monitoring programs;
6) Coordinate state and tribal participation and work products for regionally coordinated, multi-agency implementation of pilot projects or large scale monitoring programs; and

7) Participate in regional forums to evaluate new monitoring program results, assess new ability to answer key questions, propose revisions to monitoring approaches, and coordinate proposed changes with regional monitoring programs.

The activities listed above will be pursued concurrently through a series of collaborative workshops, interspersed with specific work tasks assigned to small work groups. These activities will occur at the three tiers discussed in "*Guidelines for Conducting Population and Environmental Status Monitoring* (Jordan et al. 2002)". It is recognized that a number of existing efforts are directed towards similar goals. Including senior staff involved in those other efforts in this project will ensure that this work will be complementary and supportive, not duplicative.

Coordination is accomplished through regular distribution of all relevant work products to all CBFWA committees and other interested parties as well as postings to the CSMEP Webpage, which is open to the public. In addition, a search engine will be provided to facilitate public access to all RME data inventory catalogs compiled in the Columbia River Basin during the course of this project.

Federal Research, Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (FRMEP)

The FRMEP is called for in the 2000 FCRPS BiOp and was developed jointly by NOAA Fisheries and the FCRPS Action Agencies (BPA, USACE and BOR). The resulting RME Program is intended to provide information needed to measure progress toward recovery of ESA-listed anadromous fish populations at the 2005 and 2008 check-in evaluations. In addition, this Program will result in the identification and prioritization of actions that are the most effective towards improved stock performance needed for the development of the 2010 BiOp. This Plan explicitly addresses RPA actions 158-162 and 179-199.

The BiOp recognizes substantial uncertainty which is addressed through 1) biological and physical performance standards, 2) a mid-point evaluation check-in process and 3) a research, monitoring and evaluation program. The FRMEP is designed to support the evaluation process and address the uncertainties in the RPAs.

Relationship to CSMEP: The role of the CSMEP in this effort is to assist in developing the most effective design for future RME work guided by the metrics and performance standards developed through the FRMEP Technical Recovery Teams (TRT). Through analyses of information from past studies and ongoing FRMEP pilot projects, CSMEP will develop the most effective methodologies to measure population responses to habitat alteration.

Coordination is accomplished by CSMEP being represented at the Federal RME Coordination Group meetings and FRMEP representatives being included in all CSMEP communications. CSMEP will also work closely with the Interior and Willamette/Lower Columbia TRTs.

Pacific Northwest Aquatic Monitoring Partnership (PNAMP)

The PNAMP is intended to provide a forum for coordination at the technical and policy level among the federal, state and tribal interests involved in aquatic ecosystem monitoring activities. The geographic scope includes interested parties inside as well as outside of CBFWA's region of interest. Its purpose is to provide appropriate technical information, and where necessary the technical tools to acquire adequate monitoring information in a coordinated manner at the appropriate scales to inform public policy and resource management decisions. Adequate monitoring information will be obtained through implementation of standard data collection and management protocols across all funding sources (state, federal and BPA) for the entire Pacific Northwest Region (including Northern California and coastal subbasins as well as the Columbia River Basin). Members of the Partnership include state, federal and tribal entities with a common interest in coordinating effectiveness monitoring, watershed condition monitoring and fish population monitoring as well as the management of the resulting data. PNAMP is a forum for all of the respective monitoring efforts to come together to collaborate, coordinate approaches, discuss and adopt standards, etc. It is anticipated that all RME efforts in the region will participate in PNAMP to assure their methodologies will produce information that is useful across the basin. PNAMP is only a coordination forum. It does not implement any RME activities.

Relationship to CSMEP: CSMEP will focus on facilitating the involvement of CBFWA representatives in the development of standard protocols for BPA-funded projects in the Columbia River Basin consistent with the principles adopted by the PNAMP.

Coordination needed to assure that activities are complimentary includes CSMEP representatives as co-chairs of the PNAMP Fish Population Monitoring Subcommittee and CBFWA Member participation at the policy level of the PNAMP as well as distribution of PNAMP documents to CSMEP participants.

Columbia Basin Coordinated Information System (CBCIS)

The CBCIS effort has now been renamed – the North-west Environmental Data Net-work (NED). NED is a NPCC and NOAA Fisheries initiative under an Memorandum of Understanding to improve the quality, quantity and availability of Columbia River Basin data and related information on fish, oceans, wildlife and their habitats using a publicly supported approach to information systems development. The project is using a collaborative process involving entities with a broad array of science, management, decision-making and public outreach interests in the region to evaluate current information management approaches and identify future needs. From this research, a clear understanding of gaps in the ability of current efforts to meet future needs has been gained and recommendations for improvement developed. For the purposes of this project, information is being defined as data and the products (e.g., reports, summary statistics, and other synthesized information) generated from the data. The central aspect of this project is working directly with information users and providers to gain a complete understanding of the drivers behind information management in the Basin, the kinds of

information that are currently being generated (i.e., develop an information inventory), the efficacy of current information systems in meeting current needs, information gaps and features that users would like to see in a collaborative information system.

Relationship to CSMEP: CSMEP tasks (including development of a data inventory and provision of Internet accessible data modules) are consistent with the principles of NED (CBCIS). CSMEP participants are prepared to provide any needed assistance or input to the NED (CBCIS) process on request. CSMEP products would be linked with any completed NED (CBCIS) for region-wide dissemination, especially since initial approaches for NED (CBCIS) will be built on existing data capabilities.

Coordination is accomplished by monitoring of NED (CBCIS) activities and including NED (CBCIS) representatives in the distribution of CSMEP meeting notices and work products. In addition two individuals working with CSMEP are serving on the NED (CBCIS) Program Team (Phil Roger and Bruce Schmidt). As NED (CBCIS) data management protocols are gradually developed, accepted and implemented CSMEP will adapt accordingly.

Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board (UCSRB)

The UCSRB was established through the collaboration of Chelan, Douglas, and Okanogan counties with the Colville Tribes and Yakama Nation, which operates in cooperation with local, state, and federal partners. The mission of the UCSRB is to restore viable and sustainable populations of salmon, steelhead and other at-risk species through the collaborative efforts, combined resources and wise resource management of the Upper Columbia Region. To better meet its mission the UCSRB wishes to ensure that actions taken to protect and restore salmonid habitat in the region are based on sound scientific principles. The UCSRB has established a Regional Technical Team (RTT) to assist them in establishing a common approach to identify and select habitat protection and restoration projects within the Upper Columbia Region and is facilitated by the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office. The coordinator is Bob Bugert. The UCSRB has appointed the North Central Washington Resource Conservation and Development Council as a vehicle for regional coordination and promotion.

The UCSRB facilitates subbasin planning and recovery planning under the State of Washington's Outline for Salmon Recovery. Staff participates in many fora and provides expertise in fisheries biology, ecosystem management and public outreach. The staff also coordinated with NOAA's Interior Columbia TRT to coordinate M&E, and recovery planning

The RTT has developed a Draft Monitoring Strategy for the Upper Columbia Basin for the Wenatchee, Entiat, Methow and Okanogan subbasins with standard methodologies and protocols that can serve as a model for the rest of the Basin. The RME project for the Wenatchee Subbasin is a pilot project under the FRMEP. This plan has been adopted by the UCSRB and is being closely coordinated with those in the John Day and Salmon Rivers, CSMEP and the PNAMP, Lead Entity (WA State) and PCSRF processes.

Relationship to CSMEP: The Upper Columbia Monitoring Strategy is one of the projects included in the CSMEP analysis of RME methodologies.

Coordination is accomplished through attendance of RTT meetings by CSMEP representatives and distribution of RTT meeting notes to CSMEP representatives.

USFWS Bull Trout Research, Monitoring and Evaluation Group (RMEG)

The USFWS Bull Trout Recovery Planning Process is developing a suite of criteria by which to assess the status and trends of bull trout populations within the Columbia Basin Distinct Population Segments. These criteria will likely include abundance, distribution, productivity, diversity and connectivity. The RMEG is a group of 10-12 federal, state, tribal and academic experts on bull trout led by the USFWS, who are working to make these criteria operational by developing practical and effective experimental designs, monitoring protocols and evaluation methods.

Relationship to CSMEP: Both USFWS' staff and USFWS' StreamNet representatives are involved in CSMEP activities. CSMEP and the USFWS RME process have the same facilitator, assuring that these two efforts are well coordinated.