

# **CHARTER OF THE COLUMBIA BASIN FISH AND WILDLIFE AUTHORITY**

**October 27, 2006**

## **PART I – PREAMBLE**

Nineteen federal and state agencies and Indian tribes manage Columbia Basin fish and wildlife resources in the United States. These agencies and tribes are:

Burns-Paiute Tribe  
Coeur d’Alene Tribe  
Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation  
Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation  
Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation  
Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon  
Idaho Department of Fish and Game  
Kalispel Tribe of Indians  
Kootenai Tribe of Idaho  
Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
Nez Perce Tribe  
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife  
Shoshone-Bannock Tribes  
Shoshone-Paiute Tribes  
Spokane Tribe of Indians  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife  
Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation

Most of the agencies and tribes have management authority over a discrete geographic area of the Columbia Basin that is defined by political boundaries. Coordination of management activities is important because no single agency or tribe has authority over habitat necessary for all phases of the life history of a species or over all species within a particular ecosystem. The fish and wildlife managers are united in their desire to establish and maintain a mechanism to coordinate their management activities.

The Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Authority (Authority) was established in 1987 as an informal collaborative for the region’s fish and wildlife managers. The managers established the Authority to coordinate the efforts of its Members to protect and enhance fish and wildlife resources of the

Columbia River Basin through joint planning and action. The Authority provides a forum to facilitate the exchange of information among Members on matters affecting anadromous fish, resident fish, and wildlife resources and their habitat in the Columbia River Basin for informed, coordinated decisions and joint actions by the Members and more effective review of other uses of the Basin in relation to fish and wildlife. The Authority is a consensus-based organization. The Members pledge to cooperate in good faith to participate in the consensus process.

## **PART II – PURPOSE**

Through this Charter, the Authority is established as an association of state and federal fish and wildlife agencies and Indian tribes (Members). The purposes of the Authority are:

(A) to assure comprehensive and effective planning and implementation of fish and wildlife programs in the Columbia River Basin, ongoing or proposed, consistent with requirements of applicable law; and

(B) to facilitate discussion among fish and wildlife managers in an effort to find consensus, to improve the quality of fish and wildlife decision-making, and to influence other regional decision-makers.

## **PART III – OBJECTIVES**

### **Section 301 – Fish and Wildlife Management Coordination**

#### **The Authority shall:**

(A) Coordinate interagency activities of the Columbia River Basin between the federal and state fish and wildlife management agencies and Indian tribes or their tribal coordinating entity(s);

(B) Establish the necessary committees and panels;

(C) Establish a Directorate and staff;

(D) Support the development and implementation of cost-effective fish and wildlife programs;

(E) Prioritize management needs;

(F) Where relevant and appropriate coordinate subbasin plans and assist in evaluating their implementation;

(G) Provide policy direction for and administration of the Fish Passage Center;

(H) Develop and coordinate mitigation of fish and wildlife losses of the Columbia Basin due to hydroelectric development;

(I) Coordinate the development of cost-effective research, monitoring and evaluation projects to focus on priority issues and avoid redundancy;

(J) Encourage effective communication with and involvement of stakeholders in natural resource decision processes in the Columbia Basin; and

(K) Analyze and facilitate consensus responses where appropriate to proposed state and federal legislation related to fish and wildlife habitat issues.

### **Section 302 – Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Program Coordination**

#### **The Authority shall:**

(A) Provide a centralized, regional entity for coordinating the Member's role in the design and implementation of the Northwest Power Planning Council's Fish and Wildlife Program.

(B) Provide policy and technical analysis related to the development of measures concerning fish and wildlife and hydropower relationships;

(C) Through the Fish Passage Advisory Committee, provide technical recommendations for operations of the Federal Columbia River Power System that protect and enhance fish and wildlife.

(D) Coordinate development of fish and wildlife habitat restoration measures (natural production); and

(E) Coordinate development and operation of artificial production of anadromous and resident fish measures in the Columbia Basin.

### **Section 303 – Coordination of Land and Water Management Cooperation**

#### **The Authority shall:**

(A) Coordinate activities between the Authority and all the water and land planning and management authorities of the Columbia River Basin.

(B) Facilitate the development of fish and wildlife habitat restoration measures;

(C) Ensure coordination of all relevant entities in the fish production planning process;

(D) Coordinate activities to improve production, survival, and harvest in the Columbia Basin considering, when relevant and appropriate, any Comprehensive Management Plan (U.S. v. Oregon); and

(E) Ensure communications between all relevant entities.

## **PART IV – PARTICIPATION**

### **Section 401 – Authority of Members Preserved**

(A) Membership in the Authority is based upon the authorities contained

in the treaties, statutes, executive orders, and other legal responsibilities of the parties to oversee protection, mitigation, and enhancement of resident fish, wildlife, and anadromous fish.

(B) Neither this Charter nor the operation of the Authority will alter the individual responsibilities and authorities of the parties.

### **Section 402 – Membership**

**(A) Eligibility** -- The proposed entity must be an agency or tribe with fish and wildlife management responsibilities within the geographic boundaries of the Columbia Basin.

**(B) Member Organizations** -- In order to recognize the needs and authorities of the variety of entities involved in fish and wildlife issues in the Columbia Basin, Authority Membership shall include the following entities upon official execution of this Charter:

- Burns-Paiute Tribe
- Coeur d’Alene Tribe
- Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation
- Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation
- Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
- Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon
- Idaho Department of Fish and Game
- Kootenai Tribe of Idaho
- Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks
- National Marine Fisheries Service
- Nez Perce Tribe
- Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Shoshone-Bannock Tribes
- Shoshone-Paiute Tribes
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation

**(C) Tribal Organizations** -- For purposes of Sections 404(B)(2), 404(D)(5) and 501(D)(2), –

(1) “Columbia River Intertribal Fish Commission” includes the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon the Nez Perce Tribe, and the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation; and

(2) “Upper Columbia River United Tribes” includes the Coeur d’Alene Tribe, the Kalispel Tribe of Indians, the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, and the Spokane Tribe of the Spokane Reservation, Washington.

**(D) Members Representation** -- Only state agency directors, federal agency regional directors and chairmen of tribal governing bodies, or duly authorized representatives of such directors or chairmen, may serve on the Authority.

### **Section 403 – Officers**

**(A) Selection** -- The officers of the Authority shall be a Chairperson and Vice Chairperson. By October 1 of each year, officers shall be selected from a list of Members. Representation shall alternate every other year between state/federal agencies, and Member tribes or designated tribal coordinating bodies.

#### **(B) Duties --**

(1) The Chairperson shall:

- (a) preside at all meetings of the Authority;
- (b) assure that all instructions and statements of the Authority are properly executed;
- (c) supervise the Executive Director;
- (d) sign those contracts or written statements requiring official signature as determined by the Authority; and
- (e) assure distribution of meeting agendas and minutes.

(2) The Vice Chairperson shall be vested with all the powers and perform all the duties of the Chairperson in the absence or disability of the latter. The Vice Chairperson is Chairperson-designate and takes the chair when it is vacant.

### **Section 404 - Rules of Procedure**

#### **(A) Procedural Guidelines –**

(1) Members shall provide overall policy directions, through consensus actions, to the Executive Director, the Members Advisory Group, and committees.

(2) Members shall establish operating guidelines for each committee.

(3) Members shall retain the right to review and approve yearly committee activities.

(4) Members shall retain, assign, or recall issues to the appropriate committee as needed.

#### **(B) Members Meetings --**

(1) The full Authority shall meet no less than twice annually or as

necessary to conduct Authority business.

(2) A Members Meeting quorum shall consist of:

(a) one Federal Agency Authority Member;

(b) two State Agency Authority Members, one member each from Idaho or Montana, and from Oregon or Washington; and

(c) three Tribal Authority Members, one each who is a member of the Columbia River Intertribal Fish Commission and the Upper Columbia River United Tribes, and one who is a representative of either the Burns-Paiute, the Salish-Kootenai, the Shoshone-Bannock, or the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes.

(3) All Members meetings shall include time for public comment.

(4) Closed meetings (executive sessions) may be called as necessary to discuss sensitive issues with final action to take place in open session.

(5) Proxy participation is permitted at Members meetings, except for purposes of establishing a quorum under this section. Proxies must be in writing.

(6) The Chair of the Authority may call for a special Members meeting to address issues requiring expedited resolution in advance of the next regularly scheduled Members meeting. Such a special meeting may be by telephone conference call. Notice of such a special meeting shall be provided to Members no later than 10 business days prior to the meeting.

**(C) Rules of Order --**

The Members shall adopt rules of order to govern business at all meetings and to guide the actions of the Authority.

**(D) Consensus Decision Making --**

(1) The Executive Director shall circulate a draft consent agenda and a regular business agenda for each Members meeting no later than 10 business days prior to the meeting. The Executive Director shall place any item on the consent agenda when directed to do so by the Chair or at the request of any Member.

(2) Any member must object in writing to an item on a properly circulated consent agenda. A written objection to consensus on a consent agenda item must contain the reasons for the objection. An objection need not be in writing if the consent agenda is circulated less than 10 business days prior to a meeting. An objection received by the Executive Director regarding an item for which consent approval is requested shall be considered an objection to consensus on that item, and the item shall be removed from the consent agenda.

(3) At the request of any Member, the Executive Director may place

an item for which consensus was not achieved on the regular business agenda for a subsequent Members or Members Advisory Group meeting.

(4) A Member must be physically present or represented at a Members or Members Advisory Group meeting to object to consensus on a business agenda item if the item previously was removed from the consent agenda but was placed on the regular business agenda for a subsequent Members or Members Advisory Group meeting.

(5) Following coordination on all issues, consensus positions will be sought before Members actions are communicated under Authority letterhead. When consensus is not attained on an issue requiring external communication, and on a motion approved by a majority of the participating Members, Authority letterhead will be used to advise whomever it may concern that consensus was attempted and to set forth the differing positions of the Members, provided that the motion is supported by:

(a) one Federal Agency Authority Member;

(b) two State Agency Authority Members, one member each from Idaho or Montana, and from Oregon or Washington; and

(c) three Tribal Authority Members, one each who is a member of the Columbia River Intertribal Fish Commission and the Upper Columbia River United Tribes, and one who is a representative of either the Burns-Paiute, the Salish-Kootenai, the Shoshone-Bannock, or the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes.

(6) Any Member may abstain or be absent from the consensus process without it becoming a dissenting opinion.

(7) A Member who chooses not to participate in the consensus process, either by objecting to a consensus decision in writing under subsection (D)(2), or in person under subsection (D)(4), shall be deemed to have abstained from the decisionmaking process.

**(E) Dispute Resolution --**

(1) If consensus cannot be achieved within a Committee established under Section 502 on an issue before the Committee, the Committee chair or vice-chair shall submit majority and dissenting positions to the Members Advisory Group established under Section 501 for resolution by that group. Any remaining unresolved differences shall be raised by the Members Advisory Group to the Members for resolution.

(2) The form of referral by the Members Advisory Group to the Members shall be determined by the need for timely resolution of the issue. Issues requiring expedited resolution shall be referred via conference call, or special meeting as determined by the Chair of the Authority. Other issues shall be placed on the agenda for consideration

at the next regularly scheduled Members meeting.

**(F) Funding --**

(1) Bonneville Power Administration funding will be used to carry out all Authority activities described in Section 302. Annual membership fees of \$750 shall be paid by each Member and are nonrefundable; such funds will be used only on activities described in Section 301 and Section 303.

(2) The Authority staff shall prepare for review and approval by the Members an annual work plan and budget that identifies sources and amounts of funds.

(3) The Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Foundation (CBFWF), established by the Members in October 1993 as a non-profit corporation under Oregon Law and a tax-exempt organization under section 501(C)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, will serve the contractual and fiscal functions of the Authority. The Executive Director of the Authority also shall serve as the President and Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the CBFWF.

**Section 405 – Charter Amendments**

This Charter may be amended by consensus of the Members.

**Section 406 – Withdrawal by Members**

Any Member may withdraw from the Authority by written notification to all of the Members. The effective date of the withdrawal, unless rescinded, will be 30 days from the date of receipt of the notification letter by the Executive Director.

**Section 407 – Admission of New Members**

**(A) Application Process --**

(1) The interested entity must meet the eligibility requirement referenced in Section 402(A).

(2) The applicant must submit a written request for admission that clearly explains how the entity meets the eligibility requirement. The application letter must be received at least 60 days prior to a semi-annual Members meeting. Applications will only be considered at the semi-annual winter or summer Members' meetings.

**(B) Members Decision Process --**

(1) The application letter and any corresponding materials will initially be reviewed by the Members Advisory Group at the first regularly scheduled monthly meeting following receipt of the letter.

(2) If it is determined further information is needed, the Members



Advisory Group may request that information from the applying entity.

(3) When it is determined by the Members Advisory Group the application is complete, the application will be forwarded to the Members for their consideration at the next regularly scheduled Members Meeting.

(4) The Members will review the request and will take action to either deny, grant admission, or table the application. If there are objections to the application, they must be explained.

(5) The applicant will be notified of the Members' action within ten business days of the date of the meeting.

## **PART V – ADMINISTRATION**

### **Section 501 – Members Advisory Group**

**(A) Established** -- There is hereby established a Members Advisory Group to assist the Executive Director in carrying out the regular business of the Authority.

**(B) Membership** -- Members of the Members Advisory Group shall consist of senior managers active in Columbia Basin management, each appointed by an Authority Member if such Member chooses to have representation, and the chairs of the Anadromous Fish Advisory Committee, Resident Fish Advisory Committee, and Wildlife Advisory Committee established under Section 502.

**(C) Guidelines** -- The Members Advisory Group will operate under the following guidelines:

(1) Assist the Executive Director in carrying out the policies and goals of the Authority;

(2) Be issue oriented and consider both proactive and reactive issues;

(3) Only consider and recommend policy positions to the Members;

(4) Recommend decisions to the Members when policy guidelines are unclear;

(5) Assist the Members in their committee oversight responsibilities;

(6) Recommend agenda issues and develop consent calendars for the Members actions;

(7) Consider issues brought up by any one of the Members Advisory Group members;

(8) Schedule meetings for the third Tuesday of each month but

will hold meetings only as needed;

(9) Use telecommunication systems as necessary to allow for participation;

(10) Document meeting action only through the letters and recommendations agreed to by consensus; and

(11) Differences unresolved by the Members Advisory Group will be referred to the Members as provided in Section 404(E)(2).

**(D) Committee Procedures --**

(1) The chair of the Members Advisory Group shall be selected by the members of the committee.

(2) The Members Advisory Group shall operate by consensus. A quorum of designated representatives as described in Section 404(B)(2) is desirable but not essential to conducting committee business, except as prescribed in Section 505A.

(3) Proxy participation is permitted at Members Advisory Group meetings.

(4) Regularly scheduled meetings of the Members Advisory Group shall be open to the public. The public shall be provided an opportunity for limited comment. Closed meetings (executive sessions) may be called as necessary to discuss sensitive issues with final action to take place in open session.

(5) Authority staff shall facilitate Members Advisory Group meetings but not be a part of the decision process. Authority staff will be responsible for the distribution of agendas, reports, etc., as well as meeting arrangements.

(6) The chair or vice chair with the assistance of staff shall prepare a written agenda prior to each meeting with copies sent to each designee, the Executive Director, and interested parties no later than one week prior to each meeting.

(7) The chair or vice chair with the assistance of staff shall distribute the action notes as agreed to at each meeting to each designee, the Executive Director and interested parties no later than one week after the meeting.

**Section 502 – Technical Advisory Committees**

**(A) Composition --** The Members are hereby authorized to establish technical advisory committees by Administrative Rule.

**(B) Committee Functions --**

(1) Policy assignments from the Members to the Members Advisory Group shall be by consensus of the Members. Assignments to any

technical advisory committee shall be by consensus action of the Members or Members Advisory Group, and submitted through the corresponding chair.

(2) The Members and Members Advisory Group can make technical requests of the committees. Any recommendations or range of options developed by the committee must be sent back to the body making the request for deliberation.

(3) Committee analyses and recommendations shall:

- (a) account for where the assignment has come from;
- (b) account for all applicable information and prior research;
- (c) address practicable alternatives; and
- (d) account for risk and uncertainty.

(4) When evaluating projects, committees will first develop specific evaluation criteria through consensus agreement that reflect established policies and priorities of the Members.

### **(C) Committee Procedures --**

(1) Each committee will operate on a standardized charter approved by the Members. The Committee Charter describes how the committee operates, how the committees relate to each other, and ensures that the committee's purpose is consistent with and supports the mission of the Authority.

(2) Committees shall be composed of qualified representatives designated by each interested Member. A quorum of designated representatives as described in Section 404(B)(2) is desirable but not essential to conducting committee business. Each committee recommendation will include a list of designated representatives who participated. Committees shall operate by consensus. A designated representative may abstain or, subject to timely notice regarding consideration of the issue, be absent from the consensus process without the position of that representative becoming an assenting or dissenting opinion.

(3) Regularly scheduled meetings of committees shall be open to the public. The public shall be provided an opportunity for limited comment. Agendas will be distributed one week prior to the meetings to designated representatives, to each Authority Member and to other interested parties who have made a request to attend a specified committee proceeding. Closed meetings (executive sessions) may be called as necessary to discuss sensitive issues with final action to take place in open session.

(4) Authority staff shall facilitate committee meetings but not be a

part of the decision process. They will be responsible for the distribution of agendas, reports, etc., as well as meeting arrangements.

(5) The chair or vice chair with the assistance of staff shall prepare a written agenda prior to each meeting with copies sent to each designee, the Members Advisory Group, the Executive Director, and interested parties no later than one week prior to each meeting.

(6) The chair or vice chair with the assistance of staff shall distribute the action notes agreed to at each meeting to each designee, Members Advisory Group, each committee, Executive Director and interested parties no later than one week after the meeting.

(7) Committees shall meet at the request of the chair or vice chair or at the request of a majority of the committee members.

(8) The chair or vice chair or a person designated by the chair or vice chair shall attend all Members Advisory Group and Authority Members meetings.

(9) All costs involved in committee participation are the responsibility of each member unless otherwise provided for.

(10) Proxy participation is permitted at committee meetings, except for purposes of establishing a quorum under this section. Proxies must be in writing.

#### **(D) Communications --**

(1) The Members shall release upon request any data or information provided to them by a committee or Authority staff person that is cited by a Member agency or tribe as the basis for an operational action or otherwise cited as support for a public recommendation.

(2) The committees shall not communicate statements of Authority policy positions or results of policy or technical analyses to nonmember entities unless previously approved by the Members or the Members Advisory Group. Determination of position statements shall not be delegated by the Members to any committee.

#### **Section 503 – Administrative Decisions**

The Members shall, as necessary, make Administrative Decisions, as addenda to the Charter to be identified by serial numbers in the year the action is taken (e.g. 87-1).

#### **Section 504 – Executive Director**

##### **(A) Selection --**

The Executive Director will be selected by a consensus of the Authority Members or removed by agreement of a majority providing that a majority of

the tribes and a majority of the agencies are included in that majority.

**(B) General Duties --**

(1) The Executive Director and Authority staff shall be guided in their actions by the Members and shall receive direct supervision as determined by the Members.

(2) The Executive Director shall –

(a) serve as Chief Administrative Officer of the Authority;

(b) facilitate discussion among Authority Members in an effort to find consensus;

(c) ensure the timely completion of the draft annual implementation work plan;

(d) prepare Authority annual operating budgets for Member review and approval;

(e) procure services, supplies and equipment when required to effect the work of the Authority; and

(f) perform such other duties as are set forth in this Charter or directed by the Chairperson.

(3) The Executive Director shall deliver a draft of each meeting agenda to the Members not less than ten working days prior to the meeting.

(4) The Executive Director shall record and distribute meeting minutes to all Members not more than ten working days following the meeting.

(5) The Executive Director of the Authority shall facilitate meetings of all committees either personally or by staff appointment.

**(C) External Communications --**

(1) The Executive Director may, at the direction of the Authority chairperson and with no objection by any Member:

(a) represent the Authority at meetings and public hearings to carry out policy directions from the Members; and

(b) maintain liaison between the agencies and tribes and the natural resource interest groups to provide information necessary for the support of effective resource management.

**(D) Supervision of Staff --**

(1) The Executive Director shall prescribe the duties and direct the Authority staff. The Executive Director shall assure that Authority staff represent all Members equally and perform duties with competence and

initiative but within limits prescribed by Authority's positions and charter.

(2) The Executive Director shall be responsible for maintaining high standards of ethical conduct among the staff.

**(E) Fish Passage Center Participation** -- The Executive Director shall provide oversight for the Fish Passage Center Manager and shall serve as an ex-officio member of the Fish Passage Center Board of Directors.

### **Section 505 – Authority Staff**

**(A) Selection** -- The Executive Director shall advertise vacant staff positions with notices to all the entities involved in the fish and wildlife activities of the Basin. A notice period of at least one month will be used. A representation of three Members Advisory Group members (federal, state, Tribal) shall, through a process of resume reviews and personal interviews, prepare a short list of at least three top candidates. The list will be reviewed by the full Members Advisory Group and forwarded with any comments to the Executive Director. The Executive Director is the selecting official and will be responsible for the final selection.

### **(B) Conditions of Employment** --

(1) All employees of the Authority shall recognize the staff function they perform for the Authority on behalf of its Members and that the authority for action remains with the Member entities.

(2) No employee of the Authority shall be deprived of employment, position, work, compensation, or benefit provided for or made possible through Authority employment on account of any political activity or lack of such activity in support of or in opposition to any candidate or any political party in any national, state, county, or municipal election or on account of his/her political affiliation.

(3) Working for employers other than the Authority, although not encouraged, is not prohibited so long as the Executive Director is informed and it does not, in the discretion of the Executive Director and the Members, create a conflict of interest or conflict with regular or special hours or work required of the employee by the Authority, or until the effects of such outside employment become apparent in reduced efficiency and work performance.

(4) Employees of the Authority shall perform their duties and dress in a professional manner appropriate for the business at hand.

(5) Additional conditions of employment will be stated in the adopted Personnel Handbook.

### **(C) Communications** --

(1) Employees of the Authority shall maintain open communication

with all Members and committees and keep the Executive Director briefed on significant issues.

(2) Employees of the Authority are not to advocate any one position to the detriment of another Member's views if consensus is not achieved on policy positions or technical statements of Members.

(3) Employees of the Authority shall communicate written statements to nonmembers only as determined by the Members of the Authority.

**(D) Standards of Conduct --**

No employee of the Authority shall:

(1) use his or her official authority or influence derived from his or her position with the Authority for the purpose of influencing or affecting the result of an election to or nomination for any national, state, county, or municipal elective office;

(2) pay, or offer, or promise, or solicit, or receive from any person, firm, or corporation, either as a political contribution or a personal emolument, any money, or anything of value in consideration of either support, or the use of influence, or the promise of support, or influence in obtaining for any person, any appointive office, place or employment under the Authority;

(3) have a direct or indirect financial interest that conflicts with the fair and impartial conduct of his or her Authority duties;

(4) use or allow the use of, for other than official purposes, information obtained through or in connection with his/her Authority employment which has not been made available to the general public;

(5) engage in criminal, infamous, dishonest, notoriously immoral, or disgraceful conduct prejudicial to the Authority; or

(6) use Authority or Member property on other than official business. Such property shall be protected and preserved from improper or deleterious operation or use.