

**DRAFT**  
**Comments to Northwest Power and Conservation Council**  
**on Program Coordination Project Funding Recommendations**

There appears to be a universal need among the Northwest Power and Conservation Council (Council), Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), federal agencies, and the fish and wildlife managers to coordinate information needs and reporting to support adaptive management processes in the Columbia River Basin. For the past three years, the Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Authority (CBFWA) Member fish and wildlife agencies and tribes have adopted policy directives that focus on data sharing and reporting at the basin-wide scale to inform adaptive management decision making. Recently the Council has begun to focus on monitoring and evaluation to support basin-wide decision making through the draft MERR Plan as well as their adoption of High Level Indicators. In addition, BPA staff is pursuing methods for reporting the status of VSP indicators, and habitat and hatchery effectiveness indicators for FCRPS Biological Opinion reporting.

There is a need for ongoing technical workgroups to identify and support Fish and Wildlife Program information sharing priorities; however, the funding mechanism to support ongoing facilitation of these workgroups is unclear. Existing technical work groups formerly provided through CBFWA, that developed the initial draft monitoring strategies, can no longer be supported solely from CBFWA Members funding contributions. Participation in the technical committees by most of the fish and wildlife managers, BPA staff, and Council staff has been maintained even though CBFWA membership has continued to decline. The technical committees have also modified their focus in order to better support the Council's draft MERR Plan and Fish and Wildlife Program adaptive management processes (information sharing). However it is not clear how the Council intends to support continuation of these technical committees through their project recommendations in the Resident Fish, Data Management, and Regional Coordination project review.

The Council should endorse an integrated network of technical committees that focus on monitoring, data management, and information sharing to support the Fish and Wildlife Program's reporting needs as expressed through the draft MERR Plan and the adaptive management processes described in the 2009 Fish and Wildlife Program. This network, as represented in the attached diagram, would align the existing technical committees with a policy oriented oversight board that has broad representation to support understanding and buy-in to the information needs and adaptive management processes necessary to support Program development and implementation. The network would be facilitated by a centralized staff with institutional knowledge and personal relationships with the agency and tribal staff, Council staff and BPA staff to ensure integration and successful implementation of committee activities.

The Council should provide clear and accountable recommendations for specific program coordination and data management projects that include specific tasks and funding levels. The proposed network would provide a link between funding for the individual agency and tribal program coordination projects, with participation on technical committees and policy groups that support concrete outcomes and deliverables as described in the 2009 Fish and Wildlife Program. The Council could create and host a MERR Implementation Board to coordinate information sharing in support of explicit adaptive management processes for the Fish and Wildlife Program and use funding reserved for private consultants for one-time workshops and forum facilitation, in addition to voluntary contributions from agencies and tribes program coordination funds, to support a centralized technical facilitation staff housed at the Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

*These comments could be submitted by each willing agency or tribe with specific references to their level of interest in participating in specific technical committees and providing contributions of financial support for the proposed infrastructure.*

