



COLUMBIA BASIN FISH AND WILDLIFE AUTHORITY

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Coordinating and promoting effective protection and restoration of fish, wildlife, and their habitat in the Columbia River Basin.

The Authority is comprised of the following tribes and fish and wildlife agencies:

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

Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation

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 of Fort Hall

Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of Duck Valley

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Coordinating Agencies

Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission

Upper Columbia United Tribes

Compact of the Upper Snake River Tribes

March 7, 2008

Mr. Bill Booth, Chairman
Northwest Power and Conservation Council
851 SW Sixth Avenue, Suite 1100
Portland, OR 97204-1348

Dear Chairman Booth:

On behalf of the Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Authority member agencies and tribes (CBFWA Members), I want to thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to attend our January Members' meeting in Vancouver, Washington. We appreciate the frank discussion on both the fish and wildlife program amendment process and the coordination funding topics and look forward to encouraging open and effective dialogue between the Northwest Power and Conservation Council (NPCC) and CBFWA during your tenure as Chair.

With this in mind, we are taking this opportunity to communicate the ramifications of the NPCC's decision to recommend to the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) a budget reduction of \$202,165 or 10% from FY 2007 for CBFWA. Your recommendation to BPA appears to be an arbitrary distribution of an arbitrary budget cap that ignores the needs-based budget recommendation we provided to you on December 10, 2007. Our recommended needs-based budget is a comprehensive rebuild communicating our management coordination recommendation including funding as called for by the Northwest Power Act. It is based on the definition of management coordination provided, at your request, by all nineteen (19) of the fish and wildlife agencies and tribes, to the full Council on October 16-17, 2007 in Missoula, Montana. The consequences of this arbitrary decision will result in a reduction in the overall effectiveness of seventeen (17) of the nineteen (19) fish and wildlife agencies and tribes' ability to coordinate our management activities through our chosen association, CBFWA.

To accommodate the \$202,165 reduction we have reduced our individual participation budgets for time and travel by \$97,000 and our CBFWA staff and meetings budget by \$105,000. In addition to the elimination of one position at CBFWA, the following changes will be made to accommodate this reduction:

- Elimination of our public relations line item.
- Reduction of our information technology capabilities.
- Reduction of time and travel necessary to accomplish all of the remaining tasks.

These changes will result in:

- A significant reduction in interaction among the fish and wildlife agencies and tribes. This interaction is the basis for strong, well coordinated management decisions.

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- Elimination of professional assistance used in the development of success stories from implementation of fish and wildlife program activities, which is a loss to the Council and the public in reporting Program success.
- Reduction of education and outreach by our staff within CBFWA, meaning less opportunity for on-site visits with each of the CBFWA agencies and tribes, and far fewer meetings with non-CBFWA members.
- Less effective implementation of "on-the-ground" activities will be the ultimate end result of these reductions.

The Members of CBFWA support the principle that funding spent through the Bonneville fund should be targeted for on-the-ground activities that can produce the greatest benefit to the fish and wildlife populations affected by the Federal hydropower system. However, we firmly believe the Northwest Power Act was well grounded in the recognition that to optimize those activities the fish and wildlife agencies and tribes need to coordinate their management activities. To effectively achieve this we firmly assert that some level of infrastructure is necessary to insure that on-the-ground actions are addressing priority limiting factors and that the results of those actions are producing the biological benefit anticipated to meet the objectives of our management plans. These are essential pieces for successful adaptive management. The proposed management coordination tasks and deliverables achieve this accountability and transparency in decision making. Funding management coordination helps optimize and ensure that all mitigation and restoration actions are working together toward a common outcome. It seems counter productive to make this funding recommendation to BPA at a time when we are looking forward to a proactive relationship with the NPCC and the region's rate payers.

We understand that you are not interested in revisiting this decision until after the 2008 Program amendment process is complete. Given the workload this is placing on the NPCC and the fish and wildlife managers, our members agree that it is more important to absorb the reductions, endure the consequences, and expend our energy continuing to move forward with the important process of updating the Fish and Wildlife Program. This letter is provided to establish a clear record to inform those future discussions.

Sincerely,



Larry Peterman, Chairman
Columbia Basin Fish & Wildlife Authority

cc: Steve Wright, BPA
NPCC Members
CBFWA Members