

**THE CONFEDERATED SALISH AND KOOTENAI TRIBES
OF THE FLATHEAD NATION**

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A People of Vision

A Confederation of the Salish,
Upper Pend d'Oreilles
and Kootenai Tribes

Greg Delwiche
Vice President- Environment, Fish and Wildlife - KE
Bonneville Power Administration
PO Box 3621
Portland, OR 97232

TRIBAL COUNCIL MEMBERS:

James Steele Jr. – Chairman
E.T. “Bud” Moran – Vice Chair
Steve Lozar – Secretary
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Joe Durglo
Carole Lankford
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Reuben A. Mathias
Charles L. Morigeau
Terry L. Pitts

March 24, 2009

RE: CBFWA funding

Dear Mr. Delwiche,

The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) have recently learned that the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) has decided to reduce funding for the Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Authority (CBFWA) for fiscal year 2009. This decision was made without consultation or input from CSKT. As a sovereign government with the authority to manage fish and wildlife for the CSKT tribal members, we have expressed our regional coordination needs through the CBFWA work plan, consistent with the intent of the Northwest Power Act. Coordinating our activities through CBFWA provides the CSKT the appropriate forum for coordination and collaboration on fish and wildlife issues with Columbia River Basin co-managers. This forum allows us to work collaboratively on issues that specifically involve BPA and the Northwest Power and Conservation Council and address planning, implementation and evaluation of the Fish and Wildlife Program.

The CSKT support the work plan submitted through CBFWA. It will enable the agencies and Tribes to coordinate our efforts and provide the consistency required for effective development and implementation of adaptive management. Although we understand the NPCC's reluctance to place this level of detail into the recently amended program, we think it would be impractical to expect a larger vetting of these issues to ensue without adequate coordination among the fish and wildlife managers.

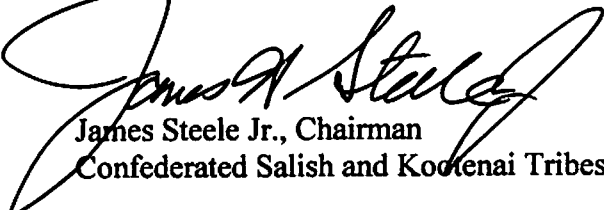
The work plan was developed through a collaborative process according to the CBFWA charter, and approved by CBFWA members, including the CSKT. It appears BPA is

urging fish and wildlife management coordination through other forums such as the Pacific Northwest Aquatic Monitoring Partnership and/or the Northwest Environmental Information Sharing forum. Neither of these coordination bodies will fulfill the needs of CSKT. The CBFWA charter is designed to respect the sovereign authority of the CSKT and provide for transparent technical and policy review. The geographic coverage of these other organizations is far greater than the Columbia River Basin and neither organization has authority within the context of the Northwest Power Act. We rely on CBFWA to provide a consensus based forum for technical and policy discussions as related to the Fish and Wildlife Program.

Through our involvement in the Federal Columbia River Power System Biological Opinion case, and our direct conversations as a sovereign government, we understand that a new paradigm is rapidly evolving within the Columbia River Basin. This is a paradigm of partnership in the development, implementation and evaluation of mitigation efforts relative to the FCRPS. In order for us all to be successful in implementing this shift, coordination amongst the fish and wildlife managers is essential. CBFWA is the established coordination entity for the agencies' and Tribes' and it is CSKT's position that it should continue to serve that role in this new paradigm as well.

We hope that you can support our request for adequate funding for the CBFWA and we hope you will move forward with us in the development of an appropriate monitoring and evaluation framework to support the Fish and Wildlife Program.

Sincerely,



James Steele Jr., Chairman
Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes

CC:
NPCC Members
CBFWA Members