



Nez Perce

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TRIBAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
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March 26, 2009

Greg Delwiche, Vice-President,
Environment, Fish and Wildlife
Bonneville Power Administration
P.O. Box 3621 KE-4
Portland, OR 97208

Barry Thom, Acting Regional Administrator
NOAA Fisheries
Northwest Region
525 N.E. Oregon St. Suite 510
Portland, OR 97232

Dear Messers. Delwiche and Thom,

The Nez Perce Tribe has emphasized the necessity of population status monitoring, population trend monitoring, and meaningful evaluation efforts for anadromous fish populations affected by the Federal Columbia River Power System. The Tribe is very interested in the population status monitoring and evaluation efforts that will be implemented as part of the 2008 Biological Opinion (FCRPS BiOp). The Tribe, and other co-managers in the Snake River Basin, primarily through Bonneville funded contracts, have been the source of data used for evaluation of status of anadromous fish populations affected by the Federal Columbia River Power System. Our efforts and data have been used by the Interior Columbia Technical Recovery Team for their evaluations and will continue to be used as we progress through implementation of FCRPS BiOp and Fish and Wildlife Program. At the end of the day, the Tribe and its co-managers will provide the information by which the region will evaluate its progress with mitigation and recovery efforts.

The Tribe is concerned that discussions regarding implementation of status monitoring actions, specifically in Reasonable and Prudent Alternative (RPA) 50 are largely being conducted "in the dark" and without the participation of the entities that will be most involved in implementation and can bring most to bear on the planning discussions. Although we can understand the desire for the Action Agencies and NOAA to have some level of internal discussion, these have been occurring behind closed doors for almost a year now (i.e. since before the FCRPS BiOp was

signed). It is time to include those entities who have their fingers on the pulse of the runs and who will be responsible for enhancing the information required through the RPA.

Secondly, the Tribe has concerns that inflexible implementation of RPA 51 may lead the region down a path which wastes time and money and provides little benefit to the fish managers, fishers and ratepayers. The RPA mentions two coordinating bodies, Pacific Northwest Aquatic Monitoring Program (PNAMP) and the Northwest Environmental Network, as the coordinating bodies for status monitoring efforts¹. The Tribe, through the Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Authority (CBFWA), has been participating in a multi-year effort that already accomplished the central coordination role described in RPA 51. It makes little sense to abandon that effort and reinitiate it under another body, which does not have participation of the fisheries managers. As an alternative, because RPA 51 alludes to a coordinating body "such as" PNAMP, we believe that language allows BPA and NOAA Fisheries to include CBFWA in that role. Certainly CBFWA has a track record of providing that coordination among the entities that will be most involved. We strongly recommend that BPA continue to fund CBFWA in their role for the population status monitoring effort, based on the work plan sent to you in January of this year. Further, the Tribe believes that BPA's full and active participation is essential to this coordination function.

In closing, the Nez Perce Tribe has emphasized the necessity of population status monitoring, population trend monitoring, and meaningful evaluation efforts for anadromous fish populations affected by the Federal Columbia River Power System. The Tribe requests that we meet to discuss the population status monitoring review and we would ask that CBFWA Executive Director Brian Lipscomb participate in those discussions with us. Further, we hope that you can support our request for full funding for the CBFWA in the development of an appropriate monitoring and evaluation framework to support the Fish and Wildlife Program and the FCRPS BiOp. Please coordinate with Dave Johnson in regards to proceeding with these actions.

Sincerely,



Samuel Penney, Chairman
Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee

CC:

Brian Lipscomb, Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Authority
Bill Booth, Northwest Power and Conservation Council

¹ Neither PNAMP nor the Northwest Environmental Network have an established charter that provides for technical and policy review and transparent consensus approval of decisions. Further, the geographic coverage of these organizations is far greater than the Columbia River Basin. And finally, they have no authority within the context of the Northwest Power Act.