



## Independent Scientific Review Panel

for the Northwest Power & Conservation Council

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**Memorandum (ISRP 2010-39)**

**November 15, 2010**

**To:** Bruce Measure, Chair, Northwest Power and Conservation Council

**From:** Eric Loudenslager, ISRP Chair

**Subject:** Final Review of Shoshone Bannock Tribes' Accord proposal, ESA Habitat Restoration Project (#2008-903-00)

### **Background**

At the Council's August 16 request, the ISRP reviewed the Shoshone Bannock Tribes' revised proposal and a response to the ISRP's preliminary review for the project, *ESA Habitat Restoration Project* (#2008-903-00). This new Columbia Fish Accord proposal is intended to "inventory, assess, plan, and implement necessary actions to ameliorate the effects of hydromodification, reduce sediment delivery, restore riparian function, improve stream temperatures, and improve passage for all life stages of anadromous and resident fish in priority areas of the Salmon River Subbasin."

The ISRP's preliminary review ([ISRP 2010-25](#)) was released on July 22, 2010. Although the ISRP found the proposal to be a good start, the ISRP requested a response on a number of issues. The Shoshone Bannock Tribes submitted a response addressing the issues, and the ISRP's review follows below organized by the issues.

### **Recommendation**

#### *Meets Scientific Review Criteria (Qualified)*

Much effort was expended to incorporate reviewer comments and the revised proposal addresses most of the ISRP's initial concerns. However, details describing how the restoration actions would address specific limiting factors at each of the seven priority sites, and quantitative projections of the benefits of the actions on target species (see Table 6) are still somewhat incomplete. Simply making statements like "rearing capacity will be increased" and "temperature will be lowered" is not adequate.

Qualification: Regarding Objectives 1 and 2 to inventory and assess potential actions, the ISRP recommends that the proposers incorporate a comparison of costs to the projected benefits to fish for the actions to assist in priority setting. This would supplement the useful summary of anticipated benefits in Table 5, while assuring that habitat improvements are likely to be cost-effective. The ISRP can look at the finalized priority list and supporting analysis in future project reviews, likely as a component of a Salmon River subbasin geographic review.

## Comments

*Request 1: provide site-specific details regarding implementation strategies, focal species benefits, and monitoring of restoration projects*

The rationale for selecting the Upper Salmon and Middle Salmon/Panther Creek was much improved. Material in the response added clarification as to why these two watersheds were selected. It is clear (based, however, as much on some reviewers' familiarity with the sites as on the proposal) that they have been significantly altered by a number of human activities – mining, water withdrawal for agriculture, overgrazing, channelization, and road impacts.

Including GPS coordinates for the sites of the initial actions is a good thing to do for planning purposes but is not as helpful for reviewers as would be showing notations on maps and site photos. The details added to Table 4 and the new Table 6 (stream length at each site, especially) were important. However, Table 4 still lacks a “translation” of to what the various number/latter Aquatic Objectives (in last column, from subbasin plan) refer.

The maps (in the appendix) were also a valuable addition (even more so if they had been placed within the text). The information regarding the specific location of the projects was still not strong, but was adequate.

*Request 2: include additional discussion regarding the specifics of using a more targeted, science-based approach to assessing sediment and stream temperature as possible limiting factors, and then ameliorating them*

The response to this concern was not complete. The ISRP was asking for additional specificity about why sediment was considered a key limiting factor at the locations where the selected projects were to be implemented. The proposal provided a generic explanation of how sediment and high water temperature can impact fish populations, but the ISRP suggested that the proposal would be much stronger if the issues with sediment and/or temperature at the site where a project was to be executed were defined, and if specific fish life-stages were targeted.

The point-by-point summary of how the ISRP comments were addressed states that “Although it may not be feasible to measure the specific reduction in sediment or temperature associated with a specific action, it is reasonable to assume that if actions are implemented in appropriate areas, the increased riparian function will contribute to ameliorating these factors.” This statement misses the point of the ISRP concern. We were not suggesting measuring a site-level response in sediment or temperature is not feasible (in fact, in many instances measuring project-scale responses in these parameters is relatively easy). Rather, the ISRP wanted a more detailed explanation of why a specific project at a specific location was considered an effective method of addressing these limiting factors. This could be aided by comparing the cost to the projected benefits.

*Request 3: clarify the relationships and hopefully synergies that this new project would create with existing projects*

Although the actual relationships between this project and other projects in the Upper Salmon and Middle-Salmon/Panther Creek were not fully described, the revisions were sufficient to move forward with this project. The project proponents should consider establishing a formal process for ensuring efficient and effective coordination among the various restoration and research efforts occurring in the project area.