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June 11, 2009

Mr. William C. Maslen  
Manager, Fish and Wildlife Division  
Bonneville Power Administration  
P.O. Box 3621  
Portland, Oregon 97208

Dear Mr. Maslen:

The purpose of this letter is to advise you of the Council's decision on a Columbia River Fish Accord proposal. This recommendation was made by the Council at its meeting on June 9, 2009.

In addition, a purpose of this letter is to inform the project sponsor and other interested parties of the status of this Council action. The following is a summary of the action taken by the Council at the meeting in June.

**Studies into Factors Limiting the Abundance of Okanagan and Wenatchee Sockeye Salmon, Project #2008-503-00**

In 2008-2009, Bonneville, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (the "Action Agencies") signed agreements with the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR), the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation (CTWSRO), the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation (YN), and the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (CRITFC). The agreement with these Tribes and CRITFC is referred to as the Three Treaty Tribes MOA. The Action Agencies also signed agreements with the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation (CCT), the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes (SBT), and the states of Idaho, Montana and Washington. These agreements, the Columbia Basin Fish Accords, fund actions that will deliver specific, scientifically-sound results for the region's fish and wildlife.

As set forth in the guidance document outlining the review process for the Accords, the Council recognizes Bonneville's commitment to Accord projects. The Accords do not, however, alter the Council's responsibilities with respect to independent science review or the Council's role following such review. As with all projects in the Fish and Wildlife Program, Accord projects are subject to review by the Independent Scientific Review Panel (ISRP) and the Council provides funding recommendations based on full consideration of the ISRP's report and the Council's Program.

The goal of this proposal is to explore factors limiting production of Okanagan and Wenatchee sockeye salmon stocks. A primary factor affecting the Okanagan stock is believed to be survival upstream of Wells Dam. To quantify this mortality, this project will fund PIT tag detection antennas in the Okanagan River as well as a Vertical Diversion Structure upstream of Osoyoos Lake (through which runs the border between the United States and Canada). This project will be phased in over three years. Initially the project will focus on the Okanagan stock as there are a number of projects that can be immediately implemented that will build on present supplementation, habitat restoration, and water-management programs. A plan for Wenatchee sockeye research will be developed in the first two years of this project, after which the focus of this project is expected to shift more to this stock.

On April 28, 2009, the Council received from Bonneville a Columbia Basin Fish Accord proposal from the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (CRITFC) for #2009-001-00, *Studies into Factors Limiting the Abundance of Okanagan and Wenatchee Sockeye Salmon*.<sup>1</sup>

The proposal was submitted to the ISRP for review, and on May 22, 2009 the ISRP provided a review (ISRP document 2009-18). The ISRP found that the proposal “Meets Scientific Review Criteria (Qualified)”.

The ISRP found that the project could provide valuable information about the sockeye salmon in the upper Columbia River. The information generated by the proposed PIT and acoustic tagging of Wenatchee and Okanagan sockeye salmon would be useful in the management of these stocks. Details regarding the locations of adult mortality could also be very useful in designing and prioritizing future habitat restoration efforts in the Upper Columbia. The ISRP did state that the following issues, if addressed, would benefit the project as it is developed for implementation.

- Thoroughly consider the possible factors that may be contributing to adult sockeye mortality between Wells Dam and Skaha Lake;
- Fully consider the methods by which mortality rates will be associated with water quality and other habitat conditions and the availability of water quality and habitat data on which to base these analyses;
- Before implementing the projects already planned for the Okanagan River, develop a sufficient rationale as to why these projects should proceed prior to identifying key limiting factors for this population;
- Undertake a more complete consideration of the role that hatchery sockeye may be playing in the poor performance of the Wenatchee stock;

In addition, the ISRP requested that future proposals include additional details on the acoustic tagging methods and more thorough description of facilities and equipment.

Based on the ISRP review, and the confidence that the sponsor understands the need to address the items raised by the ISRP in the implementation of this project, the Council recommends this

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<sup>1</sup> The proposal is listed in the May 2008 agreement in Attachment B, Category 2c, new

project for implementation. As discussed at the Council meeting, concerns were raised regarding water quality data for Osoyoos Lake. The Council is concerned with the significance of water quality as a limiting factor within this basin and wanted certainty that this issue would be adequately coordinated with the appropriate water quality agencies as part of this project.

Sincerely,

Tony Grover  
Director, Fish and Wildlife Division

cc: Jamae Hilliard Creecy, BPA  
Peter Lofy, BPA  
Christine Read, BPA  
Paul Krueger, BPA  
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