**Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program Draft Guidance for**

**Information Management, Evaluation and Reporting**

Prioritization

The Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program (Program) priorities guide which data to concentrate on for preservation and accessibility, as well as for focusing evaluation and reporting activities. These consist of:

* Program Questions,
* High Level Indicators,
* Council’s Research Plan,
* goals and biological objectives described in the Program and its subbasin plans,
* focal species,
* focal habitats.

Preserving Valuable Data

Data collected and derived through the Program are a valuable resource. These must be preserve beyond the longevity of the project tasked with their initial collection to inform status of biological resources, project performance, and on Program progress and its adaptive management.

To ensure appropriate data management, longevity of the data, and to facilitate data sharing, each data-creating project will document best management practices and standards, the protocols used in collecting and analyzing the data, and the metadata. These documents will be associated with the dataset, and will be easily accessible.

Enhancing Data Access

All data collected by Program funded projects must be publicly available in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. Thus, upon request all data and metadata must be made available. On a routine basis, however, data that is made accessible to various users can differ in the level of synthesis, e.g., access to original field data could be limited to within an agency whereas access to derived indicators and graphics could be shared with the public.

Appropriate data management and accessibility requires enhancing the data infrastructure, and providing guidance and tools needed to support information sharing.

1. Engaging a data coordinator and data steward to assist with data management components will facilitate proper documentation, infrastructure, and data-access.
2. All data management projects will publish their data electronically in a machine readable format (i.e., not a static PDF or Word document) on a regular basis, and consider using an online data-sharing system for providing access to regularly requested data. These regional projects may need to respond to data input in real time for time-sensitive evaluations.
3. Data flow to sub-regional and regional data management projects should be through automated means such as through web services.

Data and derived indicators informing Program priorities will be accessible, in a machine readable format, through regional data management projects funded through the Program. These regional data management projects will strive to improve the flow of data to achieve automated data synchronization.

Timeliness

Conduct, in a timely manner, data evaluation at the levels of syntheses that are most appropriate for informing adaptive management of the Program and its reporting needs. What is considered to be timely will depend on the type of monitoring and research question, and the amount (temporal and spatial) of data required for a meaningful assessment.

To ensure that these data are synthesized in a timely manner, project proposals and annual project progress reports should include a description of: how and when data collected will be statistically analyzed to inform their objectives and hypotheses, where findings will be reported (e.g., Annual Project Reports and project proposals), and how these data will contribute to informing Program priorities.

Maximizing Use of Data Evaluation

Data from multiple sources may need to be gathered and managed in a compatible and/or standardized manner to facilitate combining the data to inform Program decisions, performance and priorities. Collaborative efforts may enhance this process.

To facilitate the data sharing and roll-up of data from different sources, several aspects should be considered including standardization of measurements, metrics and/or the derived indicators[[1]](#footnote-1); using Council approved methods and protocols which are periodically updated[[2]](#footnote-2),[[3]](#footnote-3); and, documenting and associating with the data the methods, protocols, and statistical design used.

Monitoring and research activities that gather data relevant for informing broader evaluation needs that require combining data from multiple sources will describe how these data are to be managed to address these needs.

Providing Relevant Information

Succinctly conveying progress to a wide range of audiences, including the Council, ISRP/ISAB, Bonneville, fish and wildlife managers and tribes, Congress, Governors, and the public requires different reporting formats. These include:

* Topic-focused reports that merge current knowledge from multiple sources and projects. These may be produced by ISAB, ISRP, Sponsors, Bonneville, or others as requested by Council.
* Sponsor produced annual project progress reports to Bonneville that encompass the content**[[4]](#footnote-4)**and be in the format requested by Bonneville.
* Bonneville produced reports summarizing the effectiveness and effects of implemented actions[[5]](#footnote-5).
* Council’s High Level Indicators (HLI)[[6]](#footnote-6)report.
* Symposia[[7]](#footnote-7) organized by project sponsors.
* Council organized Science-Policy Exchanges.

1. For define of terms consult the glossary of monitoringmethods.org. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. For define of terms consult the glossary of monitoringmethods.org [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. See the 2009 Fish and Wildlife Program for methods and protocols adopted by the Council [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. See the 2011-06 Council recommendation in section one “Reporting and Use of Project and Program results” for more details (http://www.nwcouncil.org/library/report.asp?docid=286). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Actions such as hatchery releases, riparian plantings, invasive species removal, and in-stream large wood-debris additions. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. [http://www.nwcouncil.org/fw/Program/hli/Default.htm](http://www.nwcouncil.org/fw/program/hli/Default.htm) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Such as Sturgeon Workshops, Lamprey Summit, Comparative Survival Study Annual Meeting, LSRCP reviews, Annual Klickitat & White Salmon Rivers (Columbia Gorge) Fisheries and Watershed Science Conference, Lake Roosevelt Forum Conference, Columbia River Estuary Conference, and the Yakima Basin Aquatic Science and Management Conference. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)