



Independent Scientific Review Panel
for the Northwest Power & Conservation Council
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July 22, 2005

TO: Doug Marker, Fish and Wildlife Division Director, Northwest Power and Conservation Council

FROM: Rick Williams, ISRP Chair

SUBJECT: Johnson Creek Step Review: ISRP and NPT Teleconference Notes, July 19, 2005
(See ISRP 2005-12)

Callers: Johnson Creek Project Sponsors (NPT): Jay Hesse, Becky Johnson, and Jason Vogel;
ISRP: Rick Williams, Eric Loudenslager, Jack Griffith (PRG), Lyman McDonald, John Epifanio, and Erik Merrill (staff).

Summary: At the request of the NPT, the ISRP participated in a teleconference to clarify recommendation raised in the ISRP's "Review of Nez Perce Tribe's Response to the ISRP's Preliminary Step Two Review of the *Johnson Creek Artificial Propagation Enhancement Project*, 1996-043-00 (ISRP 2005-12; see also ISRP 2005-6)." Throughout the teleconference, the ISRP emphasized the need to revise the Master Plan, specifically the M&E section, to reflect changes agreed to in this iterative step review process. The ISRP clarified that a decision-tree should be developed with thresholds based on a range of responses. The NPT agreed that the revisions could be made in regard to clarifying the RASP definition in the RME plan, setting out a decision-tree (perhaps a separate document), and the link of JCAPE to regional M&E through the Collaborative Systemwide Monitoring and Evaluation Project (CSMEP) and to a lesser extent PNAMP. Before undertaking a revision, the NPT wanted to clarify the status of the project in the step review process with Council staff. The ISRP thought the discussions adequately clarified issues to guide an NPT response and did not think another teleconference between the ISRP and NPT was necessary.

The Discussion

Jay Hesse (NPT) laid-out the purpose of the teleconference to clarify several items in the ISRP report, so the NPT could develop an effective response. He appreciated that the ISRP suggested some alternatives in their latest response.

Discussion Item 1. ISRP recommendation H. NPT should edit the M&E plan to indicate which objectives address each of the important attributes of supplementation: maintaining or increasing natural production, and keeping genetic and ecological effects on target and non-target populations within limits. This is an opportunity to link performance measures for each of the management objectives to the underlying components in the RASP definition.

Jay suggested that the NPT may not be effectively communicating what is in the plan. He suggested discussion rather than re-writing could clarify this issue. Jay asserted that the Executive Summary explicitly linked the Master Plan with the RASP definition. Eric indicated that the M&E plan section should include the definition. Jay agreed the definition could be expanded from the Executive Summary and explicitly stated as an introductory piece in the M&E section. The individual elements of the RASP definition should be identified and linked to management objectives and performance measures within the Master Plan.

Lyman said an overall theme of the ISRP's response was the Master Plan needs to be revised to capture the responses, and responses-to-responses, so that future plan-users can successfully implement the program and future reviewers can readily understand what is in the plan and what is not. This is an example of where a plan needs to be edited to reflect the verbal and iterative written exchanges between the sponsors and the ISRP, not just adding minutes of the latest verbal exchange as an appendix to the plan.

Discussion Item 2. ISRP recommendation C. The M&E plan should formally define what risk levels are, identify the critical uncertainties they are testing, and provide the performance thresholds that prompt review of risk levels and program operation modification.

The ISRP suggested that the NPT make a short list of critical uncertainties, performance metrics to evaluate those uncertainties, and ranges of performance thresholds that incorporates some recognition that if the supplementation effort goes wrong, it can be stopped. The ISRP recommended thinking of this decision-tree in terms of a business plan that addresses a range of expected responses, and manages uncertainty and risk. If "X" happens what do you do? If the response falls outside a range of expected responses, what do you do? When do you quit in order to avoid going bankrupt?

Jason Vogel noted that the Master Plan does not state that supplementation will stop under a specific scenario, but rather explains that JCAPE is an adaptive management program. Jay said hardwiring a management response from the science side isn't an approach their managers will support. The NPT said it helps to hear that the ISRP is not expecting a specific number, but rather recommends building the decision tree on a range of expected responses and correspondingly appropriate responses. Jay noted the NPT are somewhat hesitant to report hard numbers that they are not entirely comfortable with, because the numbers may be misused. Jay asked does the ISRP see this risk decision-tree as being part of the M&E plan or a separate document?

The ISRP said one purpose of the decision-tree is that it justifies the M&E plan, which will be expensive, by closely tying M&E to management decisions. The ISRP noted that grizzly bear, peregrine falcons, and grey wolf thresholds for ESA delisting are examples worth reviewing. The Hood River Master Plan also includes an example of a decision framework for hatchery programs.

Jay wondered if there was an ISRP concern that management of Johnson Creek production would not be driven by results of M&E. The ISRP noted that there is some heightened ISRP concern because the use of Johnson Creek has flip-flopped over the years, e.g., ISS study, but this sort of a decision-tree is useful for any type of management action - business or resource related.

Discussion Item 3. ISRP recommendation K. The Nez Perce Tribe should join and participate in the Pacific Northwest Aquatic Monitoring Partnership (PNAMP).

Jay believes the Columbia Basin Systemwide Monitoring and Evaluation Program is the primary regional effort for them to interface with rather than PNAMP, because PNAMP documents to date are at a much broader level than what would be of most value to the Johnson Creek project. In addition, the NPT receives some funding through CSMEP but not PNAMP, so participation is more difficult with PNAMP. Jay agreed that when the Master Plan is revised, better links to the CSMEP effort will be made. Lyman hopes that, in tandem, CSMEP and PNAMP will result in more uniform collection and reporting of data across the basin. It should be valuable for Johnson Creek M&E to be explicitly linked to both.

Discussion Item 4. Potential FWP M&E Funding Constraints

Jay sees a struggle with regional decision-makers in understanding the need for project effectiveness monitoring. Specifically, the NPT worry that the M&E plan being developed in this iterative Step process may be more expensive than will be committed to for funding by the funding agency.

Lyman emphasized the need to fight for monitoring and evaluation, which may be expensive. It is not possible to do adaptive management without data. Eric stated a revised M&E plan needs clear linkage between the definition of supplementation, performance indicators, and how these need to be measured to do the evaluation. Lyman suggested the NPT look to cost saving by using data from other projects in the area such as NEOH (Secesh Creek) and ISS for reference streams.

A difficult aspect of Lyman's career has been to design monitoring and then to have the funding cut in order to implement it. Quoting Lowell Diller: the most important thing is to determine how to measure the variables that you need -- develop economical field methods. In Lyman's experience, the successful M&E programs have been cost effective and someone's professional passion, because challenges to funding are inevitable.