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December 2, 2014

### MEMORANDUM

**TO: Council members**

**FROM: Jim Ruff – Manager, Mainstem Passage and River Operations**

**SUBJECT: Briefing on NOAA's Regional Assessment**

### BACKGROUND:

**Presenter:** Bruce Suzumoto, Senior Policy Advisor in NOAA Fisheries' West Coast Region.

**Summary** Bruce Suzumoto of NOAA Fisheries will discuss a conceptual approach for developing long-term salmon and steelhead goals in the Columbia River Basin.

**Relevance** The NOAA Fisheries' effort to develop long-term salmon and steelhead goals for the Columbia Basin is related to a similar effort to refine program goals and quantitative objectives, as called for by the Council in our 2014 Fish and Wildlife Program.

**Work plan:** Priority objective #2 in the 2014 work plan calls for promoting regional fish and wildlife recovery by implementing the Program. In addition, in the *proposed work plan* for 2015, under the section implement the 2014 Fish and Wildlife Program, it says the Council should work with others in the region to identify and organize existing objectives, and refine its program objectives accordingly. The 2015 work plan also proposes a program amendment process to consider adopting objectives following this process.

**Background:** In 2013, NOAA Fisheries contracted with the Oregon Consensus Program and the Ruckelshaus Center to gather the views of Columbia Basin states, Tribes, federal agencies and other stakeholders regarding long-term salmon recovery

strategies. The contractors interviewed over 200 influential individuals who had extensive experience with salmon and steelhead issues in the Columbia Basin. Their findings are summarized in the report “Columbia River Basin Salmon and Steelhead Long-Term Recovery Situation Assessment,” and provide valuable insights on past, current and potential approaches to long-term salmon recovery in the basin.

One of the major findings of the assessment report highlighted the need for a common vision of success, and a better articulation of long-term, basin-wide salmon and steelhead goals. NOAA Fisheries believes common goals will help prioritize recovery activities and provide a greater opportunity to meet ESA, state and tribal needs. Common goals are more likely to be achieved because the region can work together on coordinated strategies and can enhance opportunities to increase abundance, distribution, and diversity of salmon and steelhead basin-wide.

Over the past several months NOAA Fisheries has been working on a conceptual approach for developing shared long-term salmon and steelhead goals for the Columbia Basin. The goals would include all Columbia Basin salmon and steelhead-- both ESA-listed and non-listed species. NOAA Fisheries would like to discuss its current thinking on a potential goal setting process and opportunities to work collaboratively with the Council and others to develop these goals.

More Info: Below is a link to the Columbia River Basin Salmon and Steelhead Long-Term Recovery Situation Assessment report:  
<http://oregonconsensus.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Columbia-River-Basin-Salmon-and-Steelhead-Long-Term-Recovery-Situation-Assessment-Final-Report1.pdf>