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August 9, 2012

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 August 7, 2012.

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 August.

Yankee Fork Salmon River Restoration, Project #2002-059-00

Activities in the Yankee Fork, as part of the Upper Salmon River projects, have been ongoing in the Program since 2002 (i.e., Project 2002-059-00, *Yankee Fork Salmon River Dredge Tailings Restoration Project*). On November 15, 2006, as part of the FY 2007 -2009 funding recommendation associated with the project, the Council recommended the following.

Fundable in part (qualified). Fund completion of planning work for step submittal to address ISRP concerns¹. Funding for implementation contingent upon favorable ISRP and Council review.

On June 30, 2008, the Council received from the Shoshone Bannock Tribes the Yankee Fork Floodplain Restoration Project Implementation Plan for 2008 - 2018. The submittal was intended to address the "step review" condition placed on this project as part of the FY 2007 -2009 funding recommendation. On August 21, 2008 the ISRP provided their review (ISRP document 2008-11). The ISRP found that the submittal "*Does Not Meet Scientific Review Criteria.*" Shortly after this review, on November 7, 2008, Bonneville entered into a memorandum of agreement (MOA) with the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes that included this project.

¹ ISRP document 2006-6.

On February 16, 2012 a submittal was received from Bonneville for Project #2002-059-00, *Yankee Fork Salmon River Restoration*. The information received from Bonneville indicated that since the last review and with the support of the MOA, the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes has worked with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Trout Unlimited, U.S. Forest Service and the landowner to gather information and refine the original proposal to address the concerns raised by the ISRP. The result was a restructured proposal, intended to not only address the previous ISRP reviews, but to present a refined approach to address restoration needs in the Yankee Fork Salmon River.²

The goal of this proposal is to increase juvenile spring/summer Chinook salmon abundance and survival through increases in suitable habitat (rearing, high flow refugia, riparian and wetland) and increase the physical quality of environmental characteristics. The SBT are pursuing this effort through a multi-year implementation plan. The current submittal is directed at a reach of the Yankee Fork from river mile 3.0 to 6.9 in an action titled Yankee Fork PS3 Side Channel (i.e., Pond Series 2 and Pond Series 3).

On March 21, 2012 the Council received the ISRP review (ISRP document 2012-5). The ISRP found the revised proposal and supporting documents “*Meets Scientific Review Criteria (Qualified)*”. They qualified this review stating that they should review the response to the qualifications outlined and detailed in the current review *prior* to implementation. Generally the ISRP requested the following.

1. Develop a formal Fish and Wildlife Program proposal for the pond reconstruction actions.
2. Pursue the reach-scale analysis and design work needed to develop justified actions.
3. Make necessary modifications in design specifications for pond series habitat alterations so that they function primarily during base flow conditions in summer and during winter. Re-construction of pond margins to hold juvenile Chinook salmon during high flow conditions in June is not biologically justified and should not be part of the proposed work.

On June 18, 2012 a response was received from Bonneville that included the requested narrative (Qualification #1 above) and a SBT response to the other qualifications raised by the ISRP. On July 19, 2012, the Council received the ISRP review (ISRP document 2012-10). The ISRP found that the proposal met science review criteria with qualifications.

The ISRP found the response was thorough and complete in addressing the critical and technical issues raised in their previous review and that that the revised plan to modify the habitat in Pond Series 3 (PS3) is appropriate to implement at this time. Though the ISRP provided a favorable review for PS3, they qualified their recommendation that additional elements of the project will need additional information and review prior to implementation.

The SBT are proposing to revise the existing project proposal to incorporate a multi-year implementation plan. The multi-year implementation plan will address the additional

² As part of the submittal the SBT requested consideration by the Council to be dismissed from the Three-Step Review Process.

information that the ISRP has requested. The ISRP is supportive of this approach and state that they look forward to receiving the following information in a revised project proposal.

1. Further development includes biological objectives for focal species in terms of Viable Salmonid Population (VSP) parameters.
2. Physical habitat objectives are developed in reach scale assessments consistent with the Tributary Analysis.
3. Monitoring and evaluation is sufficient to evaluate fluvial geomorphic conditions following habitat construction and fish population response.

As part of the review, the ISRP provided general comments intended to strengthen the project as a whole and acknowledged the significant amount of work and coordination that has occurred recently to ensure that this project is successful.

Based on the ISRP review, the Council supports the implementation of the Yankee Fork PS3 Side Channel action of this project. This recommendation is conditioned on the understanding that the additional information requested by the ISRP (ISRP document 2012-10), as outlined above, will be addressed in a revised project proposal form, and that further project implementation will be contingent on a future review and approval process.

Sincerely,

Tony Grover
Director, Fish and Wildlife Division

cc: Marcy Foster, BPA
Peter Lofy, BPA
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