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May 1, 2018

### MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Fish and Wildlife Committee Members

**FROM:** Council Staff

**SUBJECT:** Update on Habitat monitoring and evaluation strategy

#### **BACKGROUND:**

**Presenters:** Leslie Bach, senior program manager  
Nancy Leonard, fish, wildlife and ecosystem M&E manager  
Mark Fritsch, project implementation manager  
Jody Lando, Research, Monitoring and Evaluation Lead, Bonneville Power Administration (BPA)

**Summary:** Council and BPA staff will provide a summary of discussions held among Council staff, BPA and NOAA-Fisheries on developing an integrated Research, Monitoring and Evaluation strategy. The summary will include an overview of the workplan and timeline for this integrated effort, and how it will incorporate work completed to date within each of the three entities. This is a continuation and refinement of the Council's ongoing effort to develop and support habitat monitoring and evaluation.

**Relevance:** This work focuses on implementing the Council's 2013 conditions and recommendations for ensuring a cost-effective approach to tributary habitat monitoring and evaluation for informing effectiveness of program measures, as defined in Programmatic Issue #2 (i.e., *Habitat effectiveness monitoring and evaluation*) from the 2010-11 review of RME and AP Category of projects.

**Background:** In 2013 the Council requested that BPA provide a comprehensive review of the three tributary habitat monitoring projects, ISEMP, CHaMP and BPA AEM. Information requested included how these projects meet the Program's needs for assessing the benefits of habitat actions, and how they provide guidance for managers implementing habitat actions. Included in this request was for BPA to provide an analytical framework for overall evaluation of tributary habitat actions. Although some products and updates have been provided, the comprehensive review has not been completed to date.

Over the last year, Council staff reviewed current tributary habitat monitoring actions and held discussion meetings with co-managers and sponsors. Subsequently, BPA contracted with Wildland Hydrology to review data aspects of the CHaMP project. These efforts have resulted in an acknowledged need for an updated habitat monitoring and evaluation strategy going forward. At the [July 2017](#) meeting, the Council directed staff to work with the region's fish and wildlife managers and BPA to develop a tributary habitat monitoring strategy. Staff held a series of webinars and workshops, and developed a draft strategy based on the outcomes from those meetings. The draft strategy was sent to the region for review and comment, and staff have compiled those comments.

**Discussion:** At this time there is strong motivation within all three entities to develop an integrated Research, Monitoring and Evaluation strategy that will meet multiple basin needs. Several factors contribute to the timeliness of this, including the Council's Fish and Wildlife Program Amendment process and on-going Endangered Species Act consultation efforts for the operation of the Columbia River System. There is also strong concurrence among the region's fish and wildlife managers that the three entities should work together to develop a single strategy that will guide project monitoring across the Basin. Staff will present an overview of our workplan and timeline for developing this integrated strategy.

# Update on Habitat Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy

**Leslie Bach, Nancy Leonard, Mark Fritsch  
Jody Lando, Bonneville Power Administration  
Greg Sieglitz, NOAA-Fisheries**

# July 2017 Council Discussion

- **Current programmatic approach is not adequately meeting Fish and Wildlife Program needs**
- **Council expects significant changes to CHaMP, ISEMP and AEM projects**
- **Council staff should work closely with co-managers and project sponsors to develop a habitat monitoring and evaluation framework**
- **Need to coordinate closely with ongoing BPA/NOAA efforts**

# Progress to Date

- **Webinar and in-person meeting with technical specialists to develop habitat monitoring and evaluation framework and strategy**
- **Webinar presentations by practitioners demonstrating assessment tools and approaches**
- **First draft Habitat Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy**
- **Manager comments on first draft**

# Current Efforts

- Integrate ongoing Council, BPA and NOAA efforts to create regional research, monitoring and evaluation framework and habitat RM&E strategy
  - Use draft habitat M&E strategy and manager comments as foundation
  - Timing aligns given Program amendment, NEPA and BiOp processes; Managers have indicated strong desire for single framework and strategy
- Initial discussions underway on concepts, workplan, timeline, regional engagement, etc.

# Conceptual Plan

- **Regional, integrated RM&E Framework**
  - Habitat, Fish, Hatchery, Wildlife, etc.
- **Current focus – Habitat RM&E strategy (trib & estuary, related fish status and trend)**
  - Intent – a guidance document to prioritize critical information needs and integrate with ongoing regional programs
  - Leadership team - BPA, Council and NOAA
  - Regional engagement – States and Tribes, federal agencies, others

# Timeline

- **Phase 1 (May – Aug, 2018)**
  - BPA, Council and NOAA develop draft strategy
- **Phase 2 (Sept 2018 - Sept 2019)**
  - Advance habitat RM&E strategy with collaboration from States and Tribes, federal agencies, others
  - Develop additional draft RM&E strategies – fish, hatchery, wildlife
- **Phase 3 (Oct 2019 – 2021)**
  - Implement habitat RM&E strategy
  - Finalize and implement additional RM&E strategies with regional input