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September 5, 2018

MEMORANDUM

TO: Fish and Wildlife Committee Members

FROM: Erik Merrill and Tony Grover

SUBJECT: Discuss Potential ISRP and ISAB Budget Adjustments

BACKGROUND:

Presenters: Erik Merrill and Tony Grover

Summary: As part of the Bonneville Power Administration's effort to reduce Fish and Wildlife Program costs and adjust project budgets, Bonneville inquired whether the Independent Scientific Review Panel's (ISRP) and Independent Scientific Advisory Board's (ISAB) annual budgets could be adjusted to reflect expenditures over the past decade, without interfering with the ISRP's and ISAB's independent review functions. Changes to the ISRP's and ISAB's annual budgets are approved by the Council. Council staff will develop alternatives for the Council to consider based on the Fish and Wildlife Committee discussion. To help with the discussion, cost estimates for anticipated future assignments and historical costs are provided below.

Relevance: Independent scientific review is a critical part of fish and wildlife program and project development, implementation, and information sharing. Independent scientific review for the Fish and Wildlife Program is implemented by two groups: the ISAB and ISRP. Each group provides unique services to the Program. The 1996 Amendment to the Northwest Power Act requires ISRP review of Fish and Wildlife Program projects and their results. Subsequent Congressional report language directs the ISRP

to review fish and wildlife projects and programs included in federal agency budgets that are reimbursed by Bonneville, including the Columbia River Fisheries Mitigation Program and the Lower Snake River Compensation Plan. From 2019 to 2021, the ISRP will review a majority of Fish and Wildlife Program projects (~280 of 330) through the Council's Category Review Process. The ISAB serves the Council, NOAA Fisheries, and the Columbia River Indian Tribes by providing independent scientific advice regarding scientific issues that relate to the respective agencies' fish and wildlife programs. The ISAB is a standing body with general tasks, specified in a [Terms of Reference](#), that guide its work plan. ISAB reviews such as the recent reviews of the 2014 Fish and Wildlife Program ([ISAB 2018-3](#)) and NOAA Fisheries' Life Cycle Models ([ISAB 2017-1](#)) improve and inform the continued development of Columbia Basin recovery and mitigation plans and projects. The ISRP's and ISAB's budgets ensure that the groups can fulfill their functions including completion of unanticipated and time-sensitive reviews.

Workplan: ISAB reviews and ISRP project evaluations for the Category Review Process and Three-Step Reviews are incorporated in the Fish and Wildlife Division's Workplan.

Discussion:

Since the ISRP's formation in Fiscal Year (FY) 1997, the ISRP's annual budget has been \$500,000 for most years. This budget amount reflects Northwest Power Act amendment language from 1999 that specifies the cost of the ISRP and other provisions of the 1996 Amendment [\[4\(h\)\(10\)\(d\)\]](#) will not exceed \$500,000 in 1997 dollars, which is equal to about \$743,000 in 2018. Since FY2006, the ISAB's annual budget has been \$550,000.¹ This budget amount originally was developed and approved as part of Fish and Wildlife Program's annual budgeting decisions (the ISAB's FY2005 budget was \$472,000).

The ISRP and ISAB project grants and member contracts are administered by the Council. ISRP and ISAB members are paid \$90/hour for work and reimbursed for travel on approved reviews. Costs for the ISAB and ISRP manager, annual audits, and some meetings are also covered under the contracts. Annual ISAB and ISRP work plans describe anticipated assignments (see FY2019 work plans for the [ISAB](#) and [ISRP](#)), but assignments are commonly generated within the fiscal year, often span fiscal years, and are sometimes unanticipated. Thus, estimating ISAB and ISRP budgets is complicated and imprecise. Consequently, two lines of inquiry are useful in evaluating potential ISRP and ISAB budget adjustments: cost estimates for anticipated future assignments and historical costs.

¹ From FY1997-2005 the ISAB's combined budget was over \$650,000 per year, annual expenditures averaged \$503,000, with four years over \$550,000. The Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Authority administered the ISAB's contract through FY2004 and a member of the ISAB was paid through a separate \$100,000/year contract with BPA through FY2005. Overall ISAB project costs were reduced in 2005 when the Council began administering the ISAB and were reduced further in 2006 when the member with the separate contract completed his term.

Historical Costs

Table 1 shows ISAB and ISRP annual costs for the past 11 years. Over that period:

- ISAB annual costs have averaged \$284,000 and ranged from \$162,000 in FY2006 to \$496,000 in FY2010.
- ISRP annual costs have averaged \$368,000 and ranged from \$200,000 in FY2014 to \$563,000 in FY2006.² ISRP costs during the previous Category Reviews, FY2009-2013, averaged \$433,000 per year; FY2013 costs were \$492,000.
- Combined ISAB and ISRP costs have ranged from \$886,000 in FY2010 to \$540,000 in FY2017.

Potential Future Assignments

Over the past 21 years, the ISAB has completed over 100 reports, about five per year. The ISAB's draft FY 2019 Work Plan describes one ongoing, approved assignment and nine potential assignments. Table 2 provides a low and high cost range for the ten assignments based on costs of similar past assignments. In terms of currently approved assignments, the ISAB's review of the Comparative Survival Study's draft 2018 Annual Report began in FY2018 and will be completed in FY2019. Only a subset of the nine potential assignments will be approved for ISAB review because many of the assignments depend on specific processes such as NOAA's life-cycle modeling or the [Columbia Basin Partnership Task Force](#) effort having scientifically reviewable products at a stage of completion that would benefit from an ISAB review. Considering the annual average of five ISAB assignments per year plus room for another review, the ISAB's costs for FY2019 will not likely exceed \$423,000. Costs for FY2020 and beyond will depend on future reviews defined in the Fish and Wildlife Program amendments and other comprehensive regional recovery and biological opinion planning processes.

Over the past 21 years, the ISRP has reviewed over 2,800 proposals and completed over 360 reports and memos, about 17 per year. The ISRP's draft FY2019 Work Plan describes the scheduled Mainstem/Program Support Category Review (about 63 projects) and 17 other reviews that the Council might request in FY2019. Table 3 provides a low and high cost range for the 18 assignments based on costs of similar past assignments. Although the potential set of ISRP assignments is more clearly defined than the ISAB's, some of the 17 potential assignments will not be ready for ISRP review in FY2019, for example, Step Review submittals for artificial production facilities. Considering an ambitious review schedule for the ISRP, the ISRP's cost for FY2019 will not likely exceed \$463,000. The ISRP's FY2021 costs will likely be greater than FY2019 because the review of 174 projects for the Anadromous Fish Habitat/Artificial Production Category Review is scheduled for FY2021.

² The ISRP's FY2007 budget was reduced to account for FY2006 expenditures that were above the ISRP's standard \$500,000 annual budget. The ISRP reviewed 540 proposals in FY2006, a very ambitious work load.

Table 1. ISAB and ISRP starting, spent, and unspent budgets for fiscal years 2006-2017

	ISAB			ISRP			Combined		
	Budget	Spent	Unspent	Budget	Spent	Unspent	Budget	Spent	Unspent
FY2006	\$550,000	\$161,765	\$388,235	\$500,000	\$563,300	-\$63,300	\$1,050,000	\$725,065	\$324,935
FY2007	\$550,000	\$283,543	\$266,457	\$421,555	\$265,888	\$92,157	\$971,555	\$549,431	\$358,614
FY2008	\$550,000	\$250,110	\$299,890	\$500,000	\$296,204	\$203,796	\$1,050,000	\$546,314	\$503,686
FY2009	\$550,000	\$206,866	\$343,134	\$500,000	\$410,328	\$89,672	\$1,050,000	\$617,194	\$432,806
FY2010	\$550,000	\$496,369	\$53,631	\$500,000	\$389,844	\$110,156	\$1,050,000	\$886,213	\$163,787
FY2011	\$550,000	\$337,863	\$212,137	\$500,000	\$407,548	\$92,452	\$1,050,000	\$745,411	\$304,589
FY2012	\$550,000	\$215,615	\$334,385	\$500,000	\$467,132	\$32,868	\$1,050,000	\$682,747	\$367,253
FY2013	\$550,000	\$302,727	\$247,273	\$500,000	\$492,150	\$7,850	\$1,050,000	\$794,877	\$255,123
FY2014	\$550,000	\$340,751	\$209,249	\$500,000	\$200,414	\$299,586	\$1,050,000	\$541,165	\$508,835
FY2015	\$550,000	\$318,412	\$231,588	\$500,000	\$310,786	\$189,214	\$1,050,000	\$629,198	\$420,802
FY2016	\$550,000	\$263,638	\$286,362	\$500,000	\$307,660	\$192,340	\$1,050,000	\$571,298	\$478,702
FY2017	\$550,000	\$233,171	\$316,829	\$500,000	\$306,750	\$193,250	\$1,050,000	\$539,921	\$510,079
Ave. 06-17	\$550,000	\$284,236	\$265,764	\$493,463	\$368,167	\$120,003	\$1,043,463	\$652,403	\$385,767
Average 2009-2013 ISRP Category Reviews				\$500,000	\$433,401	\$66,599			

Table 2. ISAB FY 2019 - Costs of Potential Assignments	Cost Range of Similar Past Projects		Cost Estimates for Likely FY19 projects
	Low	High	
CSS Annual Report / FPC Reports	\$4,000	\$19,000	\$8,000
FWP - MAFAC Objectives	\$40,000	\$120,000	\$60,000
BPA-Council-NOAA Habitat RM&E Plan (ISRP?)	\$8,000	\$20,000	\$14,000
NOAA LCM Follow-up	\$35,000	\$75,000	?
Comparative Planning Document Review (NOAA Recovery, FWP, Tribal)	\$40,000	\$120,000	?
Habitat Action Effectiveness	\$40,000	\$80,000	?
Columbia Basin contributions to killer whales (marine mammals)	\$40,000	\$120,000	?
Predation effectiveness	\$80,000	\$250,000	\$150,000
Life history diversity	\$80,000	\$200,000	?
Blocked Area Reintroduction Assessments (ISRP?)	\$8,000	\$40,000	\$30,000
Other (spill test, etc)	\$8,000	\$120,000	\$60,000
Travel costs (5-8 meetings - ~\$5000 per meeting)	\$25,000	\$40,000	\$32,000
ISAB Administration	\$67,000	\$70,500	\$69,000
Total	\$475,000	\$1,274,500	\$423,000

Table 3. ISRP FY 2019 - Costs of Potential Assignments	Cost Range of Similar Past Projects		Cost Estimate for Likely FY19 projects
	Low	High	
2019 Category Review Mainstem/Program Support – about 63 projects	\$120,000	\$200,000	\$140,000
BPA-Council-NOAA Habitat RM&E Plan (ISAB?)	\$8,000	\$20,000	\$14,000
New BiOp-Accord-Targeted Projects	\$3,000	\$35,000	\$6,000
Master Plan for the Hood River Production Program	\$5,000	\$15,000	\$8,000
Klickitat Master Plan: Yakima Fisheries Project Design and Construction	\$5,000	\$15,000	\$6,000
Walla Walla Spring Chinook Master Plan	\$5,000	\$15,000	?
Yakima Subbasin Summer and Fall Run Chinook and Coho Salmon Hatchery Master Plan	\$5,000	\$15,000	\$6,000
Crystal Springs Fish Hatchery and Programs for Snake River Chinook Salmon and Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout	\$5,000	\$15,000	\$8,000
Ssnake River Basin Steelhead Kelt Reconditioning Facility Master Plan	\$5,000	\$15,000	\$8,000
White Sturgeon Hatchery Master Plan: Lower Columbia and Snake River Impoundments	\$5,000	\$15,000	\$8,000
Lake Roosevelt White Sturgeon Conservation Hatchery Project	\$5,000	\$15,000	\$8,000
Kalispel Tribe Resident Fish Program	\$5,000	\$15,000	?
Grande Ronde Model Watershed Synthesis Report	\$4,500	\$16,000	\$8,000
Kootenai River Project Synthesis Report	\$4,500	\$16,000	\$14,000
Duck Valley Reservation Reservoir Fish Stocking O&M and M&E, Three-Reservoir Management Plan	\$4,500	\$16,000	\$6,000
Other Follow-Up Reviews	\$6,000	\$20,000	\$6,000
AFEP Related Review (avian predation, adult passage, etc)	\$14,000	\$30,000	\$14,000
Willamette BiOp (flow, subbasin M&E plans, etc)	\$14,000	\$40,000	\$20,000
LSRCP Projects (part of 2021 review?)	\$30,000	\$120,000	?
Blocked Area Reintroduction Assessments (ISAB?)	\$8,000	\$40,000	\$30,000
Retrospective Review - Program Progress	\$20,000	\$114,000	\$20,000
Travel costs (5-8 meetings - \$5000 per meeting)	\$25,000	\$40,000	\$32,000
ISRP Administration	\$99,500	\$101,700	\$101,000
Total	\$406,000	\$943,700	\$463,000
Budget Estimates for 2020 and 2021 Category Reviews			
2020 Category Review Resident Fish/Blocked Areas – about 44 projects	\$120,000	\$200,000	\$180,000
2021 Category Review Anadromous Fish Habitat/Artificial Production – about 174 projects	\$300,000	\$425,000	\$375,000
LSRCP Projects (part of 2021 review?)	\$30,000	\$120,000	\$40,000