

W. Bill Booth  
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Idaho

James A. Yost  
Idaho

Tom Karier  
Washington

Dick Wallace  
Washington



Bruce A. Measure  
Vice-Chair  
Montana

Rhonda Whiting  
Montana

Melinda S. Eden  
Oregon

Joan M. Dukes  
Oregon

April 2, 2009

## DECISION MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Council Members

**FROM:** Mark Fritsch, project implementation manager

**SUBJECT:** Council decision on Project # 2007-155-00, *Develop a Master Plan for a Rearing Facility to Enhance Selected Populations of White Sturgeon in the Columbia River Basin*,<sup>1</sup> a Columbia Basin Fish Accord project.

**PROPOSED ACTION:** The Council staff recommends that the Council supports this project as designed and reviewed.

### BUDGETARY/ECONOMIC IMPACTS

The total amount associated with this accord project equals \$1,643,178 (e.g., approximately \$150,000 to \$182,760 per year<sup>2</sup>) in expense funds for Fiscal Year 2008 through 2017. The capital associated with the project is \$6,000,000. The Contract Request (CR-106652) associated with the project has an anticipated start date of July 1, 2009 and an end date of June 30, 2010.

### BACKGROUND

In May 2008, Bonneville, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation signed agreements with the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR), the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation (CTWSRO), the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation (YN), the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (CRITFC), the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, and the states of Idaho and Montana to implement a set of projects and actions that will deliver specific, scientifically sound results for the region's fish and wildlife. Collectively these agreements are known as the Columbia Basin Fish Accords.

As with all projects in the Fish and Wildlife Program, the Accord projects are subject to scientific review by the ISRP. As outlined in the guidance document associated with the review process for the Accords, the Council recognizes Bonneville's commitments to the projects under the Accords. However, the Accords do not alter the Council's responsibilities with respect to

<sup>1</sup> The proposal is listed in the May 2008 agreement was titled *Sturgeon Strategic and Hatchery Master Plan*.

<sup>2</sup> Includes the anticipated 2.5-percent annual inflation adjustment, beginning in Fiscal Year 2010.

ISRP review or the Council's role following ISRP review. Consequently, the Council will provide its recommendation on each project based on full consideration of the ISRP report and the Council's Program.

On February 24, 2009, the Council received from Bonneville a set of two Columbia Basin Fish Accords proposals. Included in this set was a proposal from the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (CRITFC) for # 2007-155-00, *Sturgeon Strategic and Hatchery Master Plan*.<sup>3</sup>

The proposal was submitted to the ISRP for review, and on April 1, 2009 the ISRP provided a review (ISRP document 2009-10). The ISRP found that the proposal "Meets Scientific Review Criteria (In Part, Qualified)."

## **ANALYSIS**

The goal of this project is to restore productive, viable sturgeon populations and fishery opportunities in the reservoirs associated with the Federal Columbia River Power System portions of the mid-Columbia and lower Snake River reservoirs. The objective of this project is to develop a collaborative and comprehensive strategic plan for sturgeon conservation, restoration and management (i.e., Objective 1). The strategic plan will be developed in a facilitated workshop process involving co-managers, significant stakeholders, and technical experts in order develop a consensus for goals and strategies for restoration of depleted sturgeon populations in mainstem reservoirs. In addition, if necessary, objectives include following a step review process to implement hatchery-related actions if identified in the comprehensive strategic plan (Objective 2 and 3).

The ISRP supports the sequence of the project as proposed and reviewed with an "In Part, Qualified" recommendation. The ISRP states that Objective 1 meets the review criteria. The ISRP determined that the remaining objectives associated with Objective 2 (i.e., Step Review) and 3 (M&E implementation of hatchery actions) are dependant on the outcome of the planning effort addressed in Objective 1 and future step reviews associated with Objective 2. Thus, a scientific review of Objectives 2 and 3 will be contingent on the direction in the strategic plan identified in Objective 1. As part of this review the ISRP also provided helpful comments that may assist the CRITFC with the step review if that objective is pursued.

Based on the ISRP review and the understanding that future activities are dependant on a future step review the Council staff recommends that the Council support this project as design and reviewed.

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<sup>3</sup> The proposal is listed in the May 2008 agreement in Attachment B; Hatchery Planning, O&M. New, and Hatchery Capital. In addition, detail is also provided in Attachment G, Sturgeon.