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August 1, 2024

DECISION MEMORANDUM

TO: Council Members

FROM: Erik Merrill, Independent Science Manager, and Kris Homel, Biologist for Program Performance and ISAB Ex Officio

SUBJECT: ISRP Member Term Renewal Decision, ISAB Member Renewal Discussion, and Initiation of ISAB/ISRP Nomination Process

PROPOSED ACTION: ISRP Decision: Council staff asks that the Council approve a one-year extension to Kurt Fausch's final term and renewal of Tom Turner's membership for a final four-year term to the Independent Scientific Review Panel (ISRP).

ISAB Discussion: Staff will discuss with the Council a one-year extension to Tom Quinn's final term and renewal of Desiree Tullos's membership for a final four-year term to the Independent Scientific Advisory Board (ISAB). This discussion should assist Chair Jeffery Allen in his capacity as the Council's representative on the ISAB's Administrative Oversight Panel, which will make the final ISAB appointment decision. The other Oversight Panel representatives are Aja DeCoteau (Executive Director, Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission) and Kevin Werner (Science Director, NOAA-Fisheries Northwest Fisheries Science Center). A separate decision memo was sent to the Oversight Panel for their consideration of the ISAB term extension and renewal.

ISAB/ISRP Nominations Discussion: Council staff and the ISAB Ex Officios plan to start the process to create a pool of qualified scientists for potential appointment to the ISRP and ISAB by sharing a nominations request letter regionally and nationwide.

SIGNIFICANCE: The ISRP provides recommendations to the Council on the scientific soundness and benefits to fish and wildlife of projects funded by the Bonneville Power Administration. The ISAB provides the Council, NOAA Fisheries, Columbia River Indian Tribes, and the region with independent reviews of critical scientific issues facing Columbia River Basin fish and wildlife mitigation and recovery efforts. These ISRP and ISAB member term extension and renewals should maintain the groups' expertise and ability to effectively review the science pertaining to fish and wildlife projects and topics continuing from this year and likely to arise in the next few years.

BUDGETARY/ECONOMIC IMPACTS

The ISRP and ISAB operate on an annual budget, independent of the Council's budget, funded by the Bonneville Power Administration through the Fish and Wildlife Program. No additional funds are requested.

BACKGROUND

The Appointment Process

The ISRP and ISAB each have 11 members who are eligible to serve two terms of normally three years per term. Term limits and new appointments are staggered to ensure continuity of membership and regular infusion of fresh perspectives.

ISRP and ISAB members are selected from a list of scientists that are nominated in response to a widely shared nominations solicitation letter and evaluated and approved by the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine for their scientific qualifications (NASEM [2019](#) and [2014](#) memos). From the list of recommended candidates, the ISAB Administrative Oversight Panel appoints ISAB members and the Council appoints ISRP members.

We intend to begin the process to update the ISRP and ISAB pool of qualified candidates by distributing a letter regionally and nationally for nomination of qualified scientists (see Attachment 1). The updated candidate pool will be used to recommend scientists for appointments beginning in the fall 2025.

Membership Recommendations

The ISAB and ISRP are multi-disciplinary groups with members providing a broad array of scientific expertise (see the tables below). The ISRP and ISAB have a balance of scientists who spent their careers in the Pacific Northwest and offer institutional and local knowledge, with those whose work has been primarily outside the Columbia River Basin and can provide a fresh perspective.

Rather than appoint new members from our [existing candidate pool](#), we recommend term extensions and renewals to provide continuity across past, current, and planned reviews, for example, the ISRP's review of Lower Snake River Compensation Plan hatchery programs and the ISAB's review of how to address climate change in program and project planning and implementation. The full ISRP has not met in-person since Covid in March 2020 and the current ISAB has met only a few times in-person during that time. Extending terms will allow more time for the ISAB and ISRP to coalesce as groups, share more in-person meetings, and take advantage of the knowledge gained during current reviews. Many new members with experience from outside the Columbia River Basin have joined the groups in recent years. Consequently, term extensions and renewals for experienced members will provide important institutional knowledge and context. All the members in their second terms have been engaged and effective. We have often extended members' terms in the past for continuity and to stagger succession.

ISRP Term Extension and Renewal Recommendations

- [Kurt Fausch](#), Ph.D., is a Professor Emeritus of Fish, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology at Colorado State University. He is an expert in population ecology, and his research has focused on the ecology and management of streams and stream fishes, including the impacts of non-native fish. He has been an influential and productive member of the ISAB and ISRP. He completed two full terms on ISAB serving on the ISAB's Executive Committee, as a Vice-chair, and as a lead author on numerous reviews including the ISAB's 2013 and 2018 reviews of the Fish and Wildlife Program. On the ISRP, he serves on the Executive Committee and was a prolific and constructive reviewer of projects during the Category Reviews. His ISRP term extension will ensure institutional continuity, and his expertise is especially needed for reviews of habitat restoration and resident fish management issues. He also has extensive experience in communicating scientific information to non-scientists, which is an important ISRP function. His documentary film [RiverWebs](#) was broadcasted to over 100 million homes, and his book [For the Love of Rivers](#) shares his passion for rivers and ecology to a wide audience. He does not have any conflicts of interest that would interfere with the ISRP's independence.
- [Thomas Turner](#), Ph.D., is a Professor of Biology at the University of New Mexico. He is also the Curator of Fishes at the University's Museum of Southwestern Biology. He has led scientific review groups working on trout

recovery in the Southwest and for the National Science Foundation on population and community ecology issues. His research has focused on population genetics and the evolutionary ecology of fishes. He applied this expertise during his two full ISAB terms and his first ISRP term, reviewing artificial production programs for anadromous and resident species, population ecology and genetics monitoring, and predator management projects. He does not have any conflicts of interest that would interfere with the ISRP's independence.

ISAB Term Extension and Renewal Recommendations

As noted above, Staff will also discuss ISAB term extensions and renewals with the Council to inform Chair Allen in his capacity as the Council's representative on the Independent Scientific Advisory Board's (ISAB) Administrative Oversight Panel.

- **[Thomas Quinn](#)**, Ph.D., is a professor at the School of Aquatic and Fishery Sciences at the University of Washington. His expertise and research interests include salmon and trout ecology, predator-prey interactions, and the selective effects of fisheries and artificial propagation, among others (see his [UW webpage](#), [Salmon Science website](#), and book [The Behavior and Ecology of Pacific Salmon and Trout](#)). His expertise is invaluable to ISAB and ISRP reviews, and he effectively serves as the ISAB's chair and on the ISRP's Executive Committee. He has a conflict of interest related to his spouse's employment with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). She works on ecotoxicology issues, primarily in the Puget Sound. Her work is not tied to any BPA-funded project and is not in the Columbia River Basin. Dr. Quinn's assignments are managed to avoid the appearance of bias.
- **[Desiree Tullos](#)**, Ph.D., PE, is a Professor at Oregon State University, Biological and Ecological Engineering Department. She has expertise in ecohydraulics, river engineering, and habitat restoration. She has broad experience modeling and researching the ecosystem impacts of dam operations and flood risk management in the Pacific Northwest, China, and other areas (see her [OSU lab webpage](#)). She is the ISAB's Vice-chair and also served in that capacity during her terms on the ISRP, now completed. She has reviewed the full range of Fish and Wildlife projects, focusing on habitat restoration, floodplain reconnection, and passage projects. In addition to her institutional knowledge of Program implementation, she provides engineering and hydrological expertise to augment the fisheries expertise represented on the ISAB. She does not have any conflicts of interest that would interfere with the ISAB's independence.

Table of Current ISRP Members

Shaded shows members recommended for term extension or renewal. Different term dates reflect that ISRP and ISAB members are appointed at different times. Members are eligible to serve two terms.

ISRP Member	Affiliation	Expertise	Term end date (FY)
Kurt Fausch	Colorado State University, emeritus	Fisheries - population and stream ecology	2024, 2 nd (extension)
Richard Carmichael	Consultant, formerly with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife	Fisheries, management, research, and recovery science	2025, 2 nd
Kurt Fresh	Consultant, formerly with National Marine Fisheries Service	Fisheries, ocean and salmonid ecology	2025, 2 nd
Josh Korman	Ecometric Research, Consultant, Vancouver, Canada	Biometrics and modeling	2025, 2 nd
Thomas Quinn	University of Washington	Fisheries - salmonid ecology, behavior, and artificial propagation	2025, 2 nd
Patrick Connolly	Consultant, formerly with U.S. Geological Survey, Washington	Fisheries, ecology, and habitat	2026, 2 nd
Dana Infante	Michigan State University	Hydrology and ecosystem modeling	2026, 2 nd
Kenny Rose	University of Maryland	Biometrics and modeling	2026, 2 nd
Thomas Turner	University of New Mexico	Fisheries - genetics	2024, 1 st (renewal)
Ellen Wohl	Colorado State University	Hydrology, river restoration	2026, 1 st
Yolanda Morbey	Western University, Ontario, Canada	Fisheries, avian and salmonid ecology	2026, 1 st

Table of Current ISAB Members

ISAB Member	Affiliation	Expertise	Term (FY)
Thomas Quinn	University of Washington	Fisheries - salmonid ecology, behavior, and artificial propagation	2024, 2 nd (extension)
Courtney Carothers	University of Alaska, Fairbanks	Social sciences, environmental anthropologist, marine and fisheries systems	2025, 2 nd
John Epifanio	Consultant, formerly Illinois Natural History Survey	Fisheries, genetics and hatcheries	2025, 2 nd
Dana Infante	Michigan State University	Hydrology and ecosystem modeling	2026, 2 nd
Kenny Rose	University of Maryland	Biometrics and modeling	2026, 2 nd
Desiree Tullos	Oregon State University	Ecohydraulics, river engineering, and restoration	2024, 1 st (renewal)
James Irvine	Department of Fisheries and Ocean, Canada, Nanaimo, Emeritus	Fisheries, ocean and salmonid ecology	2025, 1 st
Yolanda Morbey	Western University, Ontario, Canada	Fisheries, avian and salmonid ecology	2025, 1 st
Ellen Wohl	Colorado State University	Hydrology, river restoration	2025, 1 st
Michael Young	(Retiring) US Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Research Station	Fisheries, genetics and ecology	2026, 1 st (starts January 2023)
Patrick Connolly	Consultant, formerly with U.S. Geological Survey, Washington	Fisheries, ecology, and habitat	2026, 1 st

Attachment 1. Draft ISAB and ISRP Nominations Letter to the Region

Dear Interested Party,

The Northwest Power and Conservation Council, the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, and NOAA Fisheries invite nominations by October 15, 2024 to establish a pool of candidates who are qualified and interested in potential appointment to the Independent Scientific Advisory Board ([ISAB](#)) and/or the Independent Scientific Review Panel ([ISRP](#)).

We will request that the National Academy of Sciences evaluate the credentials of the nominees, submit additional nominees if necessary, and recommend a pool of qualified candidates for potential appointment to the ISRP and ISAB. As vacancies arise on the ISAB or ISRP, new members will be selected from this pool (see the National Academy's [2019 memo](#)). The Council makes final appointments to the ISRP. ISAB appointments are made by the ISAB Administrative Oversight Panel consisting of the Council chair, the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission's executive director (on behalf of all tribes in the Columbia Basin), and the science director of NOAA Fisheries' Northwest Fisheries Science Center (in consultation with the Northwest Regional Administrator).

The ISAB serves the Council, NOAA Fisheries, and Columbia River Indian Tribes by providing independent scientific advice and recommendations on issues related to regional fish and wildlife recovery programs under the Northwest Power Act and the Endangered Species Act. The ISAB is designed to foster a scientific approach to fish and wildlife recovery and ensure the use of sound scientific methods in the planning and implementation of research and recovery strategies related to these programs.

At the direction of Congress, the Council established the ISRP to review projects proposed for funding through the Bonneville Power Administration's annual fish and wildlife budget, including those in federal agency budgets that are reimbursed by BPA. The projects are reviewed for their scientific merit and consistency with the program. The ISRP analyzes the information gained from the review of projects and makes recommendations to the Council.

When making nominations, we ask that you provide contact information for the nominee. Although not required, if feasible, we greatly appreciate that nominators submit the resume of each nominee and a brief cover letter that describes how the nominee meets the criteria for membership specified below and confirms the candidate's interest in becoming a member of the ISAB or the ISRP.

The specific criteria each nominee must meet include:

- high achievement in a relevant discipline, which may include Columbia River anadromous and resident fish ecology, statistics, wildlife ecology, genetics, fisheries, fish passage/bioengineering, fish husbandry, marine ecology, geomorphology, socio-economics, or other appropriate disciplines;
- a strong record of scientific accomplishment documented by contribution to peer-reviewed literature or other evidence of creative scientific accomplishment;
- high standards of scientific integrity, independence, and objectivity;

- ability to forge creative solutions to complex problems;
- interest in and ability to work effectively in an interdisciplinary setting;
- ability to commit sufficient time to effectively participate in review activities, approximately 8 to 40 hours per month depending on assignments (members are compensated for their services and reimbursed for travel expenses);
- ability to comply with the ISAB/ISRP conflict of interest standards (attached [in final letter]) for the duration of their appointment.

Please submit your nominations by November 8, 2024 via email to emerrill@nwcouncil.org or mail:

Northwest Power and Conservation Council
Attn: Erik Merrill
851 SW 6th Avenue, Suite 1100
Portland, Oregon 97204

If you have any questions please contact Erik Merrill, ISAB and ISRP manager, at 503.222.5161 or toll free at 1.800.222.5161. For more information on the ISAB and ISRP including publications and a list of current members visit the Council's website at: www.nwcouncil.org/fish-and-wildlife.

Sincerely,

[Draft letter pending approval by the ISAB Administrative Oversight Panel]