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August 6, 2024

MEMORANDUM

TO: Council Members

FROM: Council staff

SUBJECT: Staff update on the Regional Coordination Forum

BACKGROUND:

Presenter: Patty O'Toole, Maureen Hess

Summary: The Regional Coordination Forum (RCF) met on July 11 to discuss the agenda items (below). Staff will brief the Council members on highlights from the meeting.

- Staff update on Program Performance
- Staff update on the Program Amendment
- Staff update on Project Review
- Continued discussion on funding adequacy
- Continued discussion on defining roles

Relevance: Part six, section III B. of the 2014 Fish and Wildlife Program calls for the Council to convene a forum of regional coordination representatives to discuss relevant issues pertaining to Program implementation.

Workplan: Hosting the Regional Coordination Forum is a task under the Program Planning & Policy component of the Fish and Wildlife Division Work Plan.

Background: The Regional Coordination Forum (RCF) is a forum comprised of entities (Fish and Wildlife Managers) that receive Fish and Wildlife regional

coordination funds. This group generally meets annually or more often as needed. The 2014 Fish and Wildlife Program states that the forum is to focus on topics related to the Council's Fish and Wildlife Program policy, implementation, and program performance evaluation. The RCF provides an important mechanism for the Council to engage with the fish and wildlife managers on the priority work in the Fish and Wildlife Program. It also provides a forum in which the managers can interact and discuss general issues of regional importance or interest.

Presentation slides and detailed notes from the July 11, 2024 RCF meeting are [linked here](#).

More Info: [Program coordination \(2014 Program\)](#)

Update on the July 11th Regional Coordination Forum

August 13, 2024



Northwest **Power** and
Conservation Council

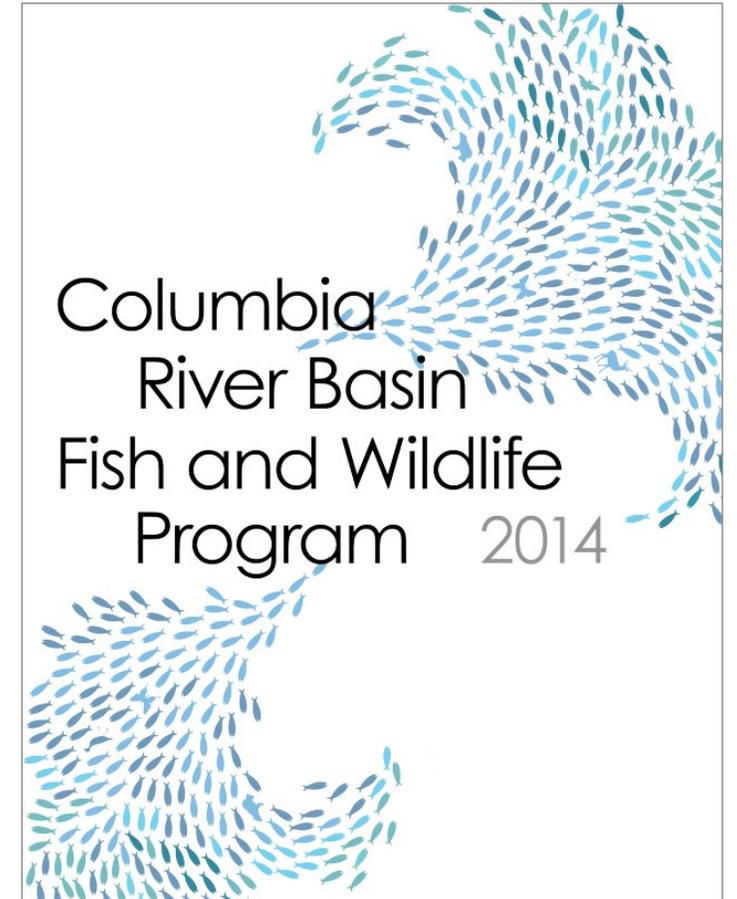
Current Program Language

2014 Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program

Part 6, Section B (page 121)

The Council has benefited and will continue to benefit from the individual and coordinated efforts of groups, committees and organizations in implementing the program. Continued coordination of various program elements is expected, supported, and in some cases financed by the Bonneville Power Administration. Annually, the Council will convene a forum of regional coordination representatives and other interested parties to discuss the upcoming years' issues of regional significance that may include:

- Council-sponsored/requested topical science and policy forums, workgroups, and special panels to aid in program development and implementation*
- Ongoing work to improve program reporting, evaluation, and assessment*
- Key program-related regional forums where policies, programs, and actions affecting fish and wildlife are planned and implemented*
- Coordination of subbasin or other level program activities*
- The Council will factor in the implementation priorities and its fish and wildlife program work plan into this annual discussion forum.*



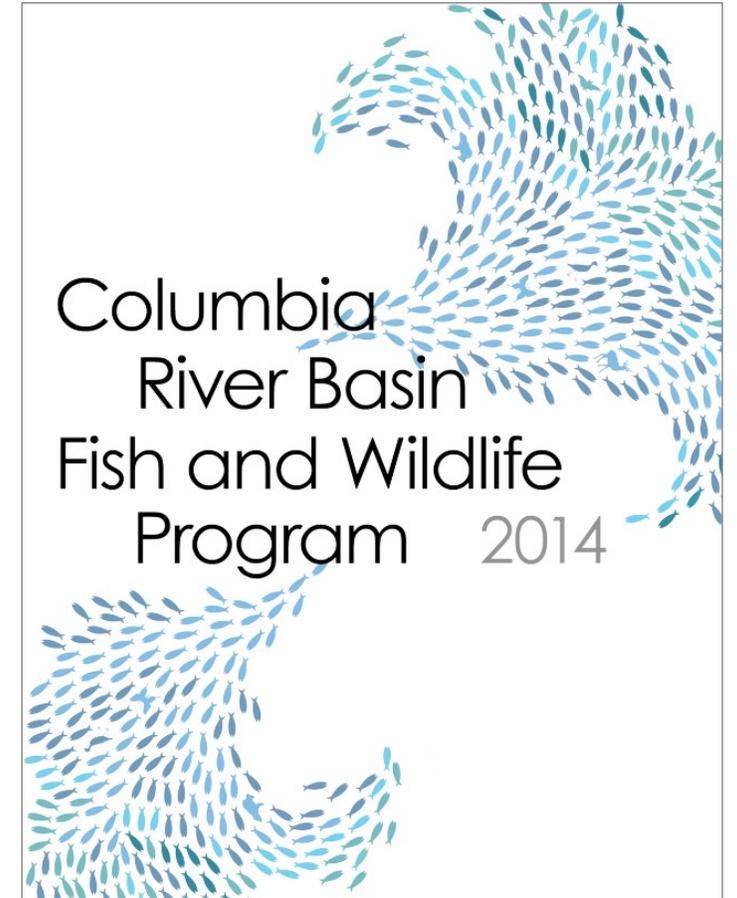
Current Program Language

2014 Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program

Part 6, Section B (page 121)

Program coordination funding

Entities receiving program coordination funding must participate in the annual forum and a subset of the resulting priority activities identified by the group, as appropriate for the particular entity. All related work should focus on activities that inform the Council on policy, program performance evaluation, and implementation decisions and are beneficial at a basinwide or regional scale.



Which entities receive regional coordination funding?

States (4)	Tribes (13)	Tribal coordination organizations (3)
Idaho	Coeur d' Alene	Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (Nez Perce, Umatilla, Warm Springs, Yakama Nation)
Montana	Colville	Upper Columbia United Tribes (Kootenai, Spokane, Coeur d' Alene, Colville, Kalispel)
Oregon	Cowlitz	Upper Snake River Tribes (Burns Paiute, Shoshone-Bannock, Shoshone-Paiute)
Washington	Grande Ronde	
	Kalispel	
	Kootenai	
	Nez Perce	
	Salish-Kootenai	
	Siletz	
	Spokane	
	Umatilla	
	Warm Springs	
	Yakama	

Regional Coordination Forum – July 11, 2024

9 am **Welcome and introductions**

9:15 am **1. Program performance**

10:15 am **2. Program amendment**

11:15 am *Extra time for continued discussion*

by noon *Lunch break*

1 pm **3. Project review**

2 pm **4. Funding adequacy**

2:20 pm **5. Defining roles**

2:50 pm *Wrap up and next steps*

3 pm *Adjourn*

[See presentation
and notes](#)

Agenda item 1. Update on Program Performance

- Staff update on assessing and communicating Program Performance
 - Approach.
 - Timeline for upcoming categorical assessments.
 - Discussion on evaluating Program goals and objectives.
- Discussion and feedback:
 - Considerations and challenges in evaluation of Program goals and objectives.
 - Tracking progress toward mitigation objectives over time.
 - Tracking fish stock abundances over time.
 - Linking Program objectives to Strategy Performance Indicators.

Agenda item 2. Update on Program amendment

- Staff overview of Program amendment process and anticipated timeline:
 - Highlight of important dates in the process:
 - Call for recommendations in **January 2025**.
 - Recommendation due date **mid-April 2025**.

Agenda item 2. Update on Program amendment

➤ Discussion and feedback:

- Full Program revision vs. addendum.
- If revision, considerations for re-structuring the Program (same substance, but better organization, reduce redundancies).
- Some F&W managers desire to help scope:
 - Revision of Program structure, letter calling for recommendations.
- Managers to meet on own to discuss coordinated recommendations.
- RCF to reconvene for further discussion on October 10th.

Agenda item 3. Update on Project Review

- Staff update on project review approach and planning for F&W Program Lands review:
 - Review of updated approach to the review process for existing projects.
 - Plan to initiate review of F&W Program Lands and timeline.

- Discussion and feedback:
 - General support for updated approach to the review process.
 - Considerations for opportunities for value-added communication with the science panel.
 - Concerns with a September initiation of review and overlap of Lands review and Program amendment occurring simultaneously.

Agenda items item 4 and 5. Continued discussion on funding adequacy and defining roles

Prior RCF discussions identified 3 main needs:

1. Multi-year projects under the F&W program should have cost-of-living adjustments built into their contract and include inflation so they can maintain scope and continue to function as reviewed.
2. Funding should be adequate to meet Program goals, including maintenance of existing mitigation, and opportunities to adjust to changing information, not held to Endangered Species Act priorities.
3. Implementation roles and responsibilities for Bonneville, Fish and Wildlife Managers, and the Council need to be reviewed because there has been a shift over time in how implementation decisions are made, and this shift differs from what the Power Act and Programs envisioned.

Agenda items item 4 and 5. Continued discussion on funding adequacy and defining roles

➤ Discussion and feedback:

- All previously noted concerns are still active.
- Issue with seeing accountability or consistency from Bonneville regarding Council recommendations.
- Anticipate that project funding and administration reform will be an issue in the Program amendment process.
- Discussion on defining roles is occurring within other processes, recommendation to pause this discussion in RCF.



Questions and discussion