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July 8, 2025

MEMORANDUM

TO: Council Members

FROM: Mark Fritsch and Maureen Hess

SUBJECT: Update on Project Review – Fish and Wildlife Lands

BACKGROUND:

Presenter: Council Staff

Summary: Staff will provide a brief summary of the updated review process for existing projects that implement the Fish and Wildlife Program. At the May 2024 Fish and Wildlife Committee meeting, staff proposed using the updated approach to begin a review during fall 2024 of a subset of projects focused on mitigation lands that benefit fish¹ and wildlife². Based on feedback from regional fish and wildlife managers regarding the overlap in timing with the Program Amendment process and implementation plans for new projects, the Council deferred the start of the Lands review to 2025. Staff plan to initiate the Lands review to begin in October 2025 and will preview the timeline, with intent to notify project sponsors after the July Council meeting.

¹ Those lands purchased and/or enhanced as mitigation through the Program to benefit aquatic focal species are termed "Fish Lands."

² Those lands purchased and/or enhanced through the Program to benefit wildlife focal species, as mitigation for losses attributable to construction, inundation, and operation of the federal hydrosystem, are termed "Wildlife Lands."

- Relevance: Section 4h(10)(D) of the Northwest Power Act directs the Council to review projects proposed for funding by Bonneville to implement the Council's Fish and Wildlife Program. The Council engages in this review process with the assistance of the Independent Scientific Review Panel (ISRP). The Council and Bonneville work together to develop the information necessary to make the review process successful.
- Workplan: Fish and Wildlife Division work plan 2025; Program Implementation; A. Project Review.
- Background: For over 25 years, the Council has developed and conducted reviews of projects directly funded by Bonneville that are implemented to mitigate, protect and enhance fish and wildlife as directed under the Northwest Power Act. These rigorous reviews have resulted in clear documentation of each project's purpose, objectives, and results; project improvements through independent scientific review and feedback; facilitation of sharing project data and information; increased transparency and accountability; and the identification of project contributions to the Program and to the region.

Many of the projects implementing the Council's mitigation Program have been reviewed and recommended by the Council numerous times, and their continued implementation and overall scientific soundness has been accepted. For these existing and ongoing projects, an extensive project review is not needed going forward. Staff have worked over the last couple of years to update the review process for these types of projects to be focused on an implementation check-in that is more efficient, and value added.

Staff previewed the draft approach and received initial input from the fish and wildlife managers through the Regional Coordination Forum (April 2023), the Independent Science Review Panel (June 2023) and Bonneville staff (September 2023) to further develop and refine the new project review process. The updated review process was described in detail during the following Council, and Fish and Wildlife Committee meetings: [May 2023](#), [October 2023](#), and [May 2024](#).

Key components to the revised review process include:

- Recognition that the basic premises and scientific soundness of existing projects have been accepted. The ISRP report and Council recommendations will offer guidance intended to strengthen aspects of the projects into the future.
- Minimal review materials submitted by project sponsors – it will be an addendum built on the last recommended project proposal.
- Recommendations will be value-added based on information received from addendum summary and responses to targeted questions. Advanced clarification on which projects are not amenable to the science review

component will be provided (e.g., coordination, planning, operations and maintenance).

- The substantive project information we are going to focus on most in this check-in is whether projects are making progress to meet their own internal goals and objectives.

Fish and Wildlife Lands Review

The next review, using the updated process, will be focused on projects that acquire and maintain mitigation lands that benefit fish and wildlife. This set of projects was selected based on both the time since the last review (2017 for most projects in the set), and alignment to other Council work on assessing Program Performance. Council staff are working to identify Strategy Performance Indicators on wildlife lands and to track progress toward achieving Wildlife Program goals. Both tracking efforts would benefit from project sponsor review materials and results.

To prepare for this initial review of Lands projects (Table 1), staff are working to define and develop the following:

- Clarify how each project may participate in the review (e.g., BPA Program Support projects and O&M project elements may not warrant scientific review).
- Develop a review template to include targeted questions to guide projects and the review process.
- Continue to seek additional input and feedback on the project review process with fish and wildlife managers (through the Regional Coordination Forum), Bonneville staff, and the ISRP.

The initiation for this review was planned to occur in 2024, however, based on feedback from project sponsors and regional coordination forum entities, the Council deferred the start of the Lands review to 2025. This deferral not only provided better alignment for both project sponsors and staff to the anticipated workload associated with the Program amendment process but also allowed fish and wildlife managers more time to initiate implementation of new projects and workload associated with recent settlements and agreements. The anticipated review schedule is:

[illegible]

Table 1: Existing Fish and wildlife lands projects to be reviewed beginning October 2025³.

Project Number	Proponent Orgs	Project Title	Project Focus – wildlife or fish lands
1990-092-00	CTUIR	Wanaket Wildlife Area	Wildlife Lands
1991-061-00	WDFW	Swanson Lake Wildlife Mitigation	Wildlife Lands
1992-048-00	CCT	Hellsgate Big Game Winter Range	Wildlife Lands
1992-061-02	KT	Albeni Falls Wildlife Mitigation-Kalispel Tribe	Wildlife Lands
1992-061-03	IDFG	Albeni Falls Wildlife Mitigation-Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG)	Wildlife Lands
1992-061-05	KTOI	Albeni Falls Wildlife Mitigation-Kootenai Tribe	Wildlife Lands
1992-061-06	CDT	Albeni Falls Wildlife Mitigation-Coeur D'Alene Tribe	Wildlife Lands
1994-044-00	WDFW	Sagebrush Flat Wildlife Mitigation	Wildlife Lands
1995-057-02	SBT	Shoshone-Bannock Wildlife Mitigation Projects	Wildlife Lands
1995-057-03	SPT	Southern Idaho Wildlife Mitigation--Shoshone-Paiute Tribes	Wildlife Lands
1995-060-01	CTUIR	Isq'ulktpe Watershed Project	Wildlife Lands
1996-080-00	NPT	Northeast Oregon Wildlife Project	Wildlife Lands

³ Note that there are 4 new Lands projects that are currently *in development*, no proposal received to date and will be reviewed later when submitted: #2024-003-00, #2024-005-00, #2027-003-00, #2028-002-00. Developing project information is located on CBFish.org.

1996-094-01	WDFW	Scotch Creek Wildlife Mitigation	Wildlife Lands
1998-003-00	STOI	Wildlife Mitigation/Operations and Maintenance (O&M) for Spokane Tribe Land Acquisitions	Wildlife Lands
1998-022-00	CTWSO	Pine Creek Conservation Area	Wildlife Lands
2000-009-00	BPT	Logan Valley Wildlife Mitigation	Wildlife Lands
2000-015-00	CTWSO	Upper John Day Conservation Lands Program	Fish Lands
2000-026-00	CTUIR	Rainwater Wildlife Area Operations	Wildlife Lands
2000-027-00	BPT	Malheur River Wildlife Mitigation	Wildlife Lands
2002-003-00	CSKT	Secure and Restore Fish and Wildlife Habitat in Montana	Fish Lands
2002-014-00	WDFW	Sunnyside Wildlife Mitigation	Wildlife Lands
2003-012-00	WDFW	Shillapoo Wildlife Mitigation	Wildlife Lands
2006-003-00	WDFW	Desert Wildlife Mitigation	Wildlife Lands
2006-004-00	WDFW	Wenas Wildlife Mitigation	Wildlife Lands
2006-005-00	WDFW	Asotin Creek Wildlife Mitigation	Wildlife Lands
2008-007-00	UCUT	Upper Columbia United Tribes (UCUT) Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Program	Wildlife Lands
2008-102-00	CCT	Upper Columbia Land Operation and Maintenance	Fish Lands
2008-104-00	CCT	Upper Columbia Land & Water Acquisition	Fish Lands
2011-003-00	ODFW	Willamette Wildlife Fund (WWF)	Wildlife Lands

2024-004-00 ⁴	STOI	Upland Wildlife Habitat Management	Wildlife Lands
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BPA Program Support - These 7 projects administratively support (i.e., BPA Program Support) the Lands category of projects and receive direct funding from Bonneville associated with the Northwest Power Act. These projects are not part of the review. For regional transparency, this informational table outlines how these projects contribute to Fish and Wildlife Program Lands.

Project Number	Proponent Orgs	Project Title	Project Description of Work Implemented
1992-061-00	IDFG, CDT, KT and KTOI	Albeni Falls Wildlife Mitigation Capital Land Acquisitions	Oversight and administration of Albeni Falls wildlife mitigation project activities.
2008-303-00	CTWSO	Columbia and Willamette Rivers Operations Administration	Provides the necessary support to the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs to coordinate with and participate in the Willamette Wildlife Mitigation Program (WWMP).
2008-800-00	MFWP	Montana Resident Fish Habitat Acquisition	Implements the Montana Fish Accord MOA.
2010-088-00	OSC	Upper and Lower Lemhi Acquisition/Easements	Assists in acquiring interests in land and water in the Lemhi Watershed. In conjunction with OSC's Lemhi River Restoration Project, 2010-072-00.
2011-004-00	ODFW	ODFW Operation & Maintenance (O&M)	Provides the funding necessary for ODFW to implement the Willamette Wildlife MOA.
2013-002-00	BPA	Land Acquisition Monitoring	This project funds the annual monitoring work completed by BPA's GIS staff for baseline surveys for lands secured through the Program. On the Transmission side of BPA.
2018-001-00	BPA	BPA Pre-Acquisition	This project funds the BPA realty group to do the pre-acquisition activities needed to acquire an acquisition such as title review, site visits, etc. On the Transmission side of BPA.

⁴ Proposal received on March 6, 2025, ISRP review received on May 30, 2025 (ISRP document 2025-1). Council recommendation in process.

Update on Project Review for Fish and Wildlife Lands

Council Meeting

July 15, 2025



Northwest **Power** and
Conservation Council

Presentation Outline

I. Project review background

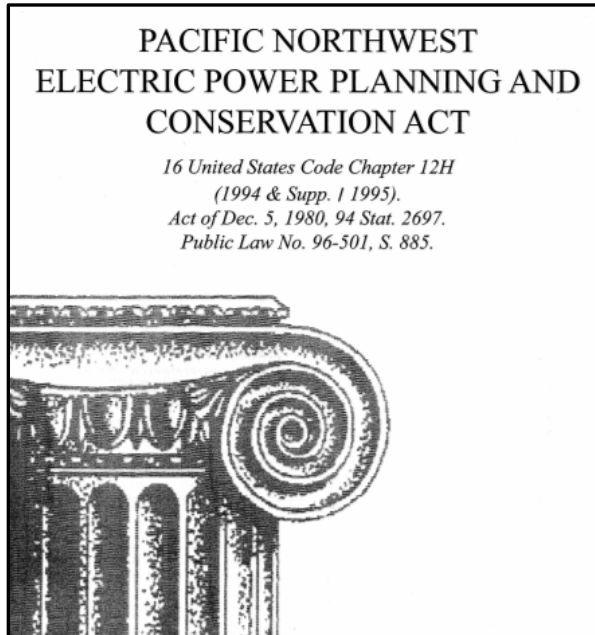
II. Summary of the revised project review process for existing projects

III. Rationale and timeline for initiating review on fish and wildlife program lands

Project reviews

Why review projects?

- Northwest Power Act, Section 4h10D: Council role in review and ISRP review (1996 amendment to NPA)



Benefits:

- Clear documentation of each project's purpose, objectives and results
- Scientific review
- Transparency & Accountability:
 - Identify contribution to the Program and region
 - Sharing of project data and information
 - Identification of policy issues to address

ISRP Review Criteria from 1996 Amendment to NW Power Act

Review projects for consistency with the Council's program and whether they:

- are based on sound science principles
- benefit fish and wildlife and
- have a clearly defined objective and outcome
- with provisions for monitoring and evaluation of results



Past reviews

- [2022 Anadromous Fish Habitat and Hatchery Review](#)
- [2020 Resident Fish and Sturgeon](#)
- [2019 Mainstem/Program Support](#)
- [2018 Research Projects: Progress Review](#)
- [2017 Wildlife Projects](#)
- 2015 - 2019 Solicitation Projects
 - [2019 Northern Pike](#)
 - [2018 Pacific Lamprey](#)
 - [2017 Sturgeon](#)
 - [2016 Habitat Assessment](#)
- [2014 Geographic Review](#)
 - [2017 Umbrella Projects follow-up](#)
- [2013 Resident Fish / Data Mgmt / Regional Coordination](#)
- [2011 RM&E/Artificial Production](#)
- [2011-2014 Lower Snake River Compensation Plan \(LSRCP\)](#)
- [2010 FastTrack](#)
- [2010 Wildlife](#)
- [Fish accord projects](#)
- [BiOp projects](#)
- [2007-2009](#)
- [2007 Innovative](#)
- [2006](#)
- [2005/2006](#)
- [2004/2005](#)
- [2002-04 Province](#)
- 2003 [Mainstem/Systemwide](#), [Request for Studies](#)
- 2002 [Innovative](#), [LSRCP](#)
- 2001 [Innovative](#), [Action Plan](#), [High Priority](#) and [Ongoing](#) reviews
- Proposals for: [2000](#), [1999](#), [1998](#), [1997](#)

Review History

- Numerous project reviews over last 25 years
- Transitioned from annual review of all projects (~300+) at once to focusing on portions of the Program in multi-year review cycles with resulting multi-year project recommendations
- Early project reviews focused primarily on proposed project details to ensure projects were scientifically sound.
- Contemporary reviews have shifted to focus on project results and adaptive management of ongoing work.

Review types

- Existing projects (~300)
- New projects (e.g., Accord and Settlement Agreements)
- Reimbursable (e.g., Lower Snake River Compensation Plan)
- Follow up reviews (e.g., Step review, addressing Council conditions)

Presentation Outline

I. Project review background

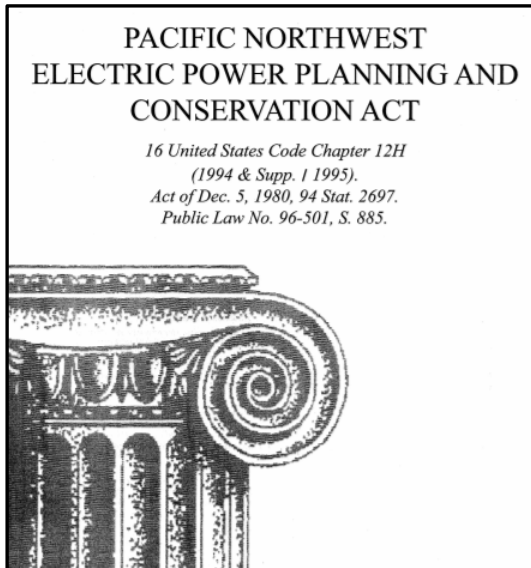
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Revised review process for existing projects

1) Continue to meet science review requirements:

- Northwest Power Act: Section 4h10D: Council role in review and ISRP review (1996 amendment to NPA)



2) Continue to emphasize transparency & accountability:

- Sharing of project data and information (i.e., project purpose, objectives, results)
- Identify contribution to the Program and region
- Identification of policy issues to address

3) Acknowledge the maturity of the active & ongoing projects implementing the Program.

- Basic premise and scientific soundness of these projects have been accepted through numerous reviews.

4) Add value and create efficiencies in the process

Review of existing projects – Summary comparison

Review components	Previous project review	Updated (revised) project review process
Comply with the NW Power Act and science review.	No change.	
Project rationale and scientific basis	Project rationale and scientific soundness of projects evaluated with every review	After numerous reviews, the basic premise and scientific soundness of projects are accepted. An implementation check-in on project actions will be used instead
Identification of projects to review at a time	Multiple approaches and large # of projects reviewed at one time	Focused, smaller sets of projects (i.e. through project mapping effort)
Scope of science review	All projects subject to ISRP review	ISRP reviews a subset of projects amendable to scientific review
Review materials	Project proposal form and support documents	Reduced materials - Addendum to last reviewed proposal form (i.e., project summary and answers to a few targeted questions)
Process steps	Project presentation meeting for all - presentation focused on proposal	Reduced process and deliverables - Coordinated sponsor/project-specific meetings, as needed
	ISRP preliminary review report	
	Written response loop between ISRP and sponsors	
ISRP final review report	Included requirements for projects to meet review criteria	Value-added comments and guidance to strengthen projects for continued implementation.
Council decision and recommendations to Bonneville	Included funding and budget-related recommendations for projects	
	Included recommendations on Program policy issues.	No change.

Presentation Outline

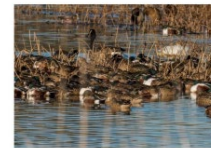
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Rationale for initiating review of the Lands projects

- Time since last review (most in 2017)
- Alignment to other staff work on Program Performance:
 - Identification of Strategy Performance Indicators (SPIs) for wildlife lands
 - Track progress toward wildlife program goals



[LANDS](#)

Maps and details on lands acquired through the Program

Timing for Lands review

- Initial notice to Lands project sponsors (**June 2024**) with anticipated review schedule to start in September 2024
- Concerns and challenges raised by Regional Coordination Forum entities (state fish and wildlife agencies and tribes) regarding review timeline (**July 2024**):
 - Overlap of review process with call for Program amendment recommendations
 - Prioritize initiation of new projects, staff capacity building, and review
- **Council decision (August 2024)** to defer Lands project review to 2025
- Staff revisit timeline and planning

Next steps

- Send notice to Lands project managers about **October 2025 start date**
- Continue to seek additional input and feedback on process from F&W managers, Bonneville, ISRP

Staff work to continue preparing for Lands review:

- Clarify how each project may participate in review
- Finalize targeted questions
- Finalize review guidance template and schedule webinar with sponsors



Questions & Discussion

[illegible]

Estimated timeline for Fish and Wildlife Program Amendment Process (*extended*)

