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February 25, 2010

MEMORANDUM

TO: Council Members

FROM: Lynn Palensky and Kerry Berg

SUBJECT: Update on two Montana Subbasin Plans Submitted for Review – Bitterroot and Blackfoot

This is an update on the status of the Bitterroot and Blackfoot subbasin plans. No action is required at this time.

At the November 2009 Council meeting, the Council approved a letter announcing the call for comments on the Bitterroot and the Blackfoot subbasin plans recommended for amendment into the Fish and Wildlife Program. The letter requested comments on the ISRP review of the proposed subbasin plans as well as the plans themselves. The public comment period closed February 11, 2010.

The Council received five sets of comments. See www.nwcouncil.org/fw/subbasinplanning/bb.htm. The planners from both subbasins plan to address the comments and the ISRP review. For the Bitterroot, the planners will focus on the comments submitted by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. They will also have the opportunity to respond to the other commenters and the ISRP's review of their subbasin plan. For the Blackfoot, planners will complete additional work on the plan to address some of the concerns raised by the ISRP.

The general process with anticipated dates/timeframes is outlined below. The process is consistent with that used in 2004. Should the need arise, additional dates to allow for oral testimony at Council meetings or otherwise, may be added.

1. Bitterroot and Blackfoot Subbasin Plans submitted – September 2009
2. ISRP review begins October 2009
3. ISRP final report complete – November 20, 2009
4. Public comment period on draft amendments and ISRP report ends – February 11, 2010
5. Council considers adoption of final program amendments