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October 28, 2014

### MEMORANDUM

**TO: Council Members**

**FROM: Stacy Horton**

**SUBJECT: Report Template for Research, Monitoring and Evaluation Projects**

#### **BACKGROUND:**

**Presenters:** Ben Zelinsky and Katie McDonald, BPA

**Summary:** Bonneville Power Administration has adopted a new annual report template for research and monitoring projects that follows a scientific journal format. The objective of the new template is to create standardized reports that increase scientific consistency, improve content, timeliness, efficiency of reporting, and accessibility to information. Ben and Katie will describe the new template, discuss the components of the report, and explain the value of the new report guidelines.

**Relevance:** The newly adopted 2014 Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program calls on Bonneville to work with the Council to develop “... a concise, useful template for annual reports for research and monitoring projects that can replace other more cumbersome, more costly, and less useful reports for individual projects.” The Council has also adopted an adaptive management strategy, and access to better information from these reports will help inform our efforts.

**Workplan:** The Fish Committee has been tracking this issue.

**Background:** As part of the *Final Council Recommendations for Research, Monitoring, Evaluation and Artificial Production Projects for FY 2012 and Beyond (June 2011)*, the Council recommended that BPA and the Council work together to develop a concise template, which included specific

requirements for research projects. This new guide is not BPA's first attempt at pulling together a template to improve reporting, but this version appears to be on track with Council requirements, as reiterated in the 2014 Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program.

**More Info:** A copy of the *Report Template for Research, Monitoring and Evaluation Projects and Guidance* and a copy of *Fiscal Year 2015 RM&E Reporting FAQs* follow this memorandum.

# Research, Monitoring and Evaluation (RM&E) Annual Progress Report Template and Guidance

*This template and guidance have been adapted from the [Transactions of the American Fisheries Society](#). RM&E project annual reports should present cumulative results to date and are expected to be 5-20 pages long, excluding appendices.*

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## Title page

The title page should include the following information:

Title
Subtitle (if applicable)
Project Number
Report covers work performed under BPA contract # _____
Report was completed under BPA contract # _____
Report covers work performed from: Month, Year – Month, Year
Author, Agency, City, State
Report Created: Month, Year

“This report was funded by the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), U.S. Department of Energy, as part of BPA's program to protect, mitigate, and enhance fish and wildlife affected by the development and operation of hydroelectric facilities on the Columbia River and its tributaries. The views in this report are the author's and do not necessarily represent the views of BPA.”

## ***Abstract***

The abstract should consist of one paragraph (up to 500 words) that concisely states why and (generally) how the study was done, as well as what the results were and what they mean. They should also include any lessons learned. The abstract should not simply outline the contents or present the methods in detail. Citations should not be presented in abstracts, and acronyms should be used sparingly. Detailed statistical results should be reserved for the main text. Because abstracts tend to be more widely read than complete papers, authors should make them concise, clear, and applied.

## ***Introduction***

The introduction should provide context for the work being reported. In doing so, it should present a general overview of previous literature and previous work on the subject to guide the reader to the report's purpose and importance. When applicable, the introduction should include a brief description of the study area to provide context. Relationships between the purpose of the work and strategies for habitat restoration, predation, or hatchery and hydrosystem operations should be described. Do not provide an exhaustive history of the project. *The type of RM&E being conducted must be identified (research, status and trend monitoring, or action effectiveness). For research projects and action effectiveness projects, include hypotheses, related uncertainties, and a timeline for your study including the start and anticipated end date.*

## ***Methods***

The methods section describes what was done, where it was done, and when it was done. Authors should provide a high-level description of the methods, accompanied by relevant links to protocols in [MonitoringMethods.org](http://MonitoringMethods.org). Well-designed maps can reduce the need for detailed descriptions of study sites as part of the overall methods section. Projects with metric and indicator data for each protocol can provide those in a separate appendix at the end of the report.

## ***Results***

It is preferable to present detailed results in tables, figures, and graphs, especially when numerical precision is important. The interpretation and application of the results should be explained in the Discussion/Conclusion section below. Results should be presented in biologically meaningful terms and should be organized by topic and species, including by ESU,

DPS, or MPG as appropriate. Data illustrating time trends should be displayed in cumulative figures and include relevant previous data. Summary data should not be refined to the point that the reader cannot verify the analyses or use the information for other purposes. Raw data and instructions for how to access data sets should only be included in the appendices. When presenting the results of statistical tests, please report the type of test, sample or effect sizes, and the significance level (P-value). The discussion of results should be included in the Discussion/Conclusion section.

### ***Discussion/Conclusion***

A good discussion provides broad syntheses and stresses the relevance of the findings, including the benefit to fish and wildlife. Authors should indicate the importance of their work and how it relates to current knowledge. If issues during implementation of your work significantly impacted results, discuss those here. Please also highlight lessons learned from your project that could inform future RM&E work on a local and regional scale. Informed speculation is acceptable as long as it is clearly identified as such. Authors should avoid merely restating their results and/or (re)summarizing the literature. *For research and action effectiveness projects, please be sure to state whether hypotheses were accepted or rejected and whether your results addressed any critical uncertainties.*

### ***Adaptive Management & Lessons Learned***

*In order to emphasize the application of results to management actions, adaptive management and lessons learned have been distinguished as a separate section from the Discussion/Conclusion section.*

Please explain how your results could be used by fish or wildlife managers to inform [program strategies](#), including habitat restoration, predation, or hatchery and hydrosystem operations. Describe how your results could be applied at the watershed, subbasin, and Columbia Basin scale. Finally, please discuss how your results will be shared with other resource managers.

## ***References***

References should be provided in a separate section at the end of the report. Alphabetize references and include them in the following format:

Author(s) last name or Organization(s), Title, Publication Date, Publisher, Volume/Edition, Page #.

## ***Appendices***

### *A.1: Data sets or products:*

If your data is available online, please provide a link to your data here. If not, please provide instructions for how your data can be accessed. If you wish to include raw or large data sets in your report, include them as an appendix here, not in the main body of the report.

### *A.2: Publications*

Include citations for all publications resulting from the study and work described in this report.

### *A.3: List of Metrics and Indicators (Optional)*

Include a list of metrics and indicators by protocol for each relevant protocol listed in the Methods section.

# Fiscal Year 2015 RM&E Reporting FAQs:

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### What is changing with BPA reporting?

The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) Fish & Wildlife Program has updated annual reporting requirements for projects with Research, Monitoring, and Evaluation (RM&E) work elements (WEs). RM&E annual reports for contracts beginning on or after October 1st, 2014 will follow a new RM&E reporting template.

### Why is the RM&E reporting process changing?

BPA Fish & Wildlife recently completed an effort to better understand the use of RM&E annual reports following the two-year pilot of an online automated RM&E report template hosted in [www.cbfish.org](http://www.cbfish.org). This effort involved interviews with project sponsors responsible for writing and submitting the reports, as well as with people who use the reports (or would like to), including members of the Northwest Power and Conservation Council.

BPA Fish & Wildlife learned from the interviews that many who use RM&E reports (or who have attempted to) often found the reports incomplete, inconsistent, and struggled to glean key messages and results. Report writers expressed difficulty in using the online tool; some said they did not use it at all. Project sponsors said that improved reporting guidance and content would increase their ability to submit reports on time and decrease unnecessary detail. Overall, writers and users both favored a report patterned after scientific journals. As a result of this feedback, BPA Fish & Wildlife has decided to update RM&E reporting requirements.

**Please request any guidance not addressed in this FAQ from your COTR.**

### **What are the new requirements for RM&E reports?**

- Any RM&E reports for contracts beginning in fiscal year 2015 (Oct. 1, 2014 – Sept. 30, 2015) will not be produced using the online RM&E report tool in [www.cbfish.org](http://www.cbfish.org).
- A new RM&E report template is in place as of October 3, 2015. The new template follows the outline of a scientific journal paper.
- The RM&E reports will continue to include a title page, abstract, introduction, methods, discussion of results and conclusions, followed by a new section regarding adaptive management and lessons learned.
- The new reports should be shorter than the reports written in previous years. The main sections of the RM&E report should be concise-- approximately 5 – 20 pages long. Raw and large data sets will be included in the appendices.

### **When will I need to start using the new report template and guidance?**

The start date for using the new report template and guidance depends on when your contract period begins:

- Contracts that begin in FY 15 (Oct. 1, 2014 – Sept. 30, 2015) will submit their RM&E reports using the new report template and guidance.
- Contracts that began prior to Oct. 1, 2014 can submit RM&E reports for calendar year 2014 or earlier using either format; the online RM&E report tool in [www.cbfish.org](http://www.cbfish.org) or the new RM&E report template and guidance. Request a copy of the guidance and FAQ documents for the online RME report tool in [www.cbfish.org](http://www.cbfish.org) from your COTR or [rmesupport@bpa.gov](mailto:rmesupport@bpa.gov).

### **When will the new RM&E report template and guidance be available?**

The new RM&E report template and guidance will be available on October 3, 2014.

## Where do I access the new RM&E report template and guidance?

The new RM&E reporting template and guidance are available at this link:  
<http://www.cbfish.org/Help.mvc/GuidanceDocuments>

## I have an outstanding RM&E report that covers work prior to FY 15. Which format is required for submitting delinquent reports?

Use whichever format is the easiest; the online RM&E report tool in [www.cbfish.org](http://www.cbfish.org) or the new report template and guidance. Multiple years of delinquent reports can be combined into one report. Delinquent reports do not have to follow the March 15 due date. Please work with your COTR to make decisions on dates and formats for delinquent reports.

*Note:* Use separate WE 132s for the contract's current RM&E report and the delinquent RM&E reports.

## Why am I required to complete an RM&E report?

Information contained in the RM&E reports is used to:

- Update and refine the Council's Fish & Wildlife Program, strategies, and management questions,
- Address Recommendations and ISRP Qualifications from the Council's Categorical Review process; (see [Review of Research, Monitoring and Evaluation and Artificial Production Projects Recommendations of the Council June 2011](#) for more details),
- Inform local adaptive management,
- Support transparency and accountability to the region and ratepayers,
- Inform and supplement FCRPS BiOp reporting.

## What work in my contract requires an RM&E report?

Work performed under the following work elements requires an RM&E report:

- 156 Develop RM&E Methods and Designs
- 157 Collect/Generate/Validate Field and Lab Data

*Note:* [Excludes project feasibility and development monitoring](#)

- 158 Mark and Tag Animals
- 162 Analyze/Interpret Data

## If I collaborate on contract work that requires an RME report, who is responsible for writing the RME report?

As a general rule, BPA only wants one report per project. The Project Leads and BPA COTR are responsible for determining which contractor will take the lead on the RM&E report. All relevant contractors will be required to contribute to drafting the report and reviewing the final version prior to submission. When in doubt, work with your BPA COTR to determine the appropriate solution for your project.

*For example:*

Projects participating in the Bonneville Power Administration Programmatic Action Effectiveness Monitoring Program (AEM) will be required to collaborate with Tetra Tech on the AEM RM&E annual report, including reviewing this report prior to submission to BPA. Tetra Tech will take the lead on developing the report.

### **Can I use an old format for my RM&E report?**

Only if your old format includes the reporting sections contained in the new report template and guidance. The new RM&E reporting template and guidance are available at this link: <http://www.cbfish.org/Help.mvc/GuidanceDocuments>. If your old format does not include the reporting sections contained in the new report template and guidance, you may not use it.

### **My project has habitat work and RM&E. Which report is required?**

The COTR, sponsor, implementation manager, and a representative from the BPA Policy and Planning group will determine which report is required. This may be the RM&E report only, the Habitat progress report only, or both reports depending on the nature of the work in the project.

### **What is the due date for my RM&E annual report?**

This year we will be following the previously established due date, **March 15**, for RM&E reports. The March due date for RM&E reports supports BPA Fish & Wildlife's Policy group in meeting regulatory reporting requirements including Biological Opinion annual reporting.

*Note:*

- Some projects have already arranged a different due date with BPA. If you have already completed this exercise, keep the due date previously agreed upon.

### **What is the reporting period for my RM&E annual report?**

Your RM&E annual report is on the calendar year cycle.

*For example:*

- A new contract starting on Oct. 1, 2014 and ending on Sept. 30, 2015 would submit an RM&E report covering work from Oct. 1, 2014 – Dec. 31, 2014 by March 15, 2015.
- The work completed from Jan. 1, 2015 – Sept. 30, 2015 would be written up in the RM&E report submitted by March 15, 2016.

### **Has the reporting work element in Pisces, WE 132, been updated with the new RM&E report template and guidance?**

Yes, WE 132 was updated in early August to reflect FY 15 changes. If your statement of work and contract were finalized prior to August 8, 2014, your

contract does not have this new language. Your COTR has several options for ways to integrate the new reporting requirements in your contract for FY 15. Please contact your COTR to explore these options.

*Additional Information:*

- You can review the updated WE 132 language here:  
<http://www.cbfish.org/WorkElement.mvc/Summary/132>

### **What does the updated reporting deliverable for Work Element 132 mean?**

The updated WE 132 deliverable, “Progress Report has been published”, is intended to serve as a prompt for Project Sponsors to confirm that the final version of your RM&E report has been received and published by BPA Fish & Wildlife. Do this by working with your COTR to confirm the final version has been published as an attachment with your contract and project in PISCES.

### **Has the FCRPS BiOp RPA report, work element 202 (previously WE 141), changed?**

No, no changes have been made to the structure, guidance, or content of the FCRPS BiOp report<sup>1</sup> for FY 15. Please continue to follow existing guidance on the requirements for this report.

*Additional Information:*

- Please see the [Instructions for Completing BiOp RM&E Reports](#) at the following link: <http://www.cbfish.org/Help.mvc/GuidanceDocuments>

### **Who do I contact for more help on BPA RM&E reporting?**

Please contact your COTR and [rmesupport@bpa.gov](mailto:rmesupport@bpa.gov) with your questions regarding RM&E annual reporting.

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<sup>1</sup> The BiOp report is designed to support documentation of compliance with the FCRPS Endangered Species Act Biological Opinion. Any projects with work supporting the FCRPS BiOp RM&E Reasonable and Prudent Alternatives (RPAs) 50 – 73 are required to complete the BiOp report. You can see your project’s BiOp associations in the first “General” section of your project summary on Cbfish.org.