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## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Fish and Wildlife Committee

**FROM:** Council Staff

**SUBJECT:** Briefing on Regional RM&E Assessment Report

Jim Geiselman (Bonneville Power Administration) will provide an overview of the report summarizing the recommendations made by the AA/NOAA/NPCC RM&E Workgroups on implementing the research, monitoring and evaluation reasonable and prudent alternatives included in the 2008 Federal Columbia River Power System Biological Opinion.

Recommendations are based on the workgroups' review of the BiOp RM&E strategies/actions/subactions, the associated management questions, and the expectations regarding work and information needed for RPA compliance. From this review, the workgroups conducted project specific assessments of the coverage of RPA actions and information needs under existing or planned Action Agencies programs, including gaps or areas that could potentially be reduced or scaled back in refocusing efforts and resources. The recommendations consist of programmatic or project specific changes, and development of targeted requests for additional work that is needed to successfully implement the BiOp RPA RM&E.

These recommendations will be used in upcoming RM&E collaboration work with Columbia Basin Fish Management Agencies, BiOp Accord Parties, and Pacific Northwest Aquatic Monitoring Partnership Agencies, and will inform the Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Program RM&E Categorical Review Process and the Corps of Engineer's Anadromous Fish Enhancement Program.

The recommendations also identify time critical, high priority information needs that may require immediate actions, such as the development of targeted requests for proposals, for BiOp compliance. Details regarding which projects and work elements support specific RPAs and the RPA gap assessment will be available as an excel worksheet online. Currently a summary sheet of projects supporting specific RPAs is provided in Appendix A of this report.

# Regional RM&E Assessment Report: Recommendations on implementing the 2008 FCRPS Biological Opinion's RME-RPAs

Jim Geiselman and participants of the  
AA/NOAA/NPCC RME Workgroups

Northwest Power and Conservation Council

July 2009

# RM&E Workgroup Process

- January 2009, the AA, NOAA and NPCC assembled five Research, Monitoring and Evaluation (RM&E) Work Groups and an oversight Planning Group.
- Assignment was to assess the requirements of the FCRPS BiOp RM&E RPA and insure that actions and projects are being implemented to successfully meet those needs.
- The work groups met regularly through May 2009. Results from those sessions are reported in current June draft report.

# RM&E Workgroup Tasks

- Review RPA RM&E actions and the expectations regarding work and information needs.
- Assess project specific coverage of these RPA actions and information needs under existing or planned AA programs.
- Identify gaps and/or work that could be reduced or scaled back.
- Recommend programmatic or project specific changes and/or development of targeted requests for additional work.
- Identify time critical work that needs to be expedited and implemented as soon as possible.

**Recommendations for Implementing  
Research, Monitoring and Evaluation for  
the 2008 NOAA Fisheries FCRPS BiOp**

**Based on AA/NOAA/NPCC RM&E  
Workgroup Assessments of Actions  
called for under the BiOp RPA**

**June 2009 Draft Pre-decisional Document**

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# Hydro and Predation – General Findings

- 48 RPA subactions reviewed
- Need for regional PIT tagging plan is central to many efforts to ensure efficiency across all-H projects.
- Need Delayed Mortality workshop to synthesize research information, establish needs and priorities.
- Need holistic assessment of collective predation studies and future efforts required.
- No other gaps apparent, but opportunities for improved coordination and refocusing of RME efforts are noted.
- Need to reduce overlap, establish preferred methodologies, clarify PIT tagging needs, and refocus efforts.
- Fall Chinook studies, System survival monitoring, Delayed mortality, collective predation studies, SMP.

# Estuary and Ocean - General Findings

- 4 RPAs with 16 Subactions, with 8 Subactions having some level of Gap to fill.
- Most of the RPAs were either fully covered by ongoing projects or would be covered with some additional work – primarily additional geographic or representative sampling sites.
- There is a need for annual reporting and synthesis of the project-specific information on many RPA subactions. These data will be relevant to BiOp reporting requirements.
- There is a need for a single, comprehensive synthesis of estuary/ocean RME to support adaptive management of the federal habitat restoration program in the estuary.
- The estuary/ocean gap report includes specific recommendations for each RPA subaction.
- The recommendations generally modify or add scope to existing projects.



# Tributary Habitat and Fish Populations General Findings

- Based on 4 RPAs with 19 subsections, 15 recommended actions were identified
- Of the 15 recommended actions, 4 high priority (time sensitive) gaps were identified
- One programmatic concern was identified


# High Priority Population Monitoring Actions

- 50.1 P-TaGIS database be revised and expanded to meet needs of tributary active and passive detections.
- 50.5 Systematically sample returning adult steelhead at Lower Granite Dam for genetics and age structure and mark the fish with PIT tags. Establish remote PIT-tag interrogation systems near the mouths of the Selway, Lochsa, South Fork, Lolo Creek and upper Salmon.
- 50.6 Fill gaps in existing steelhead population status monitoring.
- 50.7 Implement and document 100% hatchery release external marking.

# Programmatic Concern

- Fish population response to habitat actions critically dependent on implementation
- Experimental watersheds (IMWs) implementation plans must be integrated into all Habitat and Hatchery actions
- Watershed strategic monitoring plans need to be recognized in AA / NOAA planning, permitting and contracting.

# Hatchery and Harvest – General Findings

- Based on 4 RPAs with 13 subactions
  - 6 subactions have substantial recommendations
  - 4 high priority (time sensitive) gaps were identified
  - Some level of monitoring overlap was identified in the Snake
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# High Priority Hatchery Actions

- 62.3 Evaluate post-release mortality from different types of fisheries across a wide range of natural temperature regimes.
- 63.1 RFP for specific B-run monitoring (need to determine if CRITFC Accord project 2008-723 fills the gap for abundance and productivity), but "safety net" triggers still need to be investigated.
- 64.3 RFP for Relative Reproductive Studies for Methow steelhead and Snake River fall Chinook.
- 65.1 Estimate the effectiveness/fitness in nature of hatchery-origin Snake River fall Chinook salmon

# Data Coordination and Management – General Findings

- Based on 3 RPAs with 12 subactions
- 5 subactions have recommendations
- All recommendations are high priority (time sensitive)

# Overall Status of RPAs 71, 72, & 73

## **RPA 71 – Coordination** – *Coordinate RM&E activities with other Federal, State, and Tribal agencies on an ongoing annual basis*

71.1	Organizing and supporting Corps' AFEP
71.2	Support/participate Council F&W Program's project planning and review
71.3	Support and coordinate standardized design/reporting of monitoring through participation and leadership in regional coordination forums and workgroups
71.4	
71.5	
71.6	

## **RPA 72 – Data Management**– *FCRPS RM&E information archived in appropriate data management systems.*

72.1	Develop coordinated and standardized information system network through regional forums and pilot studies
72.2	Contribute funding for data system components
72.3	Participate in regional collaboration forums

## **RPA 73 – Implementation and Compliance Monitoring**–

73.1	Standardized implementation tracking through contract requirements
73.2	Maintain action/project status and implementation information
73.3	Maintain project tracking data system including Katz <i>et al.</i> metrics

# Summary of Recommendations

## RPA 72

**RPA 72 – Data Management**– The Action Agencies will ensure that the information obtained by the FCRPS RM&E Program is archived in appropriate data management systems.

RPA 72.1	Develop coordinated and standardized information system network through regional forums and pilot studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued support of PNAMP products and tools</li> <li>• Continued support of ISEMP pilot and ARS development</li> <li>• Develop strategy to facilitate implementation of ARS across Columbia Basin</li> <li>• Deploy data stewards</li> <li>• Regional coordination of action/program planning and implementation tracking systems</li> </ul>
RPA 72.2	Contribute funding for data system components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support PNAMP data management products and guidelines</li> <li>• Co-support data stewards</li> </ul>
RPA 72.3	Participate in regional collaboration forums	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued staff support</li> </ul>



# Summary of Recommendations

## RPA 73

<b>RPA 73 – Implementation and Compliance Monitoring–</b>		
RPA 73.1	Standardized implementation tracking implemented through contract requirements	<p>✓ BPA PISCES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BOR and USACE need to identify how they will report on project implementation</li> </ul>
RPA 73.2	Maintain action/project status and implementation information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BOR and USACE need to integrate implementation tracking with NOAA and BPA systems</li> </ul>
RPA 73.3	Maintain project tracking system including Katz et al. metrics (initiate FY08)	<p>✓ BPA PISCES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BOR and USACE need to identify how they will report Katz et al. metrics</li> </ul>

# Future Updates and Application

- Update report in July for input to the RM&E Collaboration and Prioritization Workshop Process for VSP and Tributary Habitat/Hatchery Effectiveness Monitoring.
- Based on the Collaboration Workshop results, update the Report again this fall.
- Use updated report for documentation and guidance to the 2010 - 2013 FCRPS BiOp Implementation Plan, the NPCC RM&E Categorical Review Process, the COE AFEP, PNAMP, and BiOp Accords.

# Updates for July Version

- Summarize high priority, time critical recommended work that needs to be implemented as soon as possible.
- Identify existing projects that may not be NOAA BiOp implementation critical, but are associated with high-priority F&W Program objectives or USFWS BiOps.
- Review new information in the Inventories of VSP and habitat/hatchery effectiveness monitoring for any apparent overlaps in monitoring coverage.

# Additional Next Steps

- Start implementing high priority recommendations through input to existing contracts, shaping of new Accord projects, and development of Targeted Requests for Proposals
  - Advance recommended workgroups and products for Regional Tagging Plan and Habitat Action Effectiveness Modeling
  - Participate in the regional Pre-workshop and 5 day Workshop process for VSP and Habitat/Hatchery Effectiveness projects that meet RPA requirements
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