

## Department of Energy

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Bonneville Power Administration  
P.O. Box 3621  
Portland, Oregon 97208-3621

ENVIRONMENT, FISH AND WILDLIFE

May 8, 2001

In reply refer to: KEW-4

Mr. D. Robert Lohn  
Fish and Wildlife Director  
Northwest Power Planning Council  
851 S.W. Sixth Avenue, Suite 1100  
Portland, OR 97204-1348

Dear Mr. Lohn:

On April 20, 2001, we received a letter from the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) regarding the Council's '**high priority**' project recommendations. In that letter, NMFS concludes, "most are likely to benefit listed species . . ." The letter also provides specific comments on the biological benefits that could be derived from the projects and their relationship to the Reasonable and Prudent Alternative actions in the NMFS 2000 Biological Opinion on the Federal Columbia River Power System. Using this information and the recommendations of the Council, Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) has decided which of the "high priority" proposals we intend to fund.

Enclosed is a spreadsheet identifying the proposal number, COTR, project title and Council budget recommendation for all proposals we are proceeding to implement as recommended under the "high priority" solicitation.

There are four projects that will require some further clarification with the project sponsor and NMFS before a final decision can be made to proceed. Proposal nos. **23010** – Restoration of Anadromous Fish Access to Hawley Creek; and **23011** – Reconnect Little Morgan Creek to the Mainstem Pahsimeroi River. Both are located in Idaho and when evaluated by the Independent Scientific Review Panel (ISRP), NMFS and BPA and there was concern that restored or improved flows associated with the projects would not be protected under Idaho water law. Representatives of the Idaho Governor's Office have indicated that the interpretation of state law made by the reviewers is inaccurate particularly in light of recent state legislation regarding minimum stream flows in the Lemhi River. In order to make a decision to implement these projects under the "high priority" solicitation, BPA is requesting written documentation from the Idaho Attorney General's office detailing how restored or improved flows will be protected, for what duration, and how that protection will be documented and monitored. Proposal No. **23046** – Increase In Stream Flows to De-watered Stream Reaches in the Walla Walla Basin and Proposal No. **23047** – Acquire Tucannon River Water Rights will also require additional documentation describing the planned 2001 activity and the provisions for retention of flows instream.

At this time, we do not intend to fund proposal no. **23008** – Improve Stream Habitat by Reducing Discharge from Animal Feeding Operations in the Salmon and Clearwater Basins. It is difficult to determine from the proposal how and to what magnitude the benefit to listed stocks would accrue to the project. It seems appropriate for this project to be resubmitted in the Mountain Snake Provincial Review process.

Proposal no. **23032**, although a sound proposal from a biological perspective, appears to be one that could or should be funded by the U.S. Forest Service as part of their obligation under the Endangered Species Act and their enabling Acts. We note that in the Basinwide Salmon Recovery Strategy (All-H Strategy) released by the Federal Caucus agencies in December, 2000, the Federal land managers have primary responsibility for protection of existing high quality habitat and accelerated restoration of habitat on Federal lands located in high priority subbasins. We recognize that similar actions have been funded through the Council's Fish and Wildlife Program in the past, however we want to stress that in implementing our responsibilities under the All-H Strategy, BPA is focused on actions on non-Federal lands and is calling upon our fellow Federal agencies to seek the Federal appropriations necessary to implement their All-H responsibilities. We do not intend to fund this proposal at this time, but we recognize the biological benefits this project would produce and will pursue discussions with the U.S. Forest Service to determine other funding mechanisms that may be available.

Proposal no. **23073** will not be funded by BPA at this time. Although this appears to be another sound biological proposal, the land arrangements that would allow the acquisition of a riparian easement are not sufficiently mature to go forward at this time. In addition, the budget proposed for this project addresses the riparian fencing costs only and does not include the conservation easement cost. We anticipate that this project will be considered for funding in the Columbia Plateau Provincial Review. If you have any questions please call me at (503) 230-4748.

Sincerely,

Robert Austin  
Deputy Director for Fish and Wildlife

Enclosures

cc:

The Honorable Dirk Kempthorne, State of Idaho, Office of the Governor  
The Honorable Gary Locke, State of Washington, Office of the Governor  
The Honorable John Kitzhaber, State of Oregon, Office of the Governor  
The Honorable Judy Martz, State of Montana, Office of the Governor  
Mr. Brian Brown, National Marine Fisheries Service  
Mr. John Palensky, National Marine Fisheries Service  
Dr. Brian Allee, Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Authority

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***FY01 High Priority Proposals***

<b>Proposal No.</b>	<b>Proposal Title</b>	<b>BPA Funding</b>	<b>COTR</b>	<b>Council Recommended Budget</b>
23036	Evaluate live capture selective harvesting methods for commercial fisheries on the Columbia River	YES	John Skidmore	\$384,285
23001	Protect Bear Valley Wild Salmon, Steelhead, Bull Trout Spawning and Rearing Habitat	YES	Allyn Meuleman	\$320,000
23002	Ames Creek Restoration	YES	John Skidmore	\$170,000
23008	Improve Stream Habitat by Reducing Discharge from Animal Feeding Operations in Salmon and Clearwater Basins	Defer to Mtn. Snake		
23010	Restoration of Anadromous Fish Access to Hawley Creek	Under Review		\$2,159,000
23011	Reconnect Little Morgan Creek to the Main-stem Pahsimeroi River	Under Review		\$1,100,000
23012	Arrowleaf/Methow River Conservation Project	Yes	Linda Hermeston	\$2,500,000
23032	Return Spawning/Rearing Habitat within Squaw Cr. - Papoose Cr. Watersheds	USFS All-H		
23045	Gourley Creek Dam Fish Ladder	Yes	John Skidmore	\$200,119
23046	Increase In Stream Flows to De-watered Stream Reaches in the Walla Walla Basin	Under Review		\$590,000
23047	Acquire Tucannon River Water Rights	Under Review		\$120,000
23048	Install Fish Screens to Protect ESA-listed Steelhead and Bull Trout in the Walla Walla Basin	YES	Jay Marcotte	\$461,700
23053	Wagner Ranch Acquisition	YES	John Baugher	\$2,658,774
23054	Forrest Ranch Acquisition	YES	John Baugher	\$4,184,185
23056	Farmers Irrigation District Main-stem Hood River Fish Screen Project	YES	Tom Morse	\$500,000
23073	Purchase Perpetual Conservation Easement on Holliday Ranch and Crown Ranch Riparian Corridors and Uplands	Defer to Columbia Plateau		
23094	Acquire 27,000 Camp Creek Ranch at Zumwalt Prairie	YES	Joe DeHererra	\$2,000,000
23007	Conservation Easement, Baker Ranch, Salmon River East Fork	YES	Allyn Meuleman	\$1,415,000
<b>TOTAL "YES" &amp; "PROVISIONAL" PROPOSALS</b>				<b>\$18,763,063</b>
<b>TOTAL YES PROPOSALS ONLY</b>				<b>\$14,794,063</b>