

October 5, 2006

Dear Mark Walker, Director of Public Affairs, NPCC

We ask that the NPCC reconsider its funding recommendation for **Project # 2003-039-00** because of the Projects importance to the region, the quality of the science, positive historical performance, and consistency with Independent Scientific Review Panel (ISRP) and Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board (UCSRB) reviews. During 2003, we initiated a BPA funded study to estimate the reproductive success of naturally spawning hatchery spring Chinook salmon in the Wenatchee River. The Northwest Power and Conservation Council, in its draft funding recommendations, has not recommended continuation of this project in FY07 and beyond. Below, we provide compelling support for why this project should be reconsidered for funding. It was our understanding that funding recommendations were contingent on evaluations of the project conducted by the ISRP and the ranking assigned to the project by agencies, tribes, and local stakeholders. We recognize that there may have been some confusion regarding the local ranking. As such, we are providing additional information specific to our project as it pertains to these processes.

ISRP Review

The project received an outstanding ISRP review (<http://www.nwcouncil.org/library/isrp/isrp2006-6.pdf> , p. 584). The final recommendation by the ISRP was fundable and no additional review was deemed necessary. The quote below is the first paragraph of the ISRP review:

"This is a well-written proposal that was a pleasure to review. This kind of project is high priority and critical to conduct prior to larger scale implementation of supplementation projects. The statement on the need for this project, 'All major reviews of hatchery programs have hatchery risks, including the relative reproductive success of hatchery fish, as a critical uncertainty for salmon recovery' says it all. The need for this work was also identified clearly in the subbasin plan."

Local Prioritization

The UCSRB submitted to the Council a list of recommended projects along with the raw scores for each project developed local Agency and tribal representatives (<http://www.nwcouncil.org/fw/budget/2007/province/UCSRBNarTables.doc>). Although the UCSRB did not specifically rank each project, the information from which such a ranking could be developed was provided. Listed below is a table that summarizes the total score for each project and the subsequent associated ranking (Table 1). It is unclear to the project sponsors why such a table was not provided to the Council. Regardless, we hope this new information clearly illustrates the importance and priority of this project in the Columbia Cascade Province (i.e., local ranking of #2). Our project was the highest ranked project that was not recommended for funding. In addition, much lower ranked projects were recommended for funding (Table 1).

Currently, supplementation programs are ongoing in 9 out of 11 anadromous stocks within the Columbia Cascade Province. Many of these supplementation programs are aimed at rebuilding threatened or

endangered stocks. The question our project addresses (the relative reproductive success and survival of hatchery fish) has been identified by multiple independent science panels (ISAB, ISRP, RSRP, HSRG), the Council, and NMFS, as a critical uncertainty in salmon recovery planning and was specifically identified within the Wenatchee Subbasin Plan

(<http://www.nwcouncil.org/fw/subbasinplanning/wenatchee/plan/Supplement.pdf> p.14). The Wenatchee River is one of the only large streams with viable Chinook populations where a project like this is feasible. In particular, Tumwater Dam offers a unique opportunity to trap and sample 100% of potential spring Chinook spawners. The project builds off of other monitoring efforts (BPA and locally funded) in the Columbia and Wenatchee basins. The Wenatchee is one of three (BPA funded) intensively monitored watersheds in the Basin, and the reproductive success project is fully integrated into that effort. The project is also integrated into Chelan County PUD's Hatchery Monitoring and Evaluation Program (<http://www.midcolumbiahcp.org/>). As such, this project is very reasonably priced because of cost sharing with other entities and activities. With the possible exception of the Yakima spring Chinook program (YKFP), no other hatchery program is as well monitored as the Wenatchee spring Chinook. As such, the Wenatchee spring Chinook population has been identified as a candidate for long term experiments by the ISRP/ISAB (<http://www.nwcouncil.org/library/isrp/isrpisab2005-15.pdf>). The project has been highly successful in its first three years. It has been able to trap and sample 99.6% of the returning adults, and large samples of juveniles. Both the molecular and the ecological components of the projects are on track and generating useful data as outlined in our two comprehensive annual reports. This project has already provided ancillary benefits for assisting in the management of the Wenatchee spring Chinook population. Upon completion, the results of this project will be used not only in the Wenatchee basin, but possibly other subbasins (e.g., Methow and Tucannon) where similar types of hatchery programs are currently operated.

In conclusion, reviews of this project by both the ISRP and UCSRB support the continued funding recommendation for this project. Lack of project prioritization does not appear to be unique to the Columbia Cascade. Fortunately, the UCSRB did provide the information from which such prioritizations could be made. We hope that you will reconsider your initial recommendation and fund this important work.

Sincerely,

Dr. Todd Pearsons, Leader, Hatchery/Wild Interactions Unit, WDFW Science Division
Dr. Michael Ford, Director, Conservation Biology Division, NMFS NWFS
Andrew Murdoch, Leader, Supplementation Research Team, WDFW Science Division

Table 1. List of Columbia Cascade projects, ISRP final recommendations, local ranking, and NPCC final draft recommendations for FY 2007-2009.

Project #	Project Name	ISRP review	Local Prioritization		Washington Final Draft Recommendations
			Total Score	Local Ranking	
2003-022-00	Okanogan Basin Monitoring and Evaluation	Fundable	83.5	1	Recommended
2003-039-00	Monitor reproductive success of spring Chinook in the Wenatchee River	Fundable	80.3	2	
1994-044-00	Enhance, protect, and maintain habitat Sagebrush Flats Wildlife Area	Fundable	74.9	3	Recommended
2007-318-00	Knapp-wham Hanan Irrigation project irrigation project	Fundable (Qualified)	72.8	4	Recommended
1996-040-00	Mid Columbia Coho restoration	Fundable (Qualified)	70.5	5	
2006-001-00	McIntyre Dam Feasibility	Fundable	69.5	6	
2000-001-00	Anadromous Fish Habitat	Fundable (Qualified)	69.1	7	Recommended
2007-282-00	Okanogan River restoration Phase iv and v	Fundable	68.6	8	
1996-042-00	Restore and enhance anadromous fish in Salmon Creek	Fundable (Qualified)	67.2	9	
2003-023-00	Chief Joseph Hatchery	Fundable in part	64.3	10	Recommended
2007-055-00	Entiat River UPA Lower Entiat off channel restoration project	Fundable	63.7	11	Recommended
2007-084-00	Shrubstepe habitat acquisition for terrestrial species	Fundable	63.6	12	
2007-214-00	Fender Mills floodplain restoration phase 1	Fundable	63.2	13	
2007-035-00	Methow Basin Riparian Enhancement Project	Fundable in part	62.6	14	
2007-178-00	Monitoring fine sediment delivery in the Entiat Subbasin	Fundable (Qualified)	60.6	15	
1996-094-00	Scotch Creek Wildlife area	Fundable	60.4	16	Recommended
2007-237-00	Elbow coulee floodplain restoration	Fundable (Qualified)	60.3	17	
2007-085-00	Nason Creek Oxbow reconnection project	Fundable (Qualified)	60.1	18	Recommended
2007-193-00	Evaluate potential to enhance spawning of summer Chinook	Fundable	59.7	19	
2007-046-00	Steelhead Spawning surveys in Upper Middle Mainstem Columbia River	Fundable	59.6	20	Recommended
2007-251-00	MVID East Diversion dam replacement	Fundable	58.8	21	
2007-172-00	MVID West canal Diversion and headworks	Fundable (Qualified)	55.0	22	
2007-212-00	Okanogan Steelhead supplementation	Fundable in Part	54.2	23	Recommended
2007-042-00	Wenatchee passage Program	Fundable in Part	53.7	24	Recommended
2007-034-00	Columbia Cascade Pump Correction	Response Requested	53.4	25	Recommended
2007-036-00	Mid-Columbia Trophic Dynamics Project	Not fundable	53.0	26	
2007-231-00	Entiat Subbasin Riparian Enhancement Project	Fundable in part	52.4	27	Recommended
2007-054-00	Entiat River UPA Stillwater Restoration Project	Not fundable	51.7	28	
2007-103-00	Skookumchuck Watershed	Fundable (Qualified)	48.4	29	
2007-232-00	Okanogan Similkameen habitat protection	Fundable	46.0	30	Recommended
2007-086-00	Wenatchee Riparian Enhancement	Fundable in part	45.9	31	Recommended
2007-264-00	Programmatic Habitat Complexity Projects in the Methow	Fundable (Qualified)	45.1	32	Recommended
2007-091-00	Limiting factors in Lake Wenatchee	Fundable in part	44.7	33	
2007-292-00	Eff. Monitoring of instream habitat restoration in lower Entiat	Fundable (Qualified)	44.3	34	
2007-362-00	Assessing fish passage in Icicle Creek	Fundable (Qualified)	39.7	35	

Table 1. Continued

2007-325-00	Wenatchee Subbasin Complexity proposal	Fundable in part	39.2	36	Recommended
2007-045-00	Beebe Property Upland, Riparian, and Wetland Enhancement	Response Requested	37.9	37	
2007-124-00	Okanogan County irrigation improvement projects	Not fundable	36.0	38	
2007-145-00	Okanogan Livestock and water	Fundable (Qualified)	35.9	39	
2007-261-00	Habitat effectiveness monitoring of existing, historical, beaver habitat	Fundable	34.3	40	
2007-154-00	Douglas County Multispecies HCP	Not fundable	33.3	41	
2007-291-00	Developing and assessing freshwater mussels	Not fundable	29.4	42	
2007-349-00	Monitoring resident salmonid populations in Icicle Creek	Response Requested	29.4	43	
2007-283-00	Wenatchee subbasin access proposal	Not fundable	28.2	44	
2007-221-00	Native trout restoration	Not fundable	26.5	45	
2007-224-00	Implementation of Okanogan Subbasin plan	Fundable	25.6	46	
2007-190-00	Icicle Creek ecological recovery and fish monitoring	Response Requested	19.6	47	

