

OFFICE OF SPECIES CONSERVATION

DEPARTMENT OF FISH & GAME

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Nathan Fisher  
Administrator

Cal Groen  
Director

June 2, 2008

Bill Booth, Chairman  
Northwest Power and Conservation Council  
851 SW Sixth Avenue, Suite 1100  
Portland, OR 97204-1348

Dear Chairman Booth:

The State of Idaho, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, and the Idaho Office of Species Conservation requests that the Northwest Power and Conservation Council (Council) incorporate projects identified in the recently completed Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the State of Idaho, the Bonneville Power Administration, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation into Idaho's April 4, 2008 submittal to amend the Council's Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program (Program).

Projects included in Idaho's MOA are consistent with the stated vision and goals of the Council's Program and complement the ongoing suite of actions that Idaho coordinates to benefit fish and wildlife species, including ongoing projects coordinated through the Council's Program.

We appreciate this opportunity and hope you will agree that the Council's Fish and Wildlife Program will benefit from this action.

If you have specific questions, please contact Paul Kline ([pkline@idfg.idaho.gov](mailto:pkline@idfg.idaho.gov)) or Jeffery Allen ([jallen@osc.idaho.gov](mailto:jallen@osc.idaho.gov)).

Sincerely,

Nathan Fisher  
Administrator

Sharon W. Kiefer  
Assistant Director, Policy

cc: Jim Yost, NWPCC  
Jeff Allen, Idaho OSC  
Paul Kline, IDFG

JUL 16 2008

# OFFICE OF SPECIES CONSERVATION

**C.L. "BUTCH" OTTER**  
Governor



P.O. Box 83720  
Boise, Idaho 83720-0195

**NATHAN A. FISHER**  
Administrator

300 North Sixth Street, Suite 101  
Boise, Idaho 83702

June 4, 2008

Mr. Tony Grover  
Director of Fish & Wildlife Division  
NPCC/ISRP  
851 SW 6th Ave Ste 1100  
Portland OR 97204

Gentlemen:

In early May, Idaho and BPA signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) setting forth specific mitigation projects to be funded by BPA over the next ten years. Idaho intends to conform to the Council Process and ISRP review for the actions and decision units agreed to in the MOA.

In the spirit of coordination and full disclosure, Idaho's 2008 MOA decision units for funding with correlations to existing ISRP reviews are attached for your review. In order to expedite funding and accommodate BPA's obligation to meet as much of its 2008 funding commitment as possible, Idaho is only submitting actions representing extensions of existing projects at this time. All of the attached have already received ISRP review and Council approved funding. We are therefore anticipating an expedited Council process allowing work to be implemented in 2008.

If you would like more detailed descriptions of these actions or would like to discuss any process that would hinder timely implementation, Idaho would like to meet with you at your earliest convenience.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nathan A. Fisher".

Nathan A. Fisher  
Administrator

NF/JA:mer

May 21, 2008

Jeff Allen  
Office of Species Conservation  
300 N. 6th Street, Suite 101; Boise, Idaho 83702  
P.O. Box 83720; Boise, Idaho 83720-0195

Dear Jeff:

Under the current memorandum of agreement (MOA) with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Bureau of Reclamation, and Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), Idaho will receive \$65 million in funding from BPA over the next 10 years for 12 new or expanded projects to benefit the state's salmon and steelhead. One of these projects – Steelhead Viability Assessments for ESA Recovery Metrics – is funded for an additional \$150 thousand per year with the intent to expand the current Idaho Steelhead Monitoring and Evaluation Studies (ISMES, project number 1990-055-00). The purpose of this letter is to identify a plan to spend additional funds in FY 2008 and to determine whether the proposed activities fall under the existing scope of work. The current ISMES FY 2008 contract between Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) and BPA expires December 31, 2008 (contract number 36150). All proposed work would be completed by that date.

The MOA expansion of ISMES focuses on status and trend monitoring of B-run steelhead populations in Idaho, specifically in the Salmon and Clearwater drainages. ISMES currently collects most of the available life history, genetic, and abundance data for both wild A-run and wild B-run populations in Idaho. This information has been, and will continue to be, necessary to assess the status of wild steelhead populations in Idaho to adequately address recovery objectives associated with the Endangered Species Act (Viable Salmonid Population criteria: abundance, spatial structure, productivity, and diversity) and to address expectations identified in the FCRPS Biological Opinion.

Accordingly, the IDFG proposes to use the \$150 thousand allocated to FY 2008 to:

- 1) Estimate wild steelhead stock composition at Lower Granite Dam using genetic stock identification techniques. Specifically, IDFG proposes to collect and genotype samples from approximately 1,000 wild adult steelhead randomly selected at the adult fish trapping facility operated by NOAAF at Lower Granite Dam. The total cost to analyze these samples at the IDFG Eagle Genetics Lab will be \$45 thousand. This technology has previously been used to assign steelhead kelts of unknown origin collected at Lower Granite Dam to upstream major population groups (Grande Ronde, Imnaha, Salmon, Pahsimeroi, Clearwater, and Asotin river sub-basins; Narum 2008<sup>a</sup>). Recent expansion of the Snake River steelhead genetic baseline (Hess et al. 2008<sup>b</sup>) will likely increase the assignment accuracy of individuals at finer spatial scales, allowing discrimination of important Idaho B-run populations (Lochsa, Selway, Middle Fork Salmon, and South Fork Salmon rivers). The current method for assigning returns by run-type

is based on length, which has been problematic. IDFG proposes to test the ability of genetic tools to provide more accurate information – information that is critical to assess population abundance and spatial structure.

- 2) Estimate age composition at Lower Granite Dam using scale pattern analysis. Specifically, IDFG proposes to collect fish scale samples from the same 1,000 wild adult steelhead. The total cost to hire two fishery technicians to help collect and analyze these samples, as well as to help collect the genetics samples, will be \$79,748 which includes benefits. Age composition will be used to partition out the numbers of adults returning after one, two, or more years in the ocean as well as total age. Most B-run steelhead return after two or more years in the ocean. This information is critical to assess productivity, diversity, and survival.
- 3) Overhead charged to BPA for this work would amount to 18.3%, or \$22,260. The total addition to the ISMES contract, including overhead, would be \$147,577.

The current ISMES contract with BPA is for \$624,333. The amended contract for FY 2008 would be for \$771,910. This proposal is for FY 2008 only. Future funding may be allocated differently depending on the FY 2008 results and the possible re-structuring of ISMES in FY 2009 and beyond due to \$100 thousand in-lieu budget cuts.

The Independent Scientific Review Panel (ISRP) has already reviewed the ISMES proposal for 2007-2009. The proposal contains three relevant objectives: 1) enumerate adult escapement, age, sex ratio, and run timing; 2) develop productivity metrics for wild steelhead stocks; and 3) monitor temporal and spatial genetic patterns. It is our opinion that the proposed new work clearly falls under the existing ISMES scope of work. The following specific work elements describe objectives and tasks that could be expanded to include the proposed new work: G:157 (Collect DNA tissue samples – Salmon River and tribs); H:157 (Collect DNA tissue samples – Clearwater River and tribs); R:162 (Estimate ages of adult and juvenile steelhead collected in 2007); V:162 (Genotype and analyze genetic tissues and results); and W:162 (Estimate 2007 adult steelhead escapement). IDFG therefore believes that a review by ISRP is unnecessary before immediate implementation.

We look forward to working with Bonneville and Council to modify our existing statement of work to facilitate the incorporation of new Steelhead monitoring and evaluation efforts associated with the MOA.

Sincerely,

Paul Kline  
Columbia River Policy Coordinator  
Idaho Department of Fish and Game

<sup>a</sup> S. R. Narum, D. Hatch, A. J. Talbot, P. Moran and M. S. Powell. 2008. Iteroparity in complex mating systems of steelhead *Oncorhynchus mykiss* (Walbaum). *Journal of Fish Biology*. 72: 45-60

<sup>b</sup> J.E. Hess, M. Paquin, E. Berntson, and P. Moran. 2008. Genetic stock identification (GSI) of Columbia River Basin Steelhead using a standardized microsatellite baseline. Poster presentation. Pacific Coast Steelhead Management Meeting. March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2008. Boise, ID.

To: Jeff Allen

From: Custer Soil and Water Conservation District, Karma Bragg

Date: May 20, 2008

Subject: ISRP Comments related to “like projects” from the 2007-2009 proposals

First it must be noted the State’s internal prioritization process gave Custer SWCD Project #2007-268-000 a “do not fund” recommendation due to budget constraints. This recommendation resulted in the district not being invited to participate in the “fix it loop” to respond to the ISRP Comments. Therefore, final ISRP Comments to this proposal were not available. While individual diversion locations were not specifically identified in the metrics, the objective for restoration of the Pahsimeroi was provided.

**ISRP Comments were as follows:**

*”Much work has already been carried out, and this proposal should be a continuation of the effort (although stated as a new project), but the impression given is that no details need be included because the need is so obvious. To make a final recommendation, the ISRP needs a response giving further details, particularly of those work elements without metrics, to help enable a recommendation for funding. What is the priority in the shopping list of strategies (pg 2, pg 5)? Did these arise from the sub-basin plan? The proposal lists general benefits related to the biological objectives and the work elements are related to the biological objectives, but the response should include more details. Specifically, not many metrics are included in the work elements.”*

The following information was contained in proposal #2007-268-000. The objectives listed were found within the Sub-Basin Plan (Sub Basin Plan, Pages 35 through 64).

**Objective 31A - Sedimentation:** Riparian management such as riparian exclusion or riparian pastures, rehabilitate floodplain connectivity and riparian function, development of TMDLs, conduct implementation and effectiveness monitoring of projects designed to reduce sediment delivery.

**Objective 32A Irrigation Diversions:** Reconnect Waterways-Use SHIPPUS document (see web-site reference) and ongoing work with IDFG to define which structural barriers should be removed or modified in priority order. Increase flows through improved irrigation and experimental fish screens.

**Objective 33A&B Stream-flow with-drawls:** Reconnect Waterways-Use SHIPPUS document (see web-site reference) and ongoing work with IDFG to define which structural barriers should be removed or modified in priority order. Increase flows through improved irrigation and experimental fish screens.

**Objective 34A&B Connectivity:** Riparian management such as riparian exclusion or riparian pastures, rehabilitate floodplain connectivity and riparian function, development of TMDLs, conduct implementation and effectiveness monitoring of projects designed to reduce sediment delivery.

**Monitoring and Evaluation:** Monitor and evaluate all mitigation activities, Integrate results with appropriate implementation strategies based on recommendations within the Sub-Basin Management Plan

**Actions Proposed within the Proposal for the Pahsimeroi:**

- ✚ Improve water conveyance systems, lease water, improve irrigation efficiency, ensure riparian vegetation meets PFC standards, provide adequate flows, develop irrigation management plans, monitor and evaluate all mitigation activities, stream-channel rehab.
- ✚ Develop water conservation agreements to reduce level of stream diversions. Improve water conveyance systems, lease water, improve irrigation efficiency, ensure riparian vegetation meets PFC standards, provide adequate flows, develop irrigation management
- ✚ Enhance and provide habitat in 4.5 miles of the Pahsimeroi River.
- ✚ Removal of diversions in Pahsimeroi will provide six miles of fish passage and habitat and three reconnected tributary streams.

**Project Selection for MOA:**

The Pahsimeroi River has a unique population of Snake River Chinook salmon, and in contrast with the Lemhi River and East Fork of the Salmon River watersheds, the salmon population in the Pahsimeroi River is a later migrating summer-run Chinook salmon rather than spring-run. Historically, spawning and rearing habitat was probably supported within the watershed for at least two federally –listed anadromous fish species, spring/summer Chinook salmon, and steelhead. (P. Murphy, 2008)

The Upper Salmon Watershed Project Technical Team, including IDFG Anadromous Fish Screen Program and Regional Fishery Management has prioritized the lower Pahsimeroi River and its major tributary, Patterson/Big Springs Creek, as SHIPUSS Priority I streams. Those are tributaries and river reaches that have the potential to realize immediate, tangible benefits to fish if recovery efforts are directed toward them. Goals in the lower Pahsimeroi River and Patterson/Big Springs Creek are to enhance migration in both streams by increasing flow regimes and reestablishing habitat connectivity to unused stream reaches. Mechanisms for attaining these goals focus on diversion consolidations and removal/alterations of diversions hindering fish passage. (P. Murphy, 2008)

At the request of the Idaho Governor's Office of Species Conservation (OSC) a technical panel with knowledge and expertise of project opportunities within the Pahsimeroi. This team included the Vince Kozakiewicz, NOAA Fisheries, Paddy Murphy (Fisheries Biologist), Eric Leitzinger, Larry Weeks, Lynn Stratton and Jim Lukins, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Morgan Case and Helen Herrington, Idaho Department of Water Resources, Mark Olson, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Brian Hamilton, Bureau of Reclamation, Jude Trapani, Bureau of Land Management Fisheries Biologist, Jeff Allen, OSC and Karma Bragg, Custer Soil and Water Conservation Service. This core team identified the areas of Pahsimeroi with most potential for fisheries enhancement and recovery within the middle Pahsimeroi. The projects were predominantly in Patterson/Big Springs Creek. Patterson/Big Springs Creek is a very important tributary for spawning and rearing of the unique population of Chinook salmon found in the Pahsimeroi.

Reconnection of Duck Creek, increased flows within Patterson/Big Springs Creek with a focus on the lower five irrigation diversions (PBSC 1-5). This includes a closure of PBSC #2 including any necessary screening to accommodate this closure, flow enhancements on PBSC #1 & #3 and a Siphon on Mayrick Creek. These projects were prioritized as projects that could be implemented within the next eighteen months.

**Conclusion:**

After careful review of the above list of potential projects in the Pahsimeroi prioritized by the planning team under coordination by the Office of Species Conservation, these newly proposed projects will be similar in scope to the original proposal that was submitted during the 2007-2009 Solicitation Process by Custer SWCD for the Pahsimeroi.

Please feel free to contact the Custer SWCD if you need additional information. The Custer SWCD thanks you for the opportunity to take part in this very important fisheries recovery effort.

References:

P. Murphy (2008) Idaho Department of Fish and Game Fisheries Biologist

Personal Communication February 2008

Salmon Sub-Basin Management Plan (2004) Written by Ecovista

[www.nwcouncil.org/fw/subbasinplanning/salmon/plan/](http://www.nwcouncil.org/fw/subbasinplanning/salmon/plan/)

Upper Salmon Basin Tech Team (2005) SHIPUSS,

[www.modelwatershed.org/TechTeam/documents/FINALSHIPUSS2005.pdf](http://www.modelwatershed.org/TechTeam/documents/FINALSHIPUSS2005.pdf)

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Idaho-Action Agency MOA  
Idaho Water Transactions Fund, Project No. 6

The Idaho Water Transactions Program (IWTP) is an expansion of an existing program funded by the Idaho-Action Agency Memorandum of Agreement signed by BPA and the state of Idaho. The program will provide a funding mechanism to increase main stem and tributary flow and reconnect tributaries to enhance habitat, rearing, and spawning in critical water bodies in the Lemhi and Pahsimeroi River drainages. This program is an expansion of the Columbia Basin Water Transaction Program (CBWTP) administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. This program, however, is distinctive in that it will be used to address Idaho-specific issues and conditions. It will also be more streamlined and efficient to react to the needs of Idaho.

The IWTP will be administered by the Idaho Water Resource Board. The IWRB is the sole CBWTP Qualified Local Entity in Idaho and has completed over thirty-two successful transactions since the inception of the program in 2003. Funds for this program will be used for direct and indirect transaction costs for water acquisitions; program management and negotiations for developing transactions; and, monitoring programs to document effectiveness of transactions.

The CBWTP was reviewed by the Independent Science Review Panel (ISRP) in 2006. The ISRP gave the program a “Fundable (Qualified)” recommendation. The IWTP will not change the scope or types of activities, except that they will be focused within Idaho. The ISRP review pointed out several weaknesses in the CBWTP which will be strengthened in the IWTP. Two items discussed in the review were the lack of support for monitoring and prioritization of projects. In addition to funding the direct and indirect transaction costs, the IWTP will also fund dedicated monitoring networks for the purpose of evaluating and quantifying the effectiveness of projects.

The prioritization of projects will be addressed through the use of a technical advisory committee (TAC). The IWTP will employ a TAC structured similar to the CBWTP, however, it will be established with members with Idaho expertise and active involvement in the Upper Salmon Basin. The IWTP will develop a formal review process through the support of the Upper Salmon Basin Watershed Program Technical Team. This long-standing group provides technical expertise and comment for the range of programs and projects undertaken in the Upper Salmon Basin. The team is familiar with the basin and the on-going activities for habitat and flow. A sub-group of the team is anticipated to be tapped to act as the technical advisory committee to review proposals for the IWTP and evaluate the scientific and technical merit of proposals brought before them. Members of the TAC would bring Idaho expertise to the evaluation process.

Proposal Number: 200206100

Proposal Name: Restore Potlatch River Watershed

Sponsoring Agency: Latah Soil and Water Conservation District

Short Description: Implementation stage for the Potlatch River Watershed Management Plan with focus on restoration of A-run steelhead spawning and rearing habitat through the implementation of best management practices on private agriculture, forest and range lands.

ISRP Recommendation: Fundable

MOA Relevant  
ISRP Comments: The ISRP is pleased to see stronger ties to fish and aquatic habitat here than in most SWCD proposals; this still works to implement Best Management Practices, but the authors have done an assessment and prioritized the tributaries with an understanding of what needs to be worked on first. This is a very strong point of this proposal. They used information from their assessment to actually inform their current understanding; i.e., some of the assessment data changed their minds. There is also a strong working connection, not just lip service, to IDFG steelhead studies on the Potlatch system.

Original Proposal –  
MOA Relevant Objectives:

Biological Objective A: Implement riparian and upland agricultural best management practices designed to reduce sedimentation, reduce nutrient loading, reduce stream summer temperatures, increase/maintain summer flows and increase riparian habitat complexity.

Biological Objective B: Implement pasture and rangeland best management practices designed to reduce sedimentation, reduce nutrient loading, reduce summer stream temperatures, increase and maintain summer flows, increase riparian habitat complexity and protect functional riparian areas from further degradation by livestock grazing.

Potlatch River Watershed  
Management Plan –  
MOA Relevant Elements:

Summary of Limiting Factors (Chapter 7 – p. 8):

- High water temperature
- High flashy stream flows
- Low summer base flows
- Lack of complexity in stream composition
- Migration barriers
- Sedimentation

Corral Creek high priority restoration strategies (Chapter 7 – p. 30):

- Restore riparian/floodplain areas to increase shading, increase woody debris recruitment, reduce streambank erosion, increase instream habitat complexity, and maintain adequate stream discharge.
- Fish biologists from NOAA-Fisheries and IDF&G who served on the technical review team anticipated a “strong” response related to steelhead production response potential with respect to this high priority restoration strategy for Corral Creek. See Appendix F of the Potlatch River Watershed Management Plan.

East Fork Potlatch River high priority restoration strategies (Chapter 7 – p. 34):

- Restore riparian/floodplain areas to increase shading, increase woody debris recruitment, reduce streambank erosion, increase instream habitat complexity, and maintain adequate stream discharge.
- Fish biologists from NOAA-Fisheries and IDF&G who served on the technical review team anticipated a “strong” response related to steelhead production response potential with respect to this high priority restoration strategy for East Fork Potlatch River. See Appendix F of the Potlatch River Watershed Management Plan.