

INDEPENDENT SCIENTIFIC REVIEW PANEL

Northwest Power Planning Council
851 SW Sixth Avenue, Suite 1100
Portland, Oregon 97204
Emerrill@nwppc.org
1.800.452.5161

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Mr. Frank L. Cassidy, Chair
Northwest Power Planning Council
851 SW Sixth Avenue, Suite 1100
Portland, Oregon 97204

Dear Mr. Cassidy,

In a January 21, 2000 memorandum from Mark Fritsch, the Council requested that the Independent Scientific Review Panel (ISRP) collaborate with the Nez Perce Tribe (NPT) to develop a scientifically sound monitoring and evaluation plan for the Nez Perce Tribal Hatchery (see Attachment 1). In addition, the Council requested that the ISRP review and provide advice on the “biological triggers” proposed by the NPT (Attachment 2). These requests were part of the Council’s Fiscal Year 2000 decision to fund the Nez Perce Tribal Hatchery.

The ISRP has completed its review of the *Monitoring and Evaluation Plan for the Nez Perce Tribal Hatchery*, the associated supplemental *Monitoring and Evaluation Action Plan*, and the “Biological Triggers” document. The ISRP review included a one-day meeting in Lapwai, Idaho, with NPT staff, biologists, and consultants. At the close of the Lapwai meeting, the ISRP asked Jay Hesse, lead biologist on the NPT monitoring and evaluation plan, to provide a brief (five to ten page) overview of the monitoring and evaluation plan that would consolidate much of the material in the larger documents and address several additional ISRP concerns. The ISRP received the overview document, *Program Overview for Independent Science Review Panel Review*, on March 24th, 2000 (Attachment 3). The overview did a good job of organizing and clarifying the hatchery project’s monitoring and evaluation activities

The ISRP is satisfied with the monitoring and evaluation plan and the overall quality of the work done thus far. The *Monitoring and Evaluation Action Plan* adds substantial rigor to the overall monitoring and evaluation plan.

However, the ISRP remains concerned about several aspects of the “biological triggers.” The program overview document contained a “decision-tree” (Attachment 3, Table 5) as requested by the ISRP. Several members found the tree to be incomplete and internally inconsistent, as it did not include all possible alternatives and did not include trigger points for termination of the program due to either success or failure in achieving program objectives. For example, in regard to spring chinook, if the initial trigger for SARs is satisfied then the question is asked “Is sufficient surplus production available at existing facilities (including NPTH phase 1) to fill

Phase 2 needs?” If the answer to this question is yes, then the logical consequence would seem to be that Phase 2 construction is not needed, but the decision tree continues with the decision “Phase 2 construction.” The ISRP recommends that a full and consistent decision tree be developed as the program moves forward. The tree should specify all triggers, including intermediate levels and timelines that if not achieved would forestall Phase 2 construction, or even lead to termination of the program itself. The history of fisheries management in the Columbia River Basin is replete with projects that failed to achieve their objectives in part or even completely. Thus, in spite of the need for this project, and the enthusiasm of its implementers, it would seem prudent to plan for all possible outcomes.

Several ISRP members were also uncertain about including Lyons Ferry hatchery production in the NPTH fall chinook decision tree and why this approach might be justified. It seems more straightforward to define the NPTH biological triggers in terms of adult salmon returning to the Clearwater system alone. Along this same vein, the fall chinook triggers are defined in terms of adult returns, while the spring chinook trigger is defined in terms of SARs. We suggest defining the biological triggers using the common currency of returning adults, with whatever subtext is required to further define the trigger.

The restatement of triggers in terms of adults returning to specific locations in the Clearwater River also highlights the need for a complete harvest management plan for each hatchery in the basin, as suggested by Brian Allee (CBFWA) and Bruce Suzumoto (NPPC) in discussions regarding implementation of the Artificial Production Review. This should include harvest in the lower Columbia River, off the coasts of Washington, Oregon, (sometimes California), Canada, and Alaska. Obviously, these are beyond the control of the Nez Perce Tribe, however, the Council might require that agencies responsible for harvest management in these areas be consulted and asked to explain the considerations in management of the fisheries that are expected to limit adult returns to hatcheries of this sort (whether they are labeled supplementation hatcheries or not).

We hope the Council finds these comments useful as it moves forward with decisions on the Nez Perce Tribal Hatchery program.

Sincerely,

Dr. Richard Williams, Chair
Independent Scientific Review Panel