

# **PNWCC** REPORT Council



## **NORTHWEST POWER AND CONSERVATION COUNCIL February 9-10, 2010**

The Council voted unanimously to approve the Sixth Power Plan. Over two years in the making, the plan has the support of all four states, and its release was marked with “Survivor” tee shirts that staff said were “green, but not too green.” The threat of quagga/zebra mussels still looms, and the Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Authority is getting a facelift. Next meeting: March 9-11 in Portland, OR.

### **IN THIS ISSUE**

---

Council Makes It Official on Sixth Plan.....	1
The Muscle Behind Mussel Prevention .....	3
CBFWA Taken Apart and Put Back Together .....	5
Smelt Likely Headed for ESA List .....	6
F&W Projects Get the Nod.....	6

---

### **THE AGENDA**

---



#### **Council Makes It Official on Sixth Plan**

Power Committee chair Melinda Eden told the Council the committee recommends adopting all chapters of the Sixth Power Plan, along with appendices F, G, and P, which are required under the Northwest Power Act. She said the Power Committee would review the outstanding appendices in a conference call, and the full Council would be asked to adopt them by teleconference before the March meeting.

Staffer Terry Morlan noted that the language changes in the plan had been distributed to Council members, and the Power Committee reviewed the last of them at its February 9 meeting. The suggestions members submitted have improved the plan, he said.

Despite wording changes, in the big picture, not much has changed, Morlan reported. We still have the same key elements in the plan, he said. Morlan highlighted recent language changes that address concerns that the Council not try to set climate change policy. We acknowledge what the states are doing in this area and make clear that the plan

allows the states to meet their own targets, he said.

Dick Wallace made a motion that the Council adopt the Sixth Northwest Conservation and Electric Power Plan. Eden seconded the motion.

In a prelude to the vote, Eden said preparations for this plan began in June 2007, when staff began gathering issues to address. That December, an issue paper was released, and the work has been ongoing since then, she said. Eden thanked the Council for considering “an excellent plan” that “expands the portfolio of resources and encourages technological innovation.” She called the plan a highly technical document with complicated analyses. Eden thanked the staff for its efforts and the region for its participation. “The region participated as never before” and the plan “is better for it,” she stated. The public meetings were well attended, and 769 groups and individuals commented on the draft, Eden noted.

Tom Karier referred to an article he recently read that touted the great potential of conservation. According to the article, no one is keeping track of the potential except the Northwest, he said. The Northwest has “a great energy heritage” with hydropower, low rates, and a clean system, Karier said. The low-carbon heritage is enhanced by investments in conservation, as well as the development of wind power, he stated.

Karier called the Sixth Power Plan “bold, smart, and a path to preserve the great Northwest energy heritage.” He praised Eden’s leadership and contribution to bringing the plan to completion.

Wallace said the plan significantly enhances the integration of the Council’s Fish and Wildlife (F&W) Program with power planning. He said an estimated 47,000 new jobs will result from the pursuit of energy efficiency in the Northwest.

Council chair Bruce Measure reiterated the praise for the staff and said Eden’s leadership on the Power Committee “was fair to all members.” He thanked Jim Yost for his advocacy of difficult issues and acknowledged Wallace, a Fish and Wildlife Committee member who spent many hours listening to the Power Committee.

In a roll-call vote, all eight members of the Council voted aye.

Eden thanked the members for their vote. She noted that the conservation target is a significant increase over past savings, and she said the plan is remarkable for reflecting rapidly changing conditions in the Northwest. Carbon penalties loom, and the conservation goals won’t be easy, Eden said. Everyone in the region needs to work together to achieve them, she stated.

Morlan offered his thoughts on the plan. The Council has adopted a plan, he said, that:

- identifies a resource strategy that is grounded in energy efficiency
- provides a strategy that will allow states to reach their carbon-reduction goals in the most cost-effective manner
- advances the region’s ability to address capacity and flexibility issues
- provides a clear perspective on how the Power Plan and F&W program fit together

- recognizes individual utility differences
- encourages important changes to the operation and expansion of power system infrastructure, and
- provides for tracking and monitoring progress on implementation.

The process for developing the plan “was not without challenges and stress,” Morlan stated. It was something like the reality TV show “Survivor,” and “some of us were almost voted off the island,” he quipped.

### **The Muscle Behind Mussel Prevention**



Staffer Jim Ruff introduced a panel of federal agency representatives who reported on their efforts to monitor, prevent, and prepare for the threat of quagga or zebra mussels being introduced into Northwest waters. Prevention is extremely important, he added.

Jim Clune of BPA said the agency’s 10-year-old aquatic nuisance species (ANS) program has four components: coordination and planning; monitoring; educational outreach; and research. BPA has provided funding for the Columbia River Basin’s rapid-response plan and supported rapid-response exercises in 2007, 2008, and 2009, he said. BPA is also active in the 100<sup>th</sup> Meridian Initiative, which coordinates mussel-prevention activities, and helped pay for preparation of a manual on uniform minimum protocols and standards for interception of mussels on watercraft, Clune noted. BPA has supported a monitoring program at Portland State University (PSU) since 2002, and this year, the agency is

supporting an effort between PSU and the Corps of Engineers to significantly increase monitoring at Corps projects in the basin, he continued. In addition, BPA supports the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission in a number of outreach efforts that target recreational boaters, including watercraft inspection training, a video, publications, and speakers, Clune said. PSU is doing research on antifouling coatings, as well as on how well mussels could survive in water taken out of the Columbia River and transported to the Southwest, he reported.

Scott Lund of the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) provided an overview of the agency’s research activities in the Southwest at Hoover, Parker, and Davis dams. This area was “hit hard” by the mussels, he said, adding that BOR is looking at non-invasive controls, including ultraviolet lights and mechanical tools. These activities are advantageous because they do not require clean-water permitting, Lund said.

In the Northwest, BOR has had a monitoring program in place for 40 years, he went on. The program is carried out at reservoirs on a rotating basis, with high-risk waters monitored yearly, Lund said. This year, we are doing a facility vulnerability assessment that will cover a variety of facilities, like pumps and dams, he reported. BOR also does public outreach, Lund said.

Bob Willis of the Corps said his agency’s program includes prevention, detection, preparation, and action. He noted that Corps laboratories in the Great Lakes have been doing mussel research for some time. We want to prevent introduction into

Northwest waters, Willis stated. “Keeping them out is the solution,” he said.

Willis noted that the Corps now incorporates language into its contracts to address the spread of the mussels by contractors’ vessels or bilge water. We have monitoring at all of our projects, and we will be doing vulnerability reports for Bonneville, John Day, and The Dalles dams, he said. Like the other agencies, the Corps has research going on and is working to answer the question of what to do if the mussels get here, Willis added.

Scott Rumsey of NOAA Fisheries noted that the Biological Opinion (BiOp) for the Federal Columbia River Power System (FCRPS) includes a recommendation calling on the federal agencies to participate in developing a response plan for quagga/zebra mussels. He pointed out that the agency’s role has been limited since NOAA has no direct statutory responsibility for fresh water. “But your September letter has encouraged us to be involved more directly,” Rumsey told the Council.

NOAA’s Northwest Fisheries Science Center has been active in developing the quagga/zebra mussel action plan for the West, he reported. And NOAA supports signing the basin’s invasive species response plan, according to Rumsey. We hope we can avoid the need to respond, he said, reiterating NOAA’s support of prevention efforts.

### Washing Not Perfect

Joan Dukes asked if the boat-washing programs are effective. Lund acknowledged that they may not be. Inspectors found that even after scrubbing, live mussels remained on the boats, he

said. There are “lots of nooks and crannies” for the mussels to lodge in, and we have tried to standardize the cleaning methods, Lund stated. We need to look at this issue very hard, he added.

What is the solution? Dukes asked. Lund said boats may need to spend a sufficient time out of water to dry entirely, and that could be five to 30 days.

Karier asked if anyone has measured the financial impacts of mussel infestation. That would help gauge the appropriate level of investment in prevention, he said. Lund said costs of ongoing maintenance at facilities in the Southwest are being evaluated. Clune pointed out that O&M costs could pale in comparison to the cost of lost power if the mussels were to interfere with generation.

Eden asked if BPA is acknowledging the mussel threat in its contracts. Bill Maslen of BPA responded that the agency expects its contractors to follow federal, state, and local laws. But we are looking at it as a possible “work element” in our contracts, he said, noting that work elements get more attention than boiler-plate contract language.

Wallace encouraged the agencies to pursue a risk analysis to determine if what is being invested in prevention is “the right amount.” Right now, your budget may not match the risk, he said. Wallace also pointed out that it can take considerable time to get through Endangered Species Act (ESA) regulations to use pesticides. “I’d encourage you to get ahead of that game,” he said.

“We have a fire burning at the border,” and when you have a fire, you try to get a fire

line around it that is as close as possible to hold it, Wallace said. Maybe you need to go to Lake Mead and get the fire line built before boats hit the road, he suggested.

What would you do if the mussels were found? Bill Booth asked. Lund said BOR does not have the authority to manage or treat reservoirs. That is done by other agencies and the states and tribes, he said, noting that the situation varies by reservoir. For example, we don't have authority to close a boat ramp, Lund noted. A representative of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service said while there are certain chemical tools available to kill the mussels, the question is "the side effects."

I hear that there is a need to unify efforts, and it's incumbent on the region to find a way to do that, Measure stated. We need to find "the vision and courage" to move forward before it is too late, he said. The region has a rapid-response plan, and we also need to get the ESA permits in hand, Measure concluded.



### **CBFWA Taken Apart and Put Back Together**

Rob Walton of NOAA Fisheries explained that the Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Authority (CBFWA) is a trade association of agency and tribal resource managers formed in 1987. The chair rotates among the member categories, and Walton is now chair.

In addition, Walton currently chairs the Federal Caucus, and he said his dual chairmanships present opportunities for entities to combine efforts and work together. Climate change is a potential area for collaboration, Walton suggested,

and he invited Council members to suggest others.

Brian Lipscomb of CBFWA said in preparing the current work plan, "we've taken CBFWA apart and put it back together again." He said the organization's focus has evolved from planning to implementing F&W actions. There are significant check-in points coming up for adaptive management under the Council's F&W program and the FCRPS BiOp, Lipscomb said, noting that for the first time in 15 years, the two programs are synchronized in time.

He told the Council that CBFWA's work plan has been approved by its members and is out for signature. The plan lays out the organization's policy directions and a management structure to carry them out, Lipscomb explained. CBFWA's budget has been sized to fit BPA's allocation, he said.

CBFWA is also working on its fourth edition of the Status of the Resource Report, according to Lipscomb. He invited the Council and BPA to an April 20 face-to-face meeting with the tribes to discuss committing to the work plan.

Rhonda Whiting said CBFWA has done an excellent job with the Status of the Resource Report. We look at it as "an arm of the Council," and it gets better every year, she said.

Karier reiterated that the Status of the Resource is a valuable tool. He pointed out that the Council will soon embark on its high-level indicator report and that the federal agencies' BiOp check-in is somewhat similar. How do we reconcile

these? he asked. Walton said the solution is “to keep talking to each other.”

Booth congratulated CBFWA for working out issues related to regional coordination between state and tribal F&W managers and other entities. It was “a tough issue,” he stated. Booth asked how frequently CBFWA would prepare and adopt a budget. Lipscomb said CBFWA prefers an annual budget cycle to a multiyear. He noted that CBFWA has eliminated three full-time employees and reorganized other staff responsibilities to cover those functions.



### **Smelt Likely Headed for ESA List**

Taylor Aalvik and Nathan Reynolds of the Cowlitz Tribe briefed the Council on the tribe’s natural resource activities and on its petition to list smelt under the ESA. Aalvik pointed out that in 1855, the tribe declined to sign a treaty and go to the Quinault Reservation. Members remained scattered in southwest Washington, he said. The Cowlitz became a federally recognized tribe in 2000, Aalvik added.

The tribe’s 1.6 million acres of ancestral lands include a portion of the Columbia River estuary, he explained. The tribe operates a natural resource program to conserve, protect, and restore culturally significant resources within its traditional homelands, Aalvik stated. We have partnerships with a number of agencies to carry out our activities, he said.

Aalvik outlined a number of the program activities, including habitat restoration, salmon and steelhead preservation, and

Columbia white-tail deer protection. He said other culturally significant resources include many Lower Columbia plants.

Reynolds described several of the plant species and their historical use by the tribe. The plants include red cedar, wapato roots, camas lily, cattails, Oregon white oak, and huckleberries, he said.

With regard to smelt (eulachon), the Cowlitz petitioned to have the small anadromous fish listed under the ESA because of the huge decline in their once-abundant numbers, Aalvik said. Eulachon are an important species in the Cowlitz culture, he said.

Reynolds pointed out that if the smelt go extinct, the smelt-related culture of the Cowlitz goes extinct. He said after the tribe submitted its petition in 2007, NOAA reviewed it and issued a proposed finding in 2009. The proposal was to list the smelt as threatened under the ESA, Reynolds noted.

Smelt abundance has declined dramatically, and in its review, NOAA found many threats to the fish, including a dramatic alteration of habitat, particularly due to the eruption of Mt. St. Helens, he said. But much about the fish is unknown, Reynolds acknowledged. NOAA is expected to finalize its ruling on the smelt in March 2010, he added.

### **F&W Projects Get the Nod**



Staffer Mark Fritsch reported that the Budget Oversight Group considered nine project funding requests during the first quarter of the fiscal year. Four of those

projects are up for a recommendation in February, he said.

The Idaho Department of Fish and Game is requesting \$120,500 to cover the loss of a cost-share, Fritsch explained. The funds will be used to complete a three-year research project on nutrient treatments using salmon carcasses in the Boise-Payette-Weiser subbasins, he said.

The second project request is a Burns-Paiute Tribe request for \$195,845 to replace a diversion dam on the Malheur River that was lost due to an ice flow in 2006, Fritsch continued. He gave an update on the science review of the project, and said it met scientific criteria, but there were qualifications related to monitoring and an adaptive management report. The Council voted to recommend BPA fund both projects.

Two Nez Perce Tribe projects related to Big Canyon fish habitat and the Big Canyon Creek watershed did not meet science review criteria, Fritsch reported. Staff did not recommend the Council approve these projects, he said.

Another project up for consideration was related to the Columbia Basin Accords. Fritsch recounted the review process for the Yakama Nation proposal. He explained that the Independent Scientific Review Panel (ISRP) found that the project did not meet science review criteria due to the lack of a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan.

The region is currently developing a comprehensive M&E plan, and there is a large monitoring effort associated with other work in the Upper Columbia, Fritsch

said. The Yakama Nation intends to work closely with ongoing efforts to accomplish monitoring for this project, he indicated. Staff is proposing the project proceed, with the stipulation that necessary monitoring elements will be available from other sources, Fritsch said. The project will be reviewed for satisfactory M&E at a later time, he added.

Dukes pointed out the staff worked out a creative solution for the project. When the M&E portion of the project is proposed, it will receive science review, she said. Wallace also praised the staff and project sponsor for pursuing ways to accomplish M&E. He said the F&W Committee would like to have the project come back to the Council once there has been an ISRP review of the monitoring approach, regardless of the outcome.

The Council voted to recommend BPA fund the project, with the condition the sponsors return once the ISRP has reviewed the M&E plan.

###

### **Council 2010 Calendar**

March	9-11	Portland
April	13-15	Boise
May	11-13	Portland
June	8-10	Missoula
July	13-15	Portland
August	18-19	Spokane
September	21-23	Bend
October	13-14	Portland
November	17-18	Portland
December	14-16	Portland