



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE  
Northwest Fisheries Science Center  
2725 Montlake Boulevard East  
Seattle, WA 98112-2097

September 12, 2003

Dr. Eric J. Loudenslager  
Independent Scientific Advisory Board  
Northwest Power Planning Council  
851 S.W. Sixth Ave, Suite 1100  
Portland, Oregon 97204

Dear Dr. Loudenslager:

I am writing to request that the ISAB review the attached *Research, Monitoring and Evaluation (RME) Plan* (also available at: <http://www.nwr.noaa.gov/1hydrop/hydroweb/fedrec.htm>). This draft plan was developed jointly by staff from NOAA-Fisheries, the Bonneville Power Administration, the Army Corps of Engineers, and the Bureau of Reclamation, and is designed to help implement the NOAA-Fisheries 2000 Federal Columbia River Power System (FCRPS) Biological Opinion (BiOp) and the Federal Caucus Basinwide Salmon Recovery Strategy. The purpose of the RME Plan is to initiate and coordinate a process for evaluating the status of affected stocks of ESA listed anadromous salmonids and the effectiveness of mitigation and conservation actions. The focus of the plan is on the BiOp and Recovery Strategy requirements as they relate to ESA-listed salmonids.

Although the plan is still in draft form, I and the other parties listed above believe that now would be a useful time for the ISAB to provide input into this plan. In particular, I would request that the ISAB focus on the following questions:

1. If implemented, will the plan provide useful information about the status of ESA-listed salmon species? In what ways could the plan be improved to provide better information?
2. If implemented, will the plan provide useful information about the effectiveness of hydro, habitat, hatchery and harvest actions at improving the status of ESA-listed salmon species. In what ways could the plan be improved to provide better information?
3. In the context of the BiOp, has the plan identified the most critical RME gaps? Are there additional important gaps that it has not identified?



4. The plan describes the need for better coordination of data collection and data management throughout the Basin. If implemented, will the plan lead to improved coordination of data collection and data management?

The Plan's developers are looking forward to your input and suggestions on how to address any problems that may be identified. They are also looking forward to discussing the Plan with you at some point during the review. This draft RME Plan will also be reviewed under the Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Authority – Collaborative Systemwide Monitoring and Evaluation Contract. In addition, it is being provided to Oregon, Washington, and Idaho State monitoring program contacts for their concurrent review as part of regional coordination under the State-Federal-Tribal Aquatic Monitoring Partnership.

Thank you in advance for your continued commitment to providing high quality scientific advice regarding natural resource conservation in the Columbia River Basin. If you have questions regarding this request, please contact Dr. Michael Ford.

Very truly yours,



Usha Varanasi, Ph.D.  
Science and Research Director  
Northwest Fisheries Science Center

CC:

D. Robert Lohn, NOAA-Fisheries Northwest Regional Administrator  
Olney Patt, Jr., Executive Director, Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission  
Judi Danielson, Chair, Northwest Power and Conservation Council  
Rod Sando, Executive Director, Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Authority  
Brigadier General William T. Grisoli, Commander NW Division, Corps of Engineers  
Steve Wright, Administrator and CEO, Bonneville Power Administration  
J. William McDonald, Regional Director, Bureau of Reclamation  
Steve Leider, Washington Salmon Recovery Funding Board  
Kelly Moore, Oregon Water Enhancement Board  
Jeff Allen, Idaho Office of Species Conservation