

## **New Salmon Plan Makes Sense**

Like most utilities in the region, Klickitat PUD purchases the majority of its power from the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA). One large factor affecting power rates is the money spent on fish and wildlife programs. More than 10 percent of your electric bill is used to pay for BPA-funded fish and wildlife programs.

Since 1978, Northwest ratepayers have spent more than \$6.5 billion on fish and wildlife programs. This is the most extensive and expensive effort to protect fish and wildlife in the world. Some say more money is needed from ratepayers to solve the problem. Klickitat PUD wants to see a results-based approach of spending for salmon to make certain the money being spent is cost-effective.

The federal government has released its draft proposal, called a "biological opinion" (Bi-Op), which outlines how the Columbia River power system will operate to protect fish listed under the Endangered Species Act during the next 10 years.

This draft proposal is the first step to promote cost-effective results-based restoration efforts for the benefit of salmon and ratepayers. It calls for the continued investment on fish programs of around \$600 million each year collected through your electric rates.

The new Bi-Op focuses on specific improvements that will make a real difference for fish. There is an increased emphasis on predator control and clearer measures for habitat and hatchery operations.

The plan promotes new fish guidance technologies—called removable spillway weirs—that further ease the passage of fish through the system.

Finally, the new plan increases emphasis on performance measures to ensure that the significant resources devoted to salmon recovery actually deliver the intended results.

To date, we have spent a lot of money without any accountability for results. We all want a healthy salmon, but wasting money on programs that have no scientific basis for success is inexcusable.

The outstanding salmon runs in the last four years demonstrate that the massive investments made for salmon recovery are making a difference. An endorsement of the new biological opinion would foster greater cooperation among all parties, and provide better results for salmon and for citizens of the Northwest by spending this money in a manner that will guarantee the highest level of results.

Klickitat PUD, along with other public power advocates, will continue to represent our customers as the Bi-Op process proceeds. The BPA must be accountable for the millions spent on fish while also being accountable to the people of the Pacific Northwest because, indeed, the salmon are back. For more information, visit this Web site: [www.smartsalmonrecovery.org](http://www.smartsalmonrecovery.org).

**Tom Svendsen, General Manager**