

PACIFIC NORTHWEST ELECTRIC POWER AND  
CONSERVATION PLANNING COUNCIL

**AGENCY:** Pacific Northwest Electric Power and Conservation Planning Council (Northwest Power Planning Council).

**ACTION:** Notice of final protected areas amendments to the Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program and the Northwest Conservation and Electric Power Plan.

**SUMMARY:** On November 15, 1982, pursuant to the Pacific Electric Power Planning and Conservation Act (the Northwest Power Act, 16 U.S.C. §839, et seq.) the Pacific Northwest Electric Power and Conservation Planning Council (Council) adopted a Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program (program). The Council adopted the Northwest Conservation and Electric Power Plan (power plan) on April 27, 1983. The program and the power plan have been amended from time to time since then. Major revisions of the program were adopted in 1984 and 1987, and a major revision of the power plan was adopted in 1986. On April 14, 1988 the Council voted to initiate rulemaking pursuant to section 4(d)(1) of the Northwest Power Act to amend the program and the power plan to incorporate measures to protect critical fish and wildlife habitat from new hydropower development. On August 10, 1988, the Council adopted final amendments. This notice contains a brief description of the final amendments.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** In 1987, the Council released a staff issue paper that proposed that the Council designate the river reaches identified in the studies as "protected areas," where future hydropower development should not occur. In a six-month period for public comment, the Council had the benefit of a substantial public debate over the policy issues involved in the staff proposal, and over the information in the Council's data base.

At its April 1988 meeting, the Council proposed to amend the program and the power plan to provide that in protected areas where anadromous or wild resident fish were present, there is an unacceptable risk that hydropower development would destroy critical fish habitat, and

therefore no hydropower development should occur. In non-wild resident fish and wildlife protected areas, the Council proposed to amend the program and the power plan to provide that mitigation is more feasible, and that hydropower development should occur only if it would not result in a "net loss" of non-wild resident fish or wildlife.

Written comments on the proposed amendments were received through July 8, 1988, and further oral consultations were initiated by the Council until August 10, 1988. Comments made in the written comments and oral consultations are summarized, and the Council's responses provided, in a document entitled "Northwest Power Planning Council, Protected Areas Response to Comments."

On August 10, 1988, the Council approved protected areas amendments that adopted many features of the proposed amendments, and also made several significant changes. In brief, the final amendments adopted a single standard for all protected areas: because protected areas represent the region's most valuable fish and wildlife habitat, hydropower development should not be allowed in any protected areas, but should be focussed in other river reaches. The final amendments do not apply to any existing projects. The Council adopted several procedures designed to ensure that protected areas, and the data that support them, are kept accurate and up-to-date.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:** A copy of the final amendments and the Council's response to comments are available on request. Those wishing to receive a copy of either document should contact Judy Allender at the Council's central office, 851 S.W. Sixth Avenue, Suite 1100, Portland, Oregon, 97204, by 5 p.m. Pacific time on July 8, 1988.

Edward Sheets

Executive Director