

FSOC Agenda Item: FRIMA Funding

To Date:

The Fisheries Restoration and Irrigation Mitigation Act was created in 2000 and first funded in 2002. It is not carried in the Administration's Budget, rather, it is funded entirely by annual Congressional add-ons. The program covers all of Idaho, Oregon and Washington, and a small part of Montana. It receives guidance from several entities, one of which is a Steering Committee that includes all four states and NOAA-Fisheries, as well as FWS. Most of those individuals likely are in the meeting today; Bill Hutchinson of IDFG, Ray Hartlerode of ODFW, Don Haring of WDFW, and Bryan Nordlund of NOAA Fisheries. FRIMA is designed to be, and is managed as, a partnership program.

A substantial outreach document was prepared to highlight the program's performance in Fiscal Years 2002-2004. A project summary report is available for FY 2002-2005.

Speaking in general, funding for the program has averaged about \$2.7M per year. By statute, those dollars are divided equally among the four states. In FY 2006 the amount appropriated dropped to a total of \$2M, and, after various dynamics including rescissions by the Administration to help pay for Katrina and the war in Iraq, the amount reaching the states totaled only \$343,750 per state. So far, the projects have been 60% funded by state/local funds. The requirement is that the "local" share be at least 35%.

Future Funding Outlook

In spite of widespread, bi-partisan, federal, state, tribal, and local government interest, and glowing testimonials from all four governors, the outlook for an increase in federal funding may not be all that good, for many reasons, including what has become known as "Pacific salmon funding fatigue." Further, there does not seem to be a region-wide strategy on how to address the "fatigue" issue, nor any region-wide lead entity to create same. Accordingly, some feel an optimistic definition of success for this program is continuing to be funded at the \$2M. On the other hand, some feel there is a real possibility of the program being zeroed out.

To assist in assuring the continuity of the program, the governors' offices, the environmental community, and the fishing community have been supplementing the supportive efforts of the agricultural community. In addition to the governors' offices, those assisting include the Regional Director of American Rivers as the lead for the environmental community, and the Regional Director of the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations, as the lead for the fishing community. The Executive Directors of the state associations of irrigation districts/water users serve as the leads for their respective organizations.

The real world outcome of funding will be determined by the political process and the actors in that play. My individual view is if the program refines what its niche is among the many salmon/native fish/water programs, it will have a unique identity and that, along

with its exemplary program design, clearly apparent cost-effectiveness, and wide support base, should provide a high probability it will continue to be funded.

Certainly the need is there. All rests on those who make federal budget decisions being convinced of the importance of the program, as well as the immense need for such projects. In turn, such convincing is dependent on efforts by the state and lay leadership in the Pacific Northwest to assure the program receives some degree of priority attention.

The efforts of the governors' offices, the environmental community and the fishing community to supplement the supportive efforts of the agricultural community appear to be having a positive effect. The full House Committee mark for 07 FRIMA funding is \$4M. In 06 it was \$2M.

5/17/06