

Release Notes for Pisces version 2.6

Release Date: **March 20, 2008**

We are pleased to announce the latest release of Pisces, version 2.6. Most of this release was dedicated to creating new reports based on Fish and Wildlife Program data, and updating the infrastructure and code behind Pisces so that it continues to perform smoothly, quickly, and efficiently. We've also added some enhancements based on user feedback.

Pisces is a web-enabled software application aimed at helping BPA and its Fish & Wildlife program participants track and manage projects throughout the Columbia River Basin. Pisces allows contractors and BPA project managers to collaborate on project definition and ongoing project management over the internet.

New features in Pisces version 2.6 include:

1. Contract Description now also copied when you base a new CR on a previous contract

To save data entry time, Pisces will now copy the text in the Contract Description field from one year's contract to the next.

The copied and pasted description will appear with the prefix "COPY" to remind the contractor and BPA Project Manager to review the description, and update the text if necessary.

2. Focal Species validation now checks selections against resident fish population areas

Thanks to the efforts of contractors and BPA staff, Pisces now maps resident fish to subbasins. This means that when a user selects a resident fish population from the Focal Species list, Pisces will now verify that the Focal Species is found in the area they've identified in their Location entry (or in their project's subbasin, if a Location has not been selected yet).

This check is intended as a heads-up to prevent errors; Pisces will still allow users to save data in cases where BPA and the contractor agree that the selected resident fish species is being benefited.

Past selections of "All Resident Fish" as beneficiaries of a work element will be updated so that the work is only associated with a smaller list of resident fish: those found in the location or subbasin in which the work was performed.

3. Improved fish data: ESU/Populations have been added using NOAA's new fish layers

ESU/MPG/Population properties will now appear for each work element location by leveraging the new fish layers from NOAA. The benefit is higher quality and quantity (additional ESUs) of fish data to be used in various reports (e.g. Habitat Metrics, Types of Work Funded, etc.).

4. Work Element Usage report

When considering how or whether to use a particular work element, Pisces users can now see how that work element is being used by others in the Program. Work element owners (the BPA Project Managers who serve as subject matter experts for each work element) will review how their work elements are being applied, to see if guidance should be clarified, or work should be split, lumped, or described in different ways. Program stakeholders can use this report (available as a drill-down feature in Program spending reports) to take a closer look at what's happening at the work element level.

5. Pisces users can add new contacts for their organization

This is intended to help transition contracts from one person to another in case of staff turnover, and to enable users to add their supervisors and other colleagues who don't have Pisces accounts to contract contact lists. When adding a contact, the new person must have a first name, last name, an organization (state, Tribe, Federal agency, private entity, etc), and at least one phone number. An email address is not required for a new contact, but is still required for anyone with a Pisces account.

6. Link to "Contract Payment..." report on WE Budgets tab

Access to the Running Balance report exists from within Pisces. However, we're adding a link in a second location, by user request.

7. Better visibility into status reports

The "View" dropdown menu has been replaced with a grid that shows all of the available status reports, along with report submission and acceptance information.

Also, a new report has been created for BPA managers to track status reporting over time, to look at trends like timeliness of submission, etc.

8. Running Balance report now integrates pre-2001 invoice data

Information from BPA's pre-2001 billing system is now included in the Contract Running Balance reports. These reports, also called Contract Payment Authorization & History, are often used by contractors and BPA staff to research contract payment histories, and by BPA managers to review historical trends and forecast future trends in invoicing and cash flow. Previously these reports only showed post-2001 data.

9. More Pisces user control over attachments, reducing support costs

Old contract attachments have been moved to the project level to allow individual Pisces users to edit their properties when necessary. Previously, these contract-level attachments could only be managed by a Pisces database administrator.

10. Various new reports for all Pisces users as well as BPA managers

We've been busy completing a number of new reports, many of which are available either via the [Report Center](#) on the web or via the Pisces Reports menu:

- Two new RM&E (Research, Monitoring and Evaluation) reports for Biological Opinion purposes
- Combination Budget/Spending Plan report, to be used by BPA's Portfolio Management team
- New version of Portfolio Budget/Spending report that has a filter on the Fiscal Year Actual columns, the Project Start Date column, and the Spending Plan columns.
- Herbicide Use within BPA's Fish and Wildlife Program by calendar year
- Work Elements with ESA HIPBO components, by calendar year (for Endangered Species Act Habitat Improvement Program Biological Opinion actions)

If you have any questions about the new or existing Pisces features, or for technical assistance, please contact fishsupport@bpa.gov.

End of Pisces v.2.6 Release Notes