



Department of Energy

Bonneville Power Administration
P.O. Box 3621
Portland, Oregon 97208-3621

ENVIRONMENT, FISH AND WILDLIFE

May 5, 2006

In reply refer to: KEC-4

Mr. Dale Bambrick
Branch Chief
NOAA Fisheries
304 S Water Street, Suite 201
Ellensburg, WA 98926

Re: Request for Formal Consultation under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act and Essential Fish Habitat Consultation for the Chief Joseph Hatchery Program, Okanogan, Washington

Dear Mr. Bambrick:

In complying with its responsibilities under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, BPA is submitting a biological assessment (BA) for the Chief Joseph Hatchery Program (copy enclosed) and requesting your review of the BA and initiation of formal consultation under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. BPA also requests Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) consultation pursuant to the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

The Northwest Power and Conservation Council has recommended that BPA fund a program sponsored by the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation that would assist in the conservation and recovery of summer/fall Chinook salmon in the Okanogan subbasin and the Columbia River between the Okanogan River and Chief Joseph Dam. The Chief Joseph Hatchery Program (CJHP) would include construction, operation, and maintenance of a hatchery adjacent to the base of the Chief Joseph Dam and a few acclimation ponds throughout the Okanogan River subbasin. Adult fish broodstock collection for gathering eggs would occur throughout the project area by various means. Egg incubation and early rearing would occur at the new hatchery. Final rearing and release of juvenile fish would occur at new and existing acclimation ponds. While the focus of the CJHP is on the propagation of summer/fall Chinook salmon, the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will also consider the use of the proposed facilities to reintroduce extirpated spring Chinook salmon to their historical habitats in the Okanogan subbasin.

The BA analysis was conducted by S.H. Smith Fisheries Consulting, Inc., of Canby, OR. Steve Smith, Fisheries Biologist, is BPA's designated Federal representative for this project. If you have questions or require additional information, please contact Steve directly at 503.263.1253 or huntersmith@canby.com.

Based on the information in the BA, BPA has determined that some level of take of Upper Columbia River steelhead is probably unavoidable and designated critical habitat would be adversely modified, so the proposed project “may affect” and “is likely to adversely affect” listed UCR steelhead. Even though Upper Columbia River spring Chinook critical habitat would not be destroyed or adversely modified by the proposed project, some level of take of UCR spring Chinook is probably unavoidable. So, the project is “likely to adversely affect” listed UCR spring Chinook.

In regards to Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) effects pursuant to the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, BPA finds that the proposed project may adversely affect EFH for Chinook and coho salmon through a small, temporary loss of aquatic habitat at the instream work sites due to turbidity increases during work. Adhering to the conservation measures included in the BA should minimize these impacts and avoid hindrance of a sustainable Pacific salmon fishery for Chinook and coho. Implementation of the hatchery program could enhance the Pacific salmon fishery to some degree by providing additional harvest opportunity for Chinook.

If you have any other questions or concerns, please contact me at (503) 230-5885 or macarter@bpa.gov. Thank you for your assistance with this project.

Sincerely,

/s/ Mickey A. Carter May 5, 2006

Mickey A. Carter

Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Enclosure:
CJH BA

cc: (w/o enclosure)

Mr. Steve Smith, 8462 S. Heinz Road, Canby, Oregon 97013

Mr. Dan Warren, P.O. Box 1511, Philomath, Oregon 97370

Mr. Joe Peone, PO Box 150, Nespelem, WA 99155