



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Northwest Region
7600 Sand Point Way N.E., Bldg. 1
Seattle, WA 98115

July 25, 2008

Mickey Carter
Environmental Protection Specialist
Bonneville Power Administration
P.O. Box 3621
Portland, Oregon 97208-3621

Joe Peone
Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation
P.O. Box 150
Nespelem, Washington 99155

Dear Mr. Carter and Mr. Peone:

Enclosed is the Biological Opinion (Opinion) on the construction and operation of the Chief Joseph Hatchery (CJH). This Opinion is issued by NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) under the authority of Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and the Magnuson-Steven Act (MSA) to the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA). NMFS has determined that the proposed action is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of endangered Upper Columbia River (UCR) spring Chinook or endangered UCR steelhead, nor result in the destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat. The proposed CJH could affect UCR spring Chinook salmon and UCR steelhead, both listed as endangered under the ESA. This Opinion includes an incidental take statement (ITS) that would authorize incidental take of ESA-listed UCR steelhead and UCR spring Chinook salmon.

We have included conservation measures that we consider to adequately address reasonably foreseeable adverse effects on essential fish habitat (EFH). Under the MSA consultation, the potential effects of the CJH program on EFH were considered based on the risks associated with artificial propagation identified by the Pacific Fisheries Management Council. Of the eight risks identified, NMFS believes that the highest risk posed by the CJH program would be in the form of competition between hatchery and natural-origin summer/fall Chinook salmon. To address this risk, we include five conservation recommendations to minimize such competition. Please note that several of the conservation recommendations are affirmations of the use of best management practices regarding hatchery programs and are supportive of robust monitoring activities contemplated in the submittal documents. Per the MSA and its implementing regulations, the BPA will need to provide written response to NMFS within 30 days after receiving these EFH conservation recommendations.



If you have any questions concerning this Opinion, please contact Kristine Petersen at (503) 230-5409.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Robert Lohn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and a long, sweeping tail.

D. Robert Lohn
Regional Administrator

Enclosure