



# United States Department of the Interior



## FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Central Washington Field Office  
215 Melody Lane, Suite 119  
Wenatchee, Washington 98801

June 9, 2006

**In Reply Refer To:**

USFWS Reference: 13260-2006-I-0198

Hydrologic Unit Codes: 17-02-00-05 (Chief Joseph) and 17-02-00-06 (Okanogan River)

RE: KEC-4, Chief Joseph Hatchery Program

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

Dear Ms. Carter:

This responds to your request for informal consultation on the proposed Chief Joseph Hatchery Program (Project), located in Okanogan County, Washington. Your May 5, 2006, cover letter and attached biological assessment (BA) were received in the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) Central Washington Field Office on May 10, 2006.

The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) has requested Service concurrence with the determination of "may affect, not likely to adversely affect" the gray wolf (*Canis lupus*), bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*), and Ute ladies'-tresses, (*Spiranthes diluvialis*) in accordance with section 7(a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (Act), as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*). Effects to other listed or proposed species, or their habitats, are not anticipated to occur. In addition, Project impacts were evaluated for the yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*), a candidate species found to be warranted for listing under the Act, but has been precluded due to higher listing priorities.

The proposed action involves the construction of a new hatchery near Chief Joseph Dam and the construction or reconstruction of five acclimation ponds. The purpose of this Project is to compensate for the loss of anadromous fish due to the construction of Grand Coulee Dam. The Project BA describes a Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*) program for recovery (augmentation) and harvest in the upper Columbia, estimated to provide some 2 million summer/fall Chinook and 900,000 spring Chinook annually. For details on the construction, operations, and maintenance of the hatchery, associate facilities, and acclimation ponds, see the Project BA.

The Project BA describes effects that are either extremely unlikely to occur and/or are very small in scale. The Service agrees that Project implementation will result in discountable and insignificant effects to individuals and the habitats of the listed species named above. Therefore, the Service concurs with your determinations of “may affect, not likely to adversely affect” for the gray wolf, bald eagle, bull trout, and Ute ladies’-tresses based on the information included in the BA. In addition, we agree that the proposed action will “not jeopardize the continued existence” of the yellow-billed cuckoo.

Our concurrence is conditioned on the Project being implemented as described in the BA and in the case of the bull trout, is dependent on the accuracy of the assumption that their use of the action area is very low and seasonal in nature. However, recent radio-telemetry and anecdotal information suggests bull trout use of the Columbia is more prevalent than previously thought. As such, any capture, collection, or handling of bull trout is likely adversely affect the species and triggers reinitiation if these actions are not covered under a section 10(a)(1)(a) permit.

This concludes informal consultation pursuant to the regulations implementing the Act, 50 C.F.R. § 402.13. The Project should be reanalyzed if new information reveals effects of the action that may affect listed or proposed species or designated or proposed critical habitat in a manner or to an extent not considered in this consultation; if the action is subsequently modified in a manner that causes an effect to a listed or proposed species or designated or proposed critical habitat that was not considered in this consultation; and/or, if a new species is listed or critical habitat is designated that may be affected by this Project.

To develop a better understanding of bull trout use in the Columbia and Okanogan Rivers, the Service makes the following recommendations:

1. Any bull trout captured in the hatchery ladder, brood stock collection, or any other aspect of Project operation and maintenance should be radio-tagged with a multi-year radio transmitter (or PIT tagged if the fish is a smaller juvenile or sub-adult) and tracked through time. The Service highly recommends these activities be covered in the section 10(a)(1)(a) permit process when the hatchery operations are incorporated into the Project monitoring and evaluation program.
2. Coordinate with the Service, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Public Utility Districts, Native American Tribes, and other involved parties regarding on-going and proposed tracking of bull trout in the Upper Columbia. Coordination of radio-telemetry and PIT tagging work may result in efficiencies in effort and cost, would provide a more comprehensive and integrated area of coverage, and would increase our overall knowledge of bull trout habitat use patterns.
3. The Service requests an annual report (by June 1) of any information regarding observations, captures, or tagging of bull trout in the action area. Reports should be sent to both the Central Washington Field Office and the Upper Columbia Fish and Wildlife Office (11103 East Montgomery, Spokane, WA 99206).

Thank you for your efforts in minimizing effects to listed species and their habitats. If you have any questions or comments regarding this letter or your responsibilities under the Act, please contact Jeff Krupka at the Central Washington Field Office in Wenatchee at (509) 665-3508, extension 18, or via E-mail at [jeff\\_krupka@fws.gov](mailto:jeff_krupka@fws.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark G. Miller, Acty". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Mark G. Miller, Project Leader  
Central Washington Field Office

cc:

Dale Bambrick, Eastern Washington Branch Office, NMFS, Ellensburg, WA  
Ken MacDonald, Okanogan and Wenatchee National Forest, USFS, Wenatchee, WA  
Scott Deeds, Upper Columbia Fish and Wildlife Office, USFSW, Spokane, WA  
Steve Smith, Smith Fisheries Consulting, Inc., 8462 S. Heinz Road, Canby, OR 97013  
Sent by e-mail: Jeff Tayer, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Region 3, Ephrata,  
WA ([tayerjtt@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:tayerjtt@dfw.wa.gov))