



REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
CORPS OF ENGINEERS, NORTHWESTERN DIVISION
PO BOX 2870
PORTLAND OR 97208-2870

May 6, 2005

District Support Team

Ms. Susan Martin, Project Leader
Upper Columbia Fish and Wildlife Office
11103 East Montgomery Drive
Spokane, Washington 99206

Dear Ms. Martin:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) and the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) submitted a Supplemental Biological Assessment on the Effects of the Operation of Libby Dam on Kootenai River White Sturgeon and Bull Trout (Supplemental BA) to the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) on July 9, 2004. In a response dated September 9, 2004, the Service requested additional information. Subsequently, the Corps, BPA, and the Service met on several occasions to further discuss and better define the proposed flow plan, a more detailed description of proposed habitat improvements, refining the research, monitoring, and evaluation activities, and the data needs concerning the sturgeon's designated critical habitat.

The information the Corps and BPA have compiled in response to the Service's request is enclosed. In particular, the agencies are submitting further clarification of the Supplemental BA, Section 3 - Proposed Action Description with the following: 1) the Kootenai River Ecosystem Function Restoration Flow Plan; 2) the Habitat Improvement Plan; and, 3) the Research, Monitoring, and Evaluation Plan. In addition, the agencies are providing the additional data needs concerning the potential impacts to designated critical habitat for the Kootenai River white sturgeon and bull trout below Albeni Falls Dam.

In addition, the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), the Corps, and BPA are requesting the Service consider a modification to a Reasonable and Prudent Measure (RPM) in the Service's December 20, 2000, FCRPS Biological Opinion (BiOp). RPM 1 calls for one- and five-year implementation and funding plans. These annual plans were intended to synchronize with similar reporting requirements for the NMFS BiOp issued in 2000.

The agencies' Updated Proposed Action (UPA) for the Federal Columbia River Power System (FCRPS) Biological Opinion Remand and NOAA Fisheries' 2004 BiOp call for Implementation Plans on a three-year cycle, with updates as needed. The action agencies are proposing the Service adjust the Implementation Plan schedule in the 2000 USFWS BiOp to coincide with the new schedule for the 2004 FCRPS BiOp. The action agencies will continue to prepare annual progress reports.

The 2005-2007 Implementation Plan for the 2004 UPA will soon be completed; however, it does not include actions specifically called for in the 2000 USFWS BiOp. We propose to prepare a supplement to the Implementation Plan to incorporate the actions in the 2000 USFWS BiOp and the forthcoming supplemental BiOp on Libby operations that the Service is preparing in the consultation underway with the Corps and BPA. The agencies want to assure you that implementation of the actions on the rest of the FCRPS contained in the 2000 USFWS BiOp are continuing.

The Corps and BPA believe the enclosed material provides the Service with the requested information. We appreciate the collaborative engagement of the Service in working toward completion of this consultation. If you have questions or concerns, please contact David Ponganis at (503) 808-3828 or Richard Pendergrass at (503) 230-7666.

Sincerely,


for Witt Anderson
Chief, District Support Team
Portland/Walla Walla/Fish

Enclosure

cc:

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cc: (con't)

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Ken Brunner, CENWS-PM-PL-ER

Alan Coburn, CENWS-PM-CP