



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Washington State Habitat Office
510 Desmond Drive SE, Suite 103
Lacey, WA 98503

September 20, 2013

Phil Anderson
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
600 Capitol Way N
Olympia, WA 98501

Kirk Hudson
Public Utility District No. 1 of Chelan County
327 N. Wenatchee Ave.
Wenatchee, WA 98801

Shane Bickford
Public Utility District No. 1 of Douglas County
1151 Valley Mall Parkway
East Wenatchee, WA 98802

Jeff Grizzel
Public Utility District No. 2 of Grant County
30 C Street SW
Post Office Box 878
Ephrata, WA 98823

Steve Parker
Yakama Nation
Post Office Box 151
Toppenish, WA 98948

Dear Messer's Anderson, Hudson, Bickford, Grizzel, and Parker:

In an email to Bob Turner on September 12, 2013, the Public Utility District No. 1 of Chelan County (Chelan PUD) stated its intent to request extensions for permits addressing Upper Columbia hatchery programs, specifically their continued compliance with the Endangered Species Act (ESA). This request was very timely, as we know other funders and operators of hatchery programs in the Upper Columbia have similar concerns.

Three ESA section 10 permits dealing with hatchery operations in the Upper Columbia Basin are due to expire in the near future:

- 1196, a section 10(a)(1)(A) permit for direct take of ESA-listed UCR spring Chinook salmon and incidental take of UCR steelhead associated with spring Chinook salmon hatchery programs for the Wenatchee and Methow Basins. The permit expires on January 20, 2014.
- 1395, a section 10(a)(1)(A) permit for direct take of ESA-listed UCR steelhead and incidental take of UCR spring Chinook salmon associated with steelhead hatchery programs for the Wenatchee, Methow, and Okanogan Basins. The permit expires on October 2, 2013.
- 1347, a section 10(a)(1)(B) permit for incidental take of ESA-listed UCR spring Chinook salmon and steelhead by artificial propagation programs for unlisted summer Chinook, fall Chinook, and sockeye¹ salmon. The permit expires on October 22, 2013.

¹ The sockeye program has since been discontinued



Formal consultations pertaining to all three permits are now in progress. The National Marine Fisheries Service is hereby extending these permits, subject to conditions explained below, until consultations are completed and NMFS has made its determination on the new permits.

Background and Rationale

Currently, NMFS is evaluating Hatchery and Genetic Management Plans (HGMPs) relevant to issuing new section 10 permits for Upper Columbia hatchery programs under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The Federal action requiring section 7(a)(2), section 10(a)(1)(A), and section 10(a)(1)(B) consultation is the issuance of permits for the implementation of these HGMPs. The new permits will deal with direct and indirect take of listed spring Chinook salmon and steelhead. The new permits will replace permits 1196, 1395, and 1347.

One key consultation relevant to these permits has been completed. On July 3, 2013, NMFS completed a section 7(a)(2) consultation and authorized section 10(a)(1)(A) permits 18118, 18120, and 18121, to WDFW and Chelan PUD, the Public Utility District No. 2 of Grant County (Grant PUD), and the Yakama Nation (YN)² for the Wenatchee Basin Chiwawa River, Nason Creek, and White River spring Chinook salmon hatchery programs. Thus, Wenatchee Basin spring Chinook salmon hatchery activities previously covered by permit 1196³ are now covered by these new permits. PUD-funded Spring Chinook salmon hatchery programs for the Methow Basin, and PUD-funded steelhead hatchery programs in the Wenatchee, Okanogan, and Methow Basins are still undergoing ESA consultation, with the Wenatchee steelhead close to completion. The PUD-funded summer and fall Chinook salmon programs are likewise still undergoing consultation.

The applicants, WDFW, Chelan PUD, Grant PUD, and Douglas PUD, have requested ESA consultation, acted in good faith, and have submitted their respective HGMPs, and in some cases supporting information, as applications for their section 10 permits. However, consultations have been slowed by incomplete plans for management of returning hatchery-origin adults. In addition, consultations have been slowed by other demands on NMFS staff, and it now appears that it will be impossible to issue new permits before permits 1196, 1347 and 1395 expire.

NMFS has examined the status of the current consultations, time lines for completion, and the proposed extension request from the applicants, and believes that continued operation of the programs while new permits are being considered will not increase the adverse effects of the programs. NMFS has taken into account new information submitted by the applicants that describe reductions in hatchery production as a result of 2012 recalculations of PUD obligations. Also, we do not anticipate that the number of broodstock collected for these programs will be higher than the current hatchery propagation programs described in the *2013 Upper Columbia River Salmon and Steelhead Broodstock Objectives and Site-Based Broodstock Collection Protocols* (WDFW 2013). Finally, we note that the proposed direct-take programs all include measures to reduce risk from large proportions of hatchery fish spawning in the wild. Provided that the planned program reductions and feasible risk reduction measures that are

² The Yakama Nation is listed as an authorized agent for the Chiwawa River, Nason Creek, and White River section 10 permits 18181, 18120 and 18121.

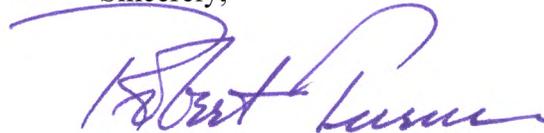
³ Previous White River spring Chinook salmon hatchery activities were covered by permit 1592.

described in the application documents and draft permits are implemented, the existing permits, including all Terms and Conditions will remain in force until new permits are issued⁴.

We expect that broodstock collection and adult management of steelhead in the Wenatchee and Methow basins will occur during the extension. Broodstock collection and adult management spring Chinook salmon in the Methow basin may also occur during the extension . Until new steelhead harvest plans are developed and approved, steelhead fisheries in the basins will be managed as per permit 1395. Any additional management details affecting other program elements that are not fully described in application documents or draft permits will be determined by consensus of the Mid-Columbia HCP Hatchery Committee or the Priest Rapids Coordinating Committee Hatchery Subcommittee, with NMFS concurrence.

If you have any questions about this letter, please contact Craig Busack (503-230-5412; Craig.Busack@noaa.gov) or Amilee Wilson (360-753-5830; Amilee.Wilson@noaa.gov).

Sincerely,



Robert Turner
Assistant Regional Administrator
Salmon Management Division
National Marine Fisheries Service
Northwest Region

Cc: Keith Truscott, Chelan PUD
Alene Underwood, Chelan PUD
Jeff Korth, DFW
Michael Tonseth, DFW
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⁴ The Wenatchee spring Chinook salmon programs will of course operate in accordance with the new permits, not permit 1196.

Bc: SMD – PDF (Houghton)
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