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March 10, 2005

Mr. Carter Stein
Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission
205 SE Spokane Street
Portland, OR 97202



Dear Carter:

Program and Project Coordination has been completed for the Comparative Survival Study (Project #196602000). This will be the ninth year in which the CSS routes a portion of PIT-tagged study fish to raceways for transportation and the remaining portion back to the river for the purpose of comparing smolt-to-adult survival rates (SARs) between these two routes of passage through the Snake River and lower Columbia River hydrosystem.

Program Coordination:

1. Members of FPAC reviewed and approved the CSS Project last fall prior to submission to BPA for funding. On March 1, the CSS Oversight Committee, based upon a request from IDFG, agreed to change the raceway routing rate of PIT-tagged wild Chinook and steelhead from one-half to two-thirds for the first-time detected CSS study fish. With this change, PIT-tagged study fish of both wild and hatchery origin have the same raceway routing rate. On March 9, FPAC members concurred with this routing rate change.
2. On March 3, a coordination letter was sent to Mr. Dave Hurson, Walla Walla District Operations, with copy to Rex Baxter, Operations Biologist, requesting separation-by-code (SbyC) operations at the three Snake River collector dams. They were advised that the 2005 transport routing rate would be two-thirds of first-time detected CSS study fish (both hatchery and wild) to the raceways and the remaining study fish back to the river. We advised them that this operation would not impact any other researcher's PIT-tagged fish at the dams, and that the operation would not require any handling of PIT-tagged fish at any COE facility.
3. Because SbyC operations at the dams will not result in any handling of listed fish, no additional ESA permit requirements are needed. However, all PIT tagging activities for CSS are covered by ESA permits.

Project Coordination:


1. On March 3, copies of the coordination letter sent to the Walla Walla District Operations Office was also sent to the Project Biologists at the three Snake River collector dams – Mike Halter (LGR), George Melanson (LGS), and Bill Spurgeon (LMN). The letter noted the separation-by-code (SbyC) operations at the three Snake River collector dams would route two-thirds of all CSS study fish (hatchery and wild) to the raceways and the remaining study fish back to the river. We advised them that this operation would not impact any other researcher's PIT-tagged fish at the dams, and that the operation would not require any handling of PIT-tagged fish at any COE facility.
2. On March 3, notification of the CSS requested 2005 SbyC operations at the COE dams was also sent to the Smolt Monitoring Program's principle investigators – Charlie Morrill, WDFW, for Lower Granite and Lower Monumental dams, and Pat Kinery, ODFW, for Little Goose Dam. The planned SbyC operations will have no impact on current SMP monitoring activities.
3. This study does not require operation of the Lower Granite Dam adult trap.

Study Coordination:

1. On March 3, FPC staff contacted Dave Marvin, PSMFC, to advise him of the change in the raceway routing rate for wild fish to match the rate used for hatchery fish. In 2005 at the Snake River collector dams, CSS study fish will have 2 fish routed to the raceways for every 1 fish routed back to the river for both hatchery and wild fish. Only first-time detected PIT tagged Chinook should be routed to raceways at Little Goose and Lower Monumental dams. SbyC operation is not required at McNary Dam – CSS PIT tagged fish would follow the default PIT-tag routing there, as was done in past years.
2. Dave was told that 6 files of PIT tags would be submitted just as last year – one for each of 5 hatchery groups and one aggregate file for all wild Chinook and wild steelhead participating in the CSS. We promised to send him the 6 PIT-tag files by March 11.
3. If additional PIT tags become available later in the season for the wild fish PIT-tag file, then FPC staff would submit these additional PIT tags to Dave once a week on a Monday schedule just as last year for uploading to SbyC databases at the dams on Tuesdays.

If you have questions or concerns, please contact Tom Berggren or Larry Basham at FPC.

Sincerely,


Michele DeHart
Principle Investigator