



IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

SALMON REGION
99 Highway 93 North
P.O. Box 1336
Salmon, Idaho 83467

C.L. "Butch" Otter / Governor
Virgil Moore / Director

February 28, 2012

Nicole Tancreto
Columbia Basin PIT Tag Information System
Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission
205 SE Spokane St., Suite 100
Portland, OR 97202

RE: Completion of SbyC study request coordination

Dear Nicole:

The Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) would like to confirm the completion of SbyC study request coordination to implant radio transmitters into wild spring/summer adult Chinook salmon previously PIT tagged in the Lemhi River subbasin at the Lower Granite adult trap. None of the coordination personnel have indicated any problems or objections to this project.

Program Coordination:

Fish Passage Advisory Committee (FPAC)

January 11, 2012 – Study request sent to Paul Wagner, FPAC Chairperson
February 10, 2012 – Notification received stating study reviewed by FPAC with no conflicts identified.

PIT Tag Operations Center (PTOC)

January 11, 2012 – Study request sent to Nicole Tancreto, PTAGIS Systems Analyst. No conflicts or objections indicated.

Army Corps of Engineers (COE)

January 11, 2012 – Study request sent to Greg Moody, Walla Walla District. No conflicts or objections indicated.

Keeping Idaho's Wildlife Heritage

ESA Permitting

February 7, 2012 – Received email authorization for Determination of Take for Research Purposes from Ritchie Graves, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Hydropower Division's Federal Columbia River Power Systems (FCRPS) Branch.

Project Coordination:

Lower Granite Dam Adult Fish Trap (LGA)

January 11, 2012 – Study request sent to Mike Halter (US Army Corp of Engineers) and Darren Ogden (NOAA Fisheries). No conflicts or objections indicated.

Study Coordination:

PIT Tag Operations Center (PTOC)

February 28, 2012 – Individual tag codes of 24,452 wild spring/summer juvenile Chinook salmon PIT tagged in the Lemhi River subbasin during migration years 2008 through 2011 sent to Nicole Tancreto. Verbal request made to divert study fish to LGA using the SbyC system. We request all target fish be diverted until the tagging of 18 adult fish is reached.

Requested Action:

Divert target fish to LGA from April 1, 2012 to August 31, 2012 (dependent on fish arrival timing). Diverting and tagging fish will require some personnel time and effort at the Lower Granite Dam Adult Fish trap. The IDFG appreciates their collaboration and efforts in our study and hopefully we are minimizing impacts by providing a range of individuals for tagging and coordinating activities and supplies with staff at GRA. We have requested all target fish be diverted until our tagging quota is met.

Project Description and Purpose:

This project will describe important migration characteristics of adult Chinook salmon in the Lemhi River subbasin for the purpose of developing and implementing conservation actions designed to provide biologically sufficient migration conditions and improve spawning and rearing habitat. This study is also one of several steps necessary to monitor the effectiveness of ongoing conservation actions implemented in the Lemhi basin. Some of these actions are: 1) flow enhancement agreements in the lower Lemhi River to improve passage conditions into the basin, 2) improvements to irrigation diversions for the purpose of improving passage conditions and reducing entrainment, and 3) restoring connectivity between the Lemhi River and tributaries.

Keeping Idaho's Wildlife Heritage

Data gathered by this study will also steer an adaptive management program developed in the Lemhi basin. We identify the following objectives for this project:

1. Determine adult Chinook salmon migration timing and success from Lower Granite Dam to spawning grounds in the Lemhi River watershed,
2. Identify stream flow and instream migration barriers in the Lemhi River watershed to guide project development for future habitat actions,
3. Monitor effectiveness of completed habitat actions on the mainstem river that were designed to improve stream flow and remove structural (i.e. irrigation diversion structures) migration barriers in the Lemhi River watershed,
4. Determine adult Chinook salmon distribution in the Lemhi River watershed.

This project supports research, monitoring, and evaluation that is prescribed in two projects that have undergone regional review:

- 1) In 2005, the Integrated Status and Effectiveness Monitoring Project (ISEMP; BPA project number 2003-017-00) completed a comprehensive design to evaluate the effectiveness of ongoing and proposed habitat actions targeting the Lemhi River watershed (Quantitative Consultants Inc. 2005. Salmon Subbasin Pilot Projects Monitoring and Evaluation Plan). That study design was reviewed by the ISRP in 2006 (ISRP 2006-1) and recommended for immediate implementation.
- 2) BPA Project 199401500, Idaho Fish Screening and Passage Improvements underwent ISRP review in 2006 for the FY 2007 – FY 2009 Funding. The ISRP Final Review (August 31, 2006) recommendation was “fundable”. The review was also positive.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Mike Biggs
Regional Fishery Biologist
Idaho Department of Fish and Game
(208) 756.2271
mike.biggs@idfg.idaho.gov

Keeping Idaho's Wildlife Heritage