

Ms. Anne Badgley
Regional Director
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
911 N.E. Eleventh Avenue
Portland, Oregon 97232

Mr. Ralph Morgenweck
Regional Director, Mountain-Prairie Region
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Post Office Box 254876
Denver Federal Center
Denver, Colorado 80225-0486

Dear Ms. Badgley and Mr. Morgenweck:

On behalf of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), and the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) (Action Agencies), I am hereby submitting the enclosed Biological Assessment on Federal Columbia River Power System (FCRPS) operations. The biological assessment addresses the effects of proposed 1999 and future operations of the FCRPS on listed Columbia Basin bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*) and Kootenai River white sturgeon (*Acipenser transmontanus*).

This Biological Assessment analysis is based on the operation of the FCRPS as contained in the 1998 Supplemental Biological Opinion on Snake River, Upper Columbia River and Lower Columbia River steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*), the coordinated package of Biological Opinions issued March 2, 1995 on Snake River spring/summer and fall chinook (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*) and sockeye (*O. nerka*), and March 1, 1995 on the Kootenai River white sturgeon, five listed mollusc species endemic to the Upper Snake River Basin, and other species listed under the Endangered species Act (ESA) which reside in the Columbia River Basin. The Action Agencies believe that the proposed operation is consistent with the adaptive management framework of the 1995 and 1998 biological opinions. Such flexibility in operations has been demonstrated during the past migration seasons. Submission of this Biological Assessment constitutes the Action Agencies' request for formal consultation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) under ESA on the effects of the proposed operation of the FCRPS on the Columbia Basin bull trout and Kootenai River white sturgeon.

The Action Agencies look forward to working with USFWS in the consultation process, and are prepared to provide and exchange other relevant information as appropriate. These discussions will assist us as we make operational decisions this year. We believe that we can accommodate operations for sturgeon and bull trout in 1999 through the adaptive management framework. As you are aware, the Action Agencies have also begun to prepare a Biological Assessment on the effects of FCRPS operations starting in spring 2000 on multiple listed species. The information in the enclosed

biological assessment and the relevant information developed in this consultation will be utilized by the Action Agencies as we draft the multi-species biological assessment.

Robert H. Griffin
Brigadier General, U.S. Army
Division Engineer

Enclosure

Copies Furnished:

Mr. Steve Clark, Acting Regional Director
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Pacific Northwest Regional Office
1150 N. Curtis Road
Boise, ID 83706-1234

Ms. Judith Johansen, Administrator
Bonneville Power Administration
905 N.E. 11th
Portland, Oregon 97232

Mr. William W. Stelle, Jr.
Regional Director
National Marine Fisheries Service
Bin C15700, Building 1
7600 Sand Point Way, N.E.
Seattle, Washington 98115-0070