

Tom Karier
Chair
Washington

Frank L. Cassidy Jr.
"Larry"
Washington

Jim Kempton
Idaho

W. Bill Booth
Idaho



Joan M. Dukes
Vice-Chair
Oregon

Melinda S. Eden
Oregon

Bruce A. Measure
Montana

Rhonda Whiting
Montana

August 29, 2007

MEMORANDUM

TO: Fish and Wildlife Committee Members

FROM: Jim Ruff

SUBJECT: Update on status of Snake River fall Chinook transportation evaluation

Purpose

The purpose of this memo is to provide the Fish and Wildlife Committee members and staff an update on the current status of the Snake River (SR) fall Chinook transport evaluation for 2008 since the August 14 meeting.

Discussion

A technical-level SR fall Chinook Transportation group meeting was held in Lapwai, ID on July 11th to discuss developing a plan and schedule to move forward with a summer transportation study in 2008 and out years. This work group consists of technical representatives from the Nez Perce Tribe, NOAA Fisheries, Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife and Corps of Engineers (Corps).

The technical group's proposed schedule and plan on how to move forward with a SR fall Chinook transportation study in 2008 and out-years was presented to *U.S. v. OR* representatives at their meeting in July. The technical group noted that this is not a new effort, as much work has been done over the past three years by various parties associated with *U.S. v. OR*, the SR fall Chinook transportation study ad hoc group, the RME remand sub-group, and others.

To facilitate agreement on a long-term study plan, the technical group is preparing an issue paper that will consist of three parts. The first part will be an executive summary. The second part will be the draft study proposal. The final part will be an appendix that will function as a long-term framework which will memorialize expectations and hold various parties accountable over the 10-year period needed to realize study results. The issue paper is being prepared now and will be provided to the technical group shortly. The intent of the issue paper is to clearly identify the various parties' positions on any issues that could stand in the way of agreeing to supply fish for the study.

Without going into detail on the issues, as of late August there remain three general areas of disagreement which will need resolution in order to complete and implement a long-term study design. The first general area of disagreement covers the specific groups of fish to be marked for the study. The second area addresses the level of collaboration among the parties in the conduct of this study, while the third area is the management process for applying the results of the study. Each one of these general topic areas has two or three associated issues with decisions needing to be made. Several points of disagreement may already be resolved. Thus the issues are currently being identified and discussed among the parties in an attempt to reach resolution. However, if left unresolved, these issues would likely jeopardize the conduct of all or part of the long-term study either through lack of fish production for marking approval by the *U.S. v. OR* parties and/or withdrawal of funding for the study by the Corps.

Next Steps

The following is a summary of the next steps that are necessary to proceed with this transport study in 2008. Attachment 1 is the agreed upon schedule from the technical group.

- Secure an ESA permit modification from NOAA Fisheries to use the Lower Granite adult trap at a 20% sampling level (permit is pending).
- Broodstock collection will begin at Lower Granite adult trap during the first week in September.
- Technical work group will complete development of the issue paper (three-part document discussed above), which will include a draft long-term study plan and identification of any study issues that may require management or policy resolution prior to plan completion.
 - Once completed, the issue paper will be submitted to the BiOp Remand policy group for their consideration and possible resolution of issues.
 - Based on feedback and resolution of issues from both the technical work group and the BiOp Remand policy group, a revised issue paper will be prepared by the last week in September and submitted to the regional Studies Review Work Group for its review under the Corps' Anadromous Fish Evaluation Program.
- The technical group identifies specific transportation research fish needs and makes a request to the *U.S. v. OR* parties for these fish, as well as a change in priority level.
- The goal will be to have a agreed-upon long-term study plan completed by the October 15 *U.S. v. OR* meeting, at which time the parties agree on fish availability and priority level in the table for the transport research fish needs in 2008. At that time WDFW will provide a preliminary estimate of 2007 SR fall Chinook broodstock collection.
- The agreed-upon long-term transport study plan, or plans if unresolved study issues remain and an alternative study plan is developed, would then be submitted to the ISRP for scientific review.

Attachment 1

Attachment 1

Schedule SR Fall Chinook Transportation Study 2008

July 11 – A Snake River (SR) fall Chinook Transportation technical group meeting in Lapwai, ID to discuss developing a plan to move forward with a SR fall Chinook transportation study in 2008 and out years.

Jay Hesse (NPT), Sharon Keifer (IDFG), Bill Muir (NMFS), Mark Schuck (WDFW), Brian Zimmerman (CTUIR), William Connor (FWS), Tom Rien (ODFW), Brad Smith (ODFW), Scott Dunmire (COE), Marvin Shuttters (COE).

August 15 - Corps assists with funding SR fall Chinook broodstock collection at LWG trap.

August 16-17 - Technical Group presents final plan to *U.S. v. OR* parties and recommends to regional parties to go forward with study in 2008 and out years.

August 18 – Distribute final plan to SRWG members for review.

August 29

- Fall Chinook Coordination Group Meeting at the Lower Granite Dam visitor center.

- a) Technical Group identifies transportation research fish needs.
- b) Technical Group requests surrogate fish from *U.S. v. OR* parties.
- c) Coordinate fish needs with hatchery managers.

September 4 - Approximate date to begin LWG trap broodstock collection at a sample rate of 18-20%.

October 15 – *U.S. v. OR* parties agree upon fish availability and priority table level for transportation research fish in 2008. WDFW provides preliminary estimate of 2007 broodstock collection.

October 31 – November 15 - WDFW provides second estimate of 2008 egg take.

November 1 – March 1, 2008 - Corps initiates and completes regional coordination, budgeting, planning, and acquisition processes needed to conduct study in 2008.

w:\jr\ww\2007\sep07 sr fall chin study update.doc