

State, Federal and Tribal Fishery Agencies Joint Staff Letter

*Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission
Idaho Fish and Game
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
US Fish and Wildlife Service*

Mr. Greg Delwiche
Vice President for Environment, Fish and Wildlife
Bonneville Power Administration
PO Box 3621
Portland, Oregon 97208-3621

Dear Greg,

It has been brought to our attention that the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) has advised the Fish Passage Center that they will fund a 3 month extension of the Comparative Survival Study contract. However, this extension will not include any new tagging work until the Northwest Power and Conservation Council (NPCC) gives BPA their recommendation for the study.

As you know, the Comparative Survival Study (CSS) Oversight Committee has completed a Ten-Year Retrospective Report, as recommended by the Independent Scientific Advisory Board (ISAB) and the Independent Scientific Review Panel (ISRP) in their 2007 review of the CSS. The Committee completed the report and presented it to the ISAB/ISRP according to the schedule and deadlines established by the NPCC. However, these deadlines were later than originally planned because of the request by BPA to extend the comment period on the report so that its contactor could provide input. The report includes responses to the extensive comments received during the comment period.

We understand that the ISAB/ISRP will present its findings on the report on November 16, 2007. This date is after the November NPCC meeting, likely delaying a recommendation on the study until the December NPCC meeting, rather than at its October meeting as originally planned. This delay is a result of the extended comment period and later deadlines. Because of the delay it is unlikely that the NPCC will develop an FY 2008 recommendation to BPA for the CSS prior to the end of the 2007 contact period. The CSS 2007 contract will expire on November 30, 2007. This timing will preclude the addition of new mark groups to the study, as proposed by the state and tribal fishery managers, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

The state and tribal fishery managers, and the USFWS have been advocating for the addition to the CSS of mark groups of wild and hatchery steelhead and additional downstream populations of Chinook since 2004. These proposals were in large part based upon ISAB/ISRP recommendations and the management needs of the fishery agencies. The 2008 CSS proposal includes additional marking of wild steelhead, hatchery A and B run steelhead from the Snake River Basin, Warm Springs River wild spring Chinook, and John Day wild steelhead, consistent with past proposals by the managers and the ISAB/ISRP recommendations. The 2008 CSS proposal is a high priority for the state and tribal fishery managers and the USFWS project sponsors.

We appreciate that BPA has extended the 2007 CSS contract to accommodate delays in decision making related to the extended comment period on the Ten-Year Retrospective Report, and resultant delay in the ISAB’s report to the NPCC. However failure to include, in the extension, additional funds to mark the additional groups of fish in the FY 2008 proposal, will delay by one-more year, their inclusion in the study. These data are important to the entire region including the FCRPS operators and regulators. The states, tribes, FPC and USFWS have worked diligently to coordinate CSS marking with other marking throughout the region so that the populations of PIT-tagged fish at large can be used to address a broad range of management needs. This approach ensures the project is implemented as cost effectively and efficiently as possible.

Table 1 indicates the mark groups and marking schedule that will be required to implement the 2008 CSS marking proposal. We request that BPA reconsider their decision to not include funds for additional marking in the contract extension. Specifically, we ask that BPA provide the dollars to purchase 322,100 tags for 2008. This total is broken down into 75,000 tags for hatchery steelhead, 213,000 tags for hatchery Chinook, 32,100 tags for wild Chinook, and 2,000 tags for wild steelhead. In the event that BPA’s ongoing funding of ODFW to PIT tag 6,000 wild Chinook and 6,000 wild steelhead in the John Day River is not continued into 2008, we also request funds to purchase an additional 12,000 PIT tags to cover that tagging effort.

Table 1. Number of wild and hatchery Chinook and steelhead to be PIT tagged under CSS contract in 2008.

Organization	Tagging Site	Species and rearing type	PIT tags needed	Date tags Needed
IDFG	Magic Valley Hatchery	H Steelhead	13,134 ^A	1/1/08
	Hagerman NFH	H Steelhead	7,666 ^A	1/1/08
	Clearwater Hatchery	H Steelhead	5,200 ^A	1/1/08
	Niagara Springs Hatchery	H Steelhead	28,000	1/1/08
	Rapid R Hatchery	H Chinook	52,000	1/15/08
	McCall Hatchery	H Chinook	52,000	1/15/08
	Salmon R. Trap	W Chinook	5,000	3/5/08
	Snake R. Trap	W Chinook	2,000	3/5/08
	Clearwater R. Trap	W Chinook	3,200	3/5/08
	Clearwater R. Trap	W Steelhead	2,000	3/5/08
	Other IDFG tributary traps	W Chinook	14,500 ^B	2/6/08

ODFW	Irrigon Hatchery Lookingglass Hatchery • Imnaha R. release • Catherine Ck. release Grande Ronde R. Trap John Day River	H Steelhead	13,000 ^A	12/1/07
		H Chinook	21,000 ^C	9/3/08
		H Chinook	21,000 ^C	9/3/08
		W Chinook	1,400	3/5/08
		W Chinook	[6,000] ^D	
		W Steelhead	[6,000] ^D	
USFWS	Dworshak NFH Dworshak NFH Carson NFH	H Steelhead	8,000 ^A	12/12/07
		H Chinook	52,000	12/12/07
		H Chinook	15,000	12/12/07
Warm Springs Tribe	Warm Springs R. Trap (Deschutes River basin)	W Chinook	6,000	2/20/08

^A Fish PIT tagged under CSS contract to complement the LSRCP's proposed steelhead hatchery evaluation (tagging) study.

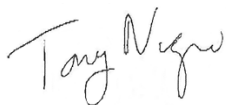
^B Cost for PIT tags only to complement on-going wild Chinook PIT tagging efforts in Idaho.

^C Fish to be PIT tagged in September 2008 for the 2009 migration.

^D Fish PIT tagged under CSS contract only if not renewed under existing ODFW contract with BPA.

We look forward to working with you to implement this critically important project.

Sincerely,



Anthony Nigro, ODFW



Peter Hassemer, IDFG



Bill Tweit, WDFW



Rob Lothrop, CRITFC



Howard Schaller, USFWS