



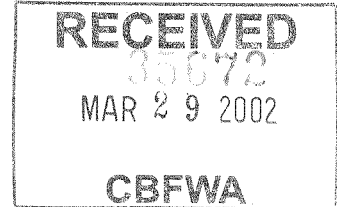
IDAHO FISH & GAME

600 South Walnut
P.O. Box 25
Boise, Idaho 83707-0025

March 27, 2002

Dirk Kempthorne/Governor
Steven M. Huffaker/Director

Frank L. Cassidy, Jr., Chair
Northwest Power Planning Council
851 SW 6th Avenue, Suite 1100
Portland, OR 97204-1348



Dear Chairman Cassidy:

Next week in Boise the Northwest Power Planning Council will make its funding recommendations for projects in the Mountain Snake Province. The Idaho Department of Fish and Game has participated in the various project review and prioritization processes that support the project funding recommendations. We consented to the project evaluations performed by the Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Authority (CBFWA), and project funding recommendations arrived at through the Council-facilitated province based prioritization.

The Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) supports funding one additional project that is currently not included in the recommended funding package. That project is #28058 – *Restore Fish Passage and Habitat on the Upper East Fork of the South Fork of the Salmon River*. This project was categorized as a “Recommended Action” in the CBFWA review process; IDFG consented to that rank at the time of the review. New information, since the project reviews were completed, causes us to elevate the priority of this project while de-emphasizing other projects that received “High Priority” rankings. The project sponsor has informed us of the time-sensitive nature of the project. If the passage barrier is not removed during the FY02-05 period and coincident with other rehabilitation work in the drainage, the opportunity to remove the barrier will be lost.

The immediate benefit from completing this project is that additional spawning and rearing habitat for chinook salmon (3 miles) and Westslope cutthroat, steelhead, and bull trout (6 miles) will become accessible. In 2000 and 2001 IDFG released adult chinook salmon above the barrier for natural spawning. Progeny of these spawners will begin returning in 2003; removal of the barrier would allow them to return to their place of natural origin. Also, a recently completed study on bull trout in the East Fork South Fork Salmon River documented a population immediately below the barrier (Glory Hole) of an estimated 216 fish. The study observed some bull trout spawners moving from Glory Hole into downstream tributaries to spawn, then returning upstream to Glory Hole to overwinter. All bull trout spawning observed in the tributaries occurred in streams within 10 miles of Glory Hole. Thus, we anticipate bull trout would readily colonize the expanded habitat.

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Based on the time-sensitive nature of this project and the benefits to resident and anadromous fishes, we support this project and urge the Council to fund the project during the current provincial funding period. Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,



SMH
Steven M. Huffaker
Director

c: Judi Danielson, NWPPC
Jim Kempton, NWPPC
Jim Caswell, IOSC
Jann Eckman, CBFWA
Doug Marker, NWPPC
Bruce Schuld, IDEQ