

1998 – 2003 Biological Opinions

Abbreviations- Origin of Legal Requirements

(1) = NMFS 1998 Opinion Term and Condition (PACFISH)

(2) = USFWS 1998 Opinion Term and Condition (INFISH)

QUESTION 1: IMPLEMENTATION OF PACFISH/INFISH STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

PACFISH and INFISH Decision Notices require that relevant PACFISH and INFISH Standards and Guidelines (S&G) be used in the design and implementation of new and ongoing actions. Use Attachment C to assist with answer this question. PACFISH and INFISH Standards & Guidelines can be accessed from the following website www.fs.fed.us/r6/fish/documents/.

QUESTION 2: METHODS TO IDENTIFY IMPORTANT PLACES?

Hierarchical Analysis

- Conduct biennial programmatic reviews and/or project bundling by watershed or subbasin (every 2 years). (1)
- Completion of Section 7 watershed baselines. (2)
- Prepare a schedule for completing Watershed Analysis with at least one per year per management unit using the 1995 Federal Guide Ecosystem Analysis at the Watershed Scale (EAWS). (1)
- Develop priorities and schedules for Watershed Analysis concurrently with restoration plans. **Update annually. (2)
- Complete watershed analysis using the 6-step process (1995 Federal Guide – EAWS) (2) Refer to July 29, 2004 Deputy Team letter Clarification for completing one Watershed Analysis and one Subbasin Assessment annually (www.fs.fed.us/r6/fish/documents)
- Apply the results of watershed analysis to conclude that actions will either “meet” or “do not prevent attainment” of ACS objectives. Conclusion must be documented and supporting rationale provided. (2)
- Treat watersheds within the Upper Columbia and Snake River ESUs as key watersheds and as designated critical habitat. (1)
- Complete watershed analysis in INFISH priority watersheds. (2)
- Complete one subbasin assessment per year. (1) Refer to July 29, 2004 Deputy Team letter Clarification for completing one Watershed Analysis and one Sub-basin Assessment annually (www.fs.fed.us/r6/fish/documents)
- Incorporate goals and objectives identified in subbasin assessments into action plans at the watershed scale. (note: this mechanism is linked to NMFS Opinion, mechanism 5d.2 as a subbasin assessment is required prior to watershed analysis). (1)
- Conduct biennial programmatic reviews and/or project bundling by watershed or subbasin (every 2 years). (1)
- Utilize information from multi-scale analyses with integration of Interagency Implementation Team (IIT) or recovery plan products at the local level in the development of subbasin reviews, watershed analyses, Land Use Plan revisions/amendments and any restoration strategies (note: IIT products include Road Density Maps (updated), RDAT/Low Road Density Analysis; priority steelhead/salmon/bull trout watersheds as identified in local recovery plans) to assist in determining the value of watersheds and subbasins in the conservation and recovery of ESA-listed salmonids and in the identification of restoration priorities.

Aquatic Habitat Restoration

- Shift project planning from the site level to the watershed and subbasin scales to promote planning efficiencies. Apply these findings in design and implementation of priority actions.
- For watershed and aquatic habitat restoration actions: Ensure that proposed actions are designed to provide for long-term habitat benefits while avoiding/reducing short-term impacts, and utilize information and recommendations from environmental baselines and results of Matrix Checklist {note: intent is to ensure that actions, especially restoration actions, would be conducted with a watershed view of benefits to bull trout and other species}. (2)
- Accelerate aquatic habitat restoration in the Snake and Upper Columbia ESUs. (1)

Roads

- Continue updating road inventories at the field level every other year in a format that can be consolidated at the state and regional level. (2)

QUESTION 3: RISK MANAGEMENT

- Implement monitoring commensurate with level of on-the-ground activities and provide feedback to NMFS (annual Implementation Monitoring reports). (1)
- Fully comply with fiscal year IIT Implementation Monitoring sampling scheme for grazing and use this information to adjust grazing strategies (P/I Standard GM-1) where riparian objectives are not being met. (1)
- Measures identified in NMFS's 1995 Biological Opinions and all subsequent related direction in FS and BLM plans are required to be extended to all plans in those portions of the Upper Columbia and Snake River basin ESUs for which ESA Section 7 consultation was not initiated for salmon. This includes, but is not limited to, designation of high priority watersheds and consultation on all ongoing Federal actions that may affect steelhead. (1)
- Use special management considerations in the Selway, SF Salmon, MF Salmon including those described for roads, Riparian Habitat Conservation Areas (RHCAs), and Fire//Timber/Grazing/Recreation Management. (1)
- Review effects to steelhead from commercial permits, non-commercial boating, and floating. Review all recreational facilities as ongoing Federal actions and modify if causing adverse effects. (1)

QUESTION 4: ENSURING ACCOUNTABILITY/OUTCOMES

Accountability and oversight mechanism for implementation of requirements at the field unit level:

- Provide for interagency and multi-level representation in ongoing field level and provide feedback to your respective Deputy on implementation issues and how this information was incorporated into revised management strategies. (1)
- Provide for an annual, interagency review of your administrative unit's fiscal year work program to ensure attainment of fish conservation measures. Use this process to reach consensus on the priority of these actions and identify shortfalls in funding/staffing and potential adjustment necessary to management actions. (1)
- Requires that a strategy be mutually developed and implemented when funding or other priorities prevent full implementation of aquatic conservation measures. (1)
- Use NMFS Matrix and Level I teams, and review ongoing activities when new species are listed or critical habitat is designated. (1)
- Use Level 1 streamlining; bull trout watershed consultation approach (1/27/98) letter of direction, new information, and bull trout Checklist/Matrix of Pathways & Indicators (or similar agreed-to approach) to ensure that an interagency, interdisciplinary process is used in the design and evaluation of all proposed actions that may affect bull trout. (2)