UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
West Coast Region – Snake Basin Office
800 Park Boulevard, Plaza IV, Suite 220
Boise, Idaho 83712-7743

March 25, 2015

Subject: Idaho Habitat Restoration Programmatic

Programmatic biological opinion pursuant to section 7(a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) on the effects of habitat restoration projects in Idaho.

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has developed a programmatic ESA Section 7 consultation for habitat restoration projects in Idaho. The NMFS programmatic biological opinion (**NMFS No: WCR-2014-832**), signed February 9, 2015, covers aquatic habitat restoration activities that are funded, permitted, or implemented by one or more of six federal agencies. An individual project can be covered under this programmatic consultation if the project follows standard design criteria and conservation measures, described in the NMFS programmatic biological opinion.

- The Action Agencies in this programmatic consultation are NMFS, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Reclamation, Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Forest Service, and the Bureau of Land Management.

- The programmatic consultation covers routine aquatic habitat restoration projects funding, permitted, or implemented by one or more of the six federal Action Agencies.

- The NMFS programmatic biological opinion addresses likely effects to salmon and steelhead. U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has signed a separate programmatic biological opinion covering bull trout and ESA-listed terrestrial species.

- Projects must be located in one of the 18 subbasins in Idaho with salmon and steelhead (Figure 1). These subbasins are in the Salmon River Basin, Clearwater River Basin, and Lower Snake River below Hells Canyon.

- Projects must fall under one of the nine categories listed in Table 1.

- **Conservation Measures**: A set of General Conservation Measures applies to all projects in order to minimize short-term adverse effects on ESA-listed species. General

Conservation Measures include: timing of in-water work, work area isolation, temporary access roads, erosion control, and site restoration. Specific Conservation Measures apply to each individual category of restoration activity. The USFWS biological opinion includes additional conservation measures for terrestrial species and bull trout, listed in Table 2 below.

- **Program Implementation Procedures**:
    1. Action Agency (or Project Sponsor) submits a **Project Information Form** to NMFS and USFWS at least 60 days before initiating the project (or 90 days if NMFS engineering review is required). See *Appendix A* of the NMFS biological opinion. ***Submit forms by email to local NMFS and USFWS biologist contacts.***
    2. NMFS and USFWS must confirm with the Action Agency by email that the project fits the agencies' respective programmatic biological opinions. NMFS and USFWS may determine that a site visit is necessary before making this decision.
    3. Action Agency (or Project Sponsor) submits a **Project Completion Form** to NMFS and USFWS within 90 days of project completion, reporting on the outcome of the project and any monitoring results (fish handling, turbidity monitoring, or herbicide use). See *Appendix B* of the NMFS biological opinion. For multi-year projects, the Action Agency must submit the Project Completion Form to NMFS and USFWS every year in which the project involves either fish handling, herbicide application, or turbidity monitoring.

- If an individual restoration project requires minor modifications to the project criteria and conservation measures described in the NMFS programmatic biological opinion, in order to address site-specific circumstances, please contact NMFS and refer to the procedures in *Section 2.10 Reinitiation of Consultation* of the biological opinion**.**

- The Idaho Habitat Restoration programmatic biological opinion **does not replace existing programmatic consultations** with federal action agencies. For categories of habitat restoration activities for which the USFS and BLM have existing programmatic consultations in place with NMFS and USFWS (e.g., stream road crossings, weeds treatment), such activities will continue to be covered under the existing programmatic consultation.

- **Questions:** Contact Sarah Fesenmyer, NMFS, at (208) 378-5660, or sarah.fesenmyer@noaa.gov.

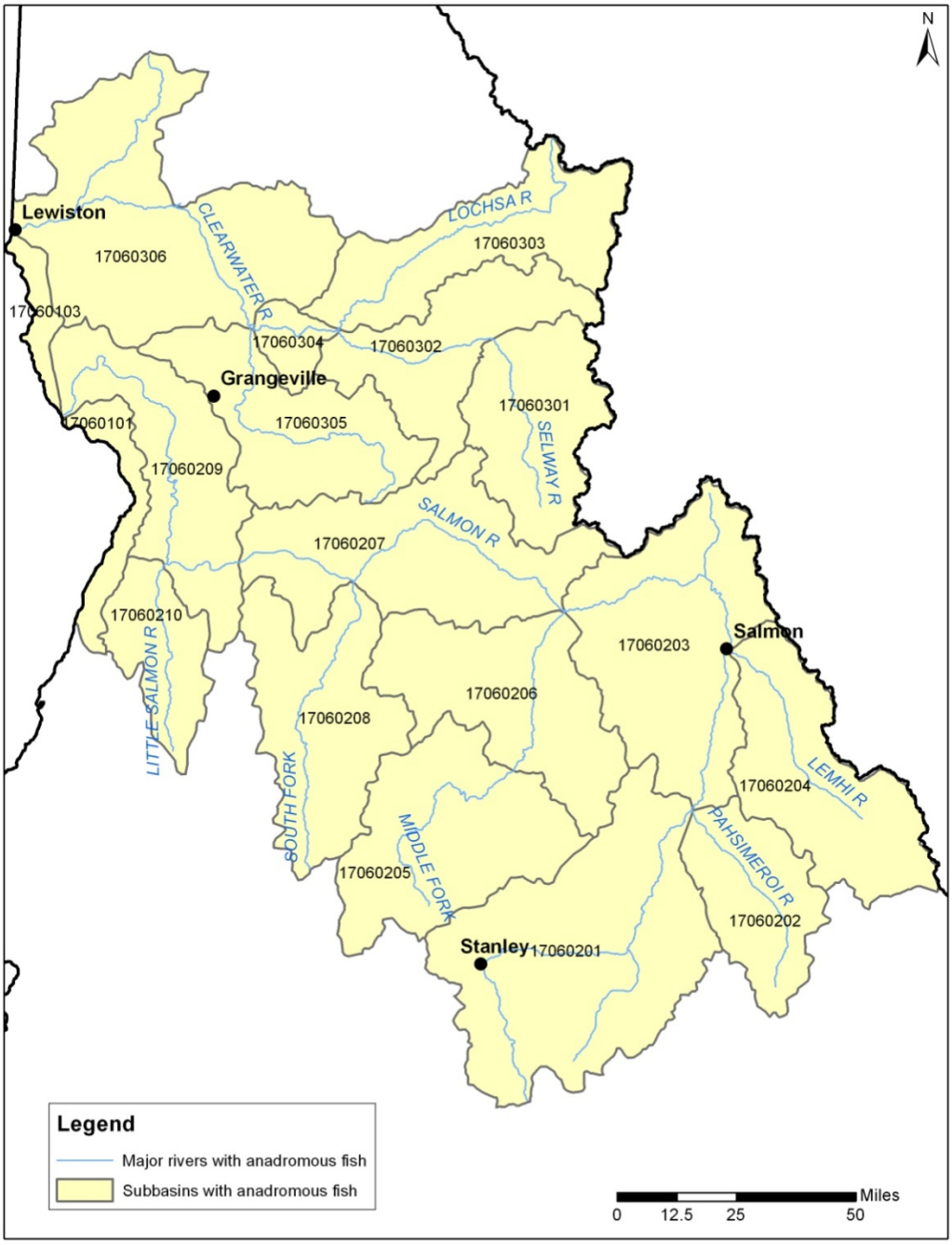

Figure 1. Subbasins in Idaho occupied by ESA-listed anadromous fish species.

Table 1. Categories of activities under the proposed action.

Action Category	Specific Actions Included in the Consultation
Fish Screening	Install, upgrade, or maintain fish screens *(NMFS must review engineering plans for installation or upgrading of screens)*
Fish Passage	Install or improve fish passage facilities (e.g., fish ladders or other fishways) at diversion structures and other passage barriers *(NMFS must review engineering plans)* Remove or modify water control structures (e.g., irrigation diversion structures) Replace culverts and bridges to provide fish passage and/or to reduce risk of culvert failure and chronic sedimentation, using the stream simulation methods from NMFS (2011b).
Instream Flow	Lease or purchase water rights to improve instream flows Change or consolidate points of diversion *(NMFS must review engineering plans)* Increase efficiency of irrigation practices (e.g., convert open ditches to pipes, or convert surface water diversions to ground water wells)[1]
Instream Structures	Provide grade control with boulder weirs or roughened channels *(NMFS must review engineering plans for installation of structures with greater than 3 feet height)* Install instream habitat structures including: • Rootwads, large woody debris (LWD), and log jams • Boulders • Spawning gravels

[1] For ground water wells and irrigation efficiency actions, the Project Sponsor will include information in the Project Information Form to demonstrate that the project will not increase consumptive use of water. This information will include any expected changes to the following elements as a result of the project: (1) amount of surface flow diverted and/or groundwater pumped; (2) timing/seasonal length of water diversion; (3) conveyance method to field; (4) acreage irrigated and crop; and (5) irrigation system (drip or sprinkler systems may increase consumptive use compared to flood irrigation).

Action Category	Specific Actions Included in the Consultation
Side Channels and Floodplain Function	Reconnect and restore historic side channels Modify or remove levees, dikes, berms, and fill
Channel Reconstruction	Reconstruction of existing stream channels into historic or newly constructed channels *(NMFS must review engineering plans).*
Riparian Habitat	Plant riparian vegetation Reduce riparian impacts from livestock: • Install fencing • Develop livestock watering facilities away from streams • Install livestock stream crossings (culverts, bridges, or hardened fords) Control invasive weeds through physical removal or with herbicides Stabilize streambanks through bioengineering
Road and Trail Erosion Control, Maintenance, and Decommissioning	Decommission or obliterate unneeded roads Relocate portions of roads and trails away from riparian buffer areas When part of a larger restoration project, reduce sediment from existing roads: • Improve and maintain road drainage features • Reduce road access and usage through gates, fences, boulders, logs, tank traps, and signs • Remove or stabilize pre-existing cut and fill or slide material
Surveying and Monitoring	Survey project sites: • Take physical measurements • Install recording devices • Determine fish presence (*electroshocking for research purposes is not included under this consultation*) Monitor project site and stream habitat after project completion Install passive integrated transponder (PIT) tag detection arrays

Table 2. Additional conservation measures for USFWS species, compiled from the USFWS programmatic biological opinion.

Species	Conservation Measures
Canada Lynx	Activities will not be located within 270 yards of known active lynx dens (based on sight distance and attenuation of sound in forested environments).
Northern Idaho Ground Squirrel	Any squirrel activity sites, den, or burrows encountered at a work site will be flagged and avoided during site preparation, staging, or construction and earthmoving activities. Squirrel activity within 200 feet of work sites will be reported to the USFWS which will recommend a course of action, which could include initiation of site-specific consultation. Herbicides will not be applied where ground squirrels are known to be present.
Yellow-Billed Cuckoo	Activities will avoid fragmentation, degradation, or destruction of riparian habitat known to support yellow-billed cuckoos.
Plants	If one or more ESA-listed plant species are present and may be affected by the project, the project may require protective measures and the appropriate level of consultation. Due to soil disturbance that will occur, and use of heavy equipment that could carry seeds and plant parts into project areas, all appropriate measures will be incorporated into contract or equipment rental agreements to avoid introduction of invasive plants and noxious weeds into project areas. Herbicides will not be applied where ESA-listed plant species (including **whitebark pine**) are known to be present.
Bull Trout	If the project would facilitate the expansion of brook trout into occupied bull trout habitat, a USFWS biologist will consider whether or not the project is appropriate for coverage for bull trout under the programmatic consultation.
General	Disposal sites, storage sites, and staging areas will not affect listed species or their habitats.