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Fish and Wildlife Service  
Arizona Ecological Services Field Office  
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In Reply Refer To:

AESO/SE  
2-21-94-F-243

June 25, 1998

John Bedell  
U.S. Forest Service  
P.O. Box 640  
Springerville, Arizona 85938

Dear Mr. Bedell:

This letter amends the June 16, 1997, interim biological opinion on the normal and flood-related maintenance and repair of Forest Road (FR) 281 and associated Greenlee County maintained roads along the upper Blue River. That opinion considered effects to the loach minnow (Tiaroga cobitis), bald eagle (Haliaeetus leucocephalus), razorback sucker (Xyrauchen texanus), southwestern willow flycatcher (Empidonax traillii extimus), and American peregrine falcon (Falco peregrinus anatum). The Forest Service is lead agency for the consultation, with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as a joint agency. A previous amendment to the biological opinion was issued on September 11, 1997.

#### CONSULTATION HISTORY

The following information is added to the consultation history section of the June 16, 1997, biological opinion, as amended on September 11, 1997. The need for the present amendment was discussed via telephone, between Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests staff and Fish and Wildlife Service staff, on several occasions in May and early June 1998. Because of unexpected delays in implementing portions of the project description, it was informally agreed that a 90-day extension to the 12-month interim period of the June 16, 1997, biological opinion would be appropriate.

#### BIOLOGICAL OPINION AMENDMENT

All sections of the biological opinion not specifically mentioned below remain unchanged by this amendment.

#### *DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION*

This amendment carries forward changes in the description of the proposed action to extend, by 90 days, the time period for formulating the geomorphic and environmental history study plans,

as detailed on pages 18 and 19 of the original opinion. The 90-day period will be calculated from the date of this amendment.

#### *DIRECT AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF THE ACTION*

References throughout this section to a 12-month interim period are changed to a 15-month interim period. The addition of 3 months to the interim period is not expected to change the type of effects anticipated to any of the five species involved. Because the additional time is during the summer and not during the breeding or spawning season of these species, the additional time is not expected to significantly increase the level of effects.

#### *SUMMARY OF EFFECTS*

References in this section to a 12-month interim period are changed to a 15-month interim period.

### INCIDENTAL TAKE STATEMENT

#### *ANTICIPATED LEVEL OF INCIDENTAL TAKE*

The thresholds used to determine anticipated levels of take for loach minnow, razorback sucker, bald eagle and southwestern willow flycatcher remain the same, but are extended for 90 days. The anticipated level of take for peregrine falcon is unchanged because the extension will occur outside of the breeding season for the species.

#### *REASONABLE AND PRUDENT MEASURES*

The reasonable and prudent measures remain unchanged by this amendment. They are extended to cover the additional 90-day period.

#### *TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION*

The terms and conditions remain unchanged by this amendment. They are extended to cover the additional 90-day period.

### CONSERVATION RECOMMENDATIONS

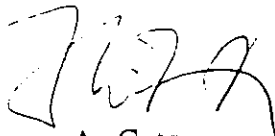
No change to the conservation recommendations is made by this amendment.

## REINITIATION NOTICE

The provisions of the reinitiation notice of the June 16, 1998 biological opinion apply to this amendment.

If we can be of further assistance, please contact Sally Stefferud or Bruce Palmer.

Sincerely,



Thomas A. Gatz  
Acting Field Supervisor

cc: Director, Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D.C. (DES)  
Regional Director, Fish and Wildlife Service, Albuquerque, NM (ES)  
Field Supervisor, Fish and Wildlife Service, Albuquerque, NM  
Project Leader, Fish and Wildlife Service, Pinetop, AZ  
Regional Solicitor, Fish and Wildlife Service, Albuquerque, NM (Attn: Beverly  
Ohline)  
District Ranger, Alpine Ranger District, Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests, Alpine, AZ  
Chief, Regulatory Branch, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Phoenix, AZ

Director, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, Santa Fe, NM  
Director, Arizona Game and Fish Department, Phoenix, AZ  
Director, Arizona Division of Emergency Management, Phoenix, AZ  
County Engineer, Greenlee County, Clifton, AZ  
Chairman, Greenlee County Board of Supervisors, Clifton, AZ