



Agenda Item C.1.b  
NMFS Report  
September 2010

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**  
**NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE**  
Northwest Region  
7600 Sand Point Way N.E., Bldg. 1  
Seattle, WA 98115

August 23, 2010

Mr. Mark Cedergreen, Chairman  
Pacific Fishery Management Council  
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101  
Portland, Oregon 97220-1384

Dear Mr. Cedergreen:

I am writing to update the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) about ongoing efforts to address the tasks described in the 2010 biological opinion on Lower Columbia River Chinook. Recall that the 2010 opinion covered Council area fisheries in 2010 and 2011. The opinion limited the total exploitation rate on Lower Columbia River tule Chinook to 0.38 in 2010 and 0.36 in 2011. However, the opinion included a contingency that allowed for an exploitation rate limit of 0.37 in 2011 if certain tasks were addressed satisfactorily. The opinion described a set of tasks designed to accelerate the recovery process by completing actions with immediate benefit to tule populations. If the tasks are addressed adequately, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) would indicate through its annual guidance letter to the Council that the higher exploitation rate was acceptable.

I know the Council has a keen interest in ensuring completion of the tasks and thought it would be useful to update the Council on progress at this time. Staff from Oregon and Washington, the Council, recovery planning groups, and NOAA Fisheries is involved. The Lower Columbia Steering Committee is helping to coordinate the work assignments and met on June 2, 2010 to form working groups with convening leads assigned to each task. NOAA Fisheries appreciates the work of the Steering Committee and all involved, including the Council staff, but wants to underscore the need to follow through to complete the work. The tasks were designed to advance the recovery planning process and so are important to progressively reduce the risks to Columbia River fall chinook. That is why satisfactory completion of the work is necessary to take advantage of the opportunity presented in the biological opinion.

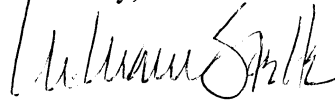
NOAA Fisheries will provide a progress report related to the tasks at the November Council meeting. The report will allow the Council to assess the prospects for successfully completing the tasks, and highlight areas that may require immediate attention.



Council members should recognize, however, that by November little time will be remaining to complete any remaining work prior to formulation of NOAA's guidance on the 2011 harvest rate. NOAA Fisheries therefore asks that the Council and its members continue to support the ongoing effort and encourage all involved parties to set priorities accordingly.

I appreciate your support and look forward to our collective success in this endeavor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William W. Stelle, Jr.", written in a cursive style.

William W. Stelle, Jr.

Regional Administrator