



Pacific Fishery Management Council

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Dorothy M. Lowman, Chair | Donald O. McIsaac, Executive Director

September 30, 2013

Ms. Sondra Ruckwardt, Project Manager
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Portland District
P.O. Box 2946
Portland, Oregon 97208

RE: Pacific Fishery Management Council Request Regarding the Content and Review of the Environmental Impact Statement on Double-Crested Cormorant Predation of Juvenile Salmonids in the Columbia River.

Dear Ms. Ruckwardt:

The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) met September 12-17, 2013 in Boise, Idaho and reviewed the status of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on Double-Crested Cormorant Predation of Juvenile Salmonids in the Columbia River. The Council appreciates your presentation to the Salmon Advisory Subpanel at the April 2013 Council meeting in Portland and had anticipated an opportunity to review and comment on the EIS at the September meeting in Boise. The Council continues to be interested in the project and has concerns regarding avian predation of salmonids in the Columbia River. This letter formally requests an opportunity for a thorough Council review when the draft EIS is completed for public comment.

It is the Council's current understanding that the USACE anticipates releasing the EIS for public review and comment in the winter of 2013-2014. The Council is encouraged that the project is moving forward and offers the following recommendations on ways to facilitate Council participation.

The Council's upcoming meeting schedule includes November 1-6, 2013 in Costa Mesa, California, March 8-13, 2013 in Sacramento, California, and April 5-10, 2013 in Vancouver, Washington. The Council recommends that the EIS public comment period coincide with the April 2014 Council meeting because the Council's salmon advisory groups will be in attendance and the meeting location of Vancouver, Washington is a convenient venue for USACE Portland District staff and for many interested Columbia River constituents.

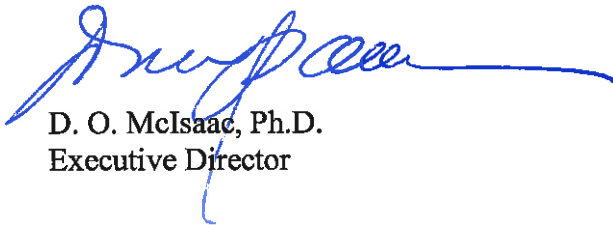
The March 2014 Council meeting would also be an opportunity for Council participation, but its location of Sacramento, California is less advantageous for reasons aforementioned. The agenda for the November 2013 Council meeting is largely set, and the Council does not anticipate that the EIS would be ready with sufficient time for adequate review.

The Council requests that the public review period for the EIS allow adequate time for advanced review before a Council meeting, for deliberation at the meeting, and for drafting of a formal response after the meeting. Specifically, briefing materials for a Council meeting are typically requested three weeks in advance of the start of the meeting and Council staff requests a two-week period following a Council meeting for the documentation and transmittal of Council recommendations.

The Council anticipated the EIS will include a complete accounting and analysis of the effects of cormorant predation on juvenile salmonids and the subsequent adult-equivalent catches in fisheries and adult returns to spawning areas. The Council reviewed the scoping comments summarized in the February 2013 USACE e-newsletter on the topic and looks forward to evaluating the alternatives. The Council would be very appreciative if the appropriate authors and/or principle investigators on the project could be available to meet with Council advisory groups and to attend the Council's session to present the findings and respond to questions.

I understand that this Council requested process would require substantial coordination and participation by the USACE. Please consider that the Council's transparent public process is an ideal forum for soliciting broad and meaningful constituent input. Thank you for your consideration of these recommendations. Should your staff have any questions on this matter, please contact Mr. Mike Burner at the Council office.

Sincerely,



D. O. McIsaac, Ph.D.
Executive Director

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- C: Council Members
Mr. Kevin Brice, USACE, Deputy District Engineer for Programs and Project Mgt.
Ms. Michelle McDowell, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Pacific Region
Mr. David Wills, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Columbia River Fisheries Program
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SAS Members