



Recy To
Attention Of:

Planning Division

Administrative Rc'd Exh **515**
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
WALLA WALLA DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
201 NORTH THIRD AVENUE
WALLA WALLA, WASHINGTON 99362-1876

MAR 19 1998

Elizabeth Homes Gaar
Director, Habitat Conservation Division
National Marine Fisheries Service
525 NE Oregon Street, Suite 500
Portland, Oregon 97232

Dear Ms. Gaar:

Pursuant to Section 7 (a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and its implementing regulations, 50 CFR Part 402, this letter is a request to reinstate informal consultation under Section 7 of the ESA for wild Columbia River steelhead and potential strays of Snake River fall chinook. The Walla Walla District is proceeding with plans for bank stabilization of 300 feet of shoreline where the 9,200 year old physical remains of the "Kennewick Man" were discovered in 1996. Subject of inquiry and concern last December on the part of the White House resulted in a requirement for the Corps of Engineers, Walla Walla District to stabilize the shoreline before seasonal high waters with erosional capability would begin. We originally looked at having the work completed by January 31, 1998. The shoreline geomorphological assessment was completed at that time, but cultural concerns with the State, area Tribes, and Federal governments deferred the bank stabilization until this spring.

Proposed Activities

Enclosed are drawings of the proposed bank stabilization. The bank stabilization is currently scheduled to be accomplished before April 15, 1998, to limit any effect on individuals of listed salmonid stock. We plan to incorporate bio-remediation measures as part of the slope protection of the site. Approximately 1,100 cubic yards of riprap and soil will be placed along the more centrally located 300 feet of the most sensitive area of the shoreline. Riprap and soil will be stockpiled in an upland site about 100 yards from the shoreline. The staging site will be restored to existing conditions upon completion of the work.

The riprap and soil combination will be placed by a helicopter to avoid adverse impacts to the site. The helicopter will likely be a Bell 412 or Chinook model routinely used for logging and/or construction, having a lifting capacity of 3,200 pounds. Rocks and soil will be loaded into a bucket suspended from the helicopter on a 100 foot line.

5873

Each load will weigh between 2,000 and 2,500 pounds and there will be approximately 1,000 loads delivered over a period of 5 - 7 days. Each load will be placed on the shoreline substrate and released through the sliding door of the bucket. No load will be dropped from the helicopter. A helicopter landing area will be located in an area of Columbia Park just downstream of the site (see drawing).

The soil will be worked into the riprap voids by wetting the soil with water pumped from the river. The proposed pump will be a five horse-power pump with a two inch diameter maximum intake and screened openings of not more than 1/4 inch. The pump will be placed on a small floating platform. Also incorporated with the riprap and soil will be 5 levels of Bon Terra 12 inch biologs to create more a terraced profile, rather than a straight slope and to provide a substrate for vegetative plantings. Vegetative plantings will be willow, cottonwood, and red osier dogwood, and possibly other species agreed to by Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and planted at a time and density also agreed to by WDFW. The Corps will monitor the plantings to ensure survival.

Presence of Listed Stocks and Likely Effects on Listed Species

We believe that activities required for stabilization of the shoreline would not adversely affect any listed steelhead and/or salmon stock. The work site is a migratory corridor for upper Columbia River steelhead, but does not provide spawning or important rearing habitat for upper Columbia River steelhead. Few individuals of the Columbia River steelhead and potential strays of the Snake River fall chinook Evolutionarily Significant Unit (ESU) stocks should be present in the immediate work area since the water depths would be so shallow during the proposed activity periods and therefore would not be affected by the proposed activities. We recognize that the method of delivery of the riprap by the helicopter using a 100 foot long line may produce a large degree of rotor wash over several acres encompassing shallow water and upland wetland zones extending from the shoreline activity area. If this appears to produce a potential effect, the line will be lengthened until the rotor wash is minimal. Due to steelhead life history traits, we also recognize that it is possible that a few individuals of the upper Columbia River steelhead stock, listed as endangered under ESA, may have the potential to be in the vicinity of the construction site during the activity period, but should avoid any potential consequences of the activities by normal response behavior to move riverward outside of the effects of the activities.

Please refer once again to the habitat assessment letter from Dr. Dennis Dauble, Pacific Northwest Labs, Richland, Washington. Dr. Dauble is recognized as a regional authority on salmonid stocks habitats on the lower Snake and Columbia Rivers, especially on the Columbia River reach through the Tri-Cities, Washington, upriver