



United States Department of the Interior

Fish and Wildlife Service
Idaho Fish and Wildlife Office
Northern Idaho Field Office
11103 East Montgomery Drive
Spokane Valley, WA 99206



May 28, 2013

Duane Mitchell
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Walla Walla Regulatory Office
201 North Third Avenue
Walla Walla, WA 99362

Todd Tillinger
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Helena Regulatory Office
10 West 15th Street, Suite 2200
Helena, MT 59626

Subject: Section 7 Consultation for SLOPES 9FWS Ref: 61130-2010-F-0239; x-ref:
01EIFW00-2013-F-0254; CONS-100(b))

Dear Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Tillinger:

This document transmits the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service's biological opinion based on our review of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) Biological Assessment (BA) for developing Standard Local Operating Procedures for Endangered Species (SLOPES) for Nationwide Permits Affecting Bull Trout and Kootenai River white sturgeon in Northern Idaho, Western Montana, and Northeast Washington (BA) for effects to the threatened bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*), and bull trout critical habitat in accordance with section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.). Your request for formal consultation was received on August 30, 2012 and the BA was deemed adequate on December 11, 2012. The Biological Opinion covering effects for Kootenai River white sturgeon (*Acipenser transmontanus*) and its critical habitat will be forthcoming from the Service's Northern Idaho Field Office.

The attached biological opinion for bull trout and bull trout critical habitat in the Clark Fork, Kootenai, and Coeur d'Alene Management Units of the Columbia River Interim Recovery Unit and in the St. Mary-Belly River Interim Recovery Unit is based on information provided in the biological assessment prepared for this project, telephone conversations, and electronic mail with Corps personnel, and other sources of

information. A complete administrative record of this consultation is on file in the Montana Ecological Services Field Office.

We appreciate your interest and cooperation in meeting our joint responsibilities under the Endangered Species Act. Should you have any further questions regarding implementation in Montana, please contact me or Shannon Downey of Montana Ecological Services at (406) 758-6871.

Sincerely,



Ben Conard
Field Supervisor
Northern Idaho Field Office

Enclosure: Biological Opinion, Standard Local Operating Procedures for Endangered Species (SLOPES) for Selected Nationwide Permit Activities Affecting Bull Trout in Western Montana and Northern Idaho

cc: Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Coeur d'Alene, ID (Attn: C. Corsi)
Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, Helena, MT (Attn: M. Jeff Hagner)