

## Decision Memo

### Dungeness Chinook Acclimation Tanks Permit

USDA Forest Service  
Olympic National Forest  
Clallam County, Washington  
T29N, R3W, S30

#### **Background**

In 1995 the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe, Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW), and the Olympic National Forest partnered together to create an acclimation pond off of the Grey Wolf River, in conjunction with the Tribe and WDFW's Chinook captive broodstock program in the Dungeness River. The goal of the captive broodstock is to recover ESA listed threatened Chinook in the watershed. New plans are to expand the acclimation of sub-yearling Chinook to include the Dungeness River with the aim of increasing escapement and subsequent production in the upper watershed where the habitat is more stable. WDFW is requesting a special use permit for the proposed expanded Chinook acclimation operations in the upper Dungeness River.

#### **Decision**

I have decided to issue a special use permit to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife for the operation of the Dungeness Chinook Acclimation Tanks, which will expire December 31, 2016.

#### Project Description

The purpose of the project is to expand sub-yearling Chinook acclimation in the upper anadromous reaches of the Dungeness River, by setting up two acclimation tanks by the 2880/Dungeness bridge. The footprint of the operations described below would be within an existing dispersed campsite on the eastside (opposite side of the Dungeness Forks Campground) of the 2880 bridge. There will be no excavation involved with the operations of the acclimation tanks. Annual operations and maintenance would involve the follow:

#### **Site preparation** (late March – early April):

All of the materials to be used at the site including tanks, pumps, piping and other equipment will be set up and torn down every season. The rearing tanks will measure 5 foot wide by 40 foot long and either be fiberglass or metal frames with a vinyl liner. The 2 pumps used to supply water (one primary and one backup) will be housed inside an insulated box to keep the noise down or have a muffler attached. Each pump will have an intake pipe with a screened end to draw water from the river. The outlet of the pump will be piped to the head end of each pond. The ponds will have a common drain to discharge effluent water and will also be used to release the fish. A travel trailer will be placed near the tanks to house staff. The approximate footprint of the site will be 20 feet by 100 feet.



**Maintenance (April – June):**

Salmonberry and other brush in the immediate area of the ponds may be pruned back during operation.

**Operation (April – June):**

- The ponds will be used to acclimate and release one group of accelerated sub-yearling Dungeness Spring Chinook. The Chinook will be transferred to the ponds from Hurd Creek hatchery in April, to be released in June. While fish are in the tanks on site, a pump will constantly (24 hours/7 days) be running to circulate water. Pumps will be housed in an insulated box to reduce noise.
- During operation of the pond, a hatchery worker will stay in a travel trailer at the site to care for the fish and respond to emergencies. A generator housed inside an insulated box will be used to power the travel trailer.
- A radio alarm system may be used to alert staff at the Dungeness Hatchery of low flow conditions in the ponds.
- Low profile netting over the pond will be employed to protect the fish from predators.

WDFW has obtained their own water quality permit with WA DOE.

**Mitigation Measures****Wildlife**

- Place pumps inside insulated box or use other measures to reduce ambient noise outputs to <92 db.

**Invasive Plants**

- All materials brought on-site each year will be cleaned prior to being brought onto Forest Service land so that they are free of mud or other debris that may contain weed seeds or other propagules. "Materials" include tanks, pumps, piping and other equipment.
- Areas that experience disturbance as a result of activities related to this special use permit will be lightly mulched with weed free mulch, and then seeded with annual rye, native grass seed, or a mixture of the two, no later than two weeks after all tanks, travel trailers, etc. have been removed from the site. This seed will be provided by the Forest Service. Sites to be seeded each year include the footprints of the tanks, travel trailer, etc. where vegetation has been smothered or reduced by shading, areas where brush has been removed, and anywhere that soil has been disturbed.

This action is categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement or an environmental assessment as under the Forest Service Handbook Title 1909.15 Chapter 30, Section 31.2 (3) for the approval, modification, or continuation of minor special uses of National



Forest System lands that require less than five contiguous acres of land. The categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects which may significantly affect the environment, and it does not, individually or cumulatively, have a significant effect (40 CFR 1508.27) on the quality of the human environment. I considered the issues of maintaining water quality and minimizing impacts to threatened species; see the Project Consistency Evaluation Form (PCEF) for this project for detailed analysis.

### **Public Involvement**

This project was listed in the Schedule of Proposed Actions on January 1, 2010. The proposal was provided to the public and other agencies for comment during scoping. No public comments regarding this project were received.

### **Findings Required by Other Laws**

This decision is consistent with the Olympic National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (1990) as amended by the 1994 Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl, and its amendments, as well as its attached Standards and Guidelines as required by the National Forest Management Act.

#### Aquatic Conservation Strategy Consistency Finding and Rationale

I have reviewed the relevant analysis for this project that pertains to the Aquatic Conservation Strategy Objectives (NWFP ROD 1994), and I find that this decision meets these objectives. I have reviewed the analysis of the existing condition and desired future condition or range of natural variability of important physical and biological components as documented in the related watershed analysis and specialist input. I am confident with my finding that this decision will meet the Aquatic Conservation Strategy Objectives.

Threatened and Endangered Species: The proposed action was assessed and found to be consistent with the *Programmatic Biological Assessment for Selected Forest Management Activities, Olympic National Forest*, which addressed potential effects of projects on federally listed threatened species. It was determined that this proposed project may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect the northern spotted owl and its critical habitat, and the marbled murrelet and its critical habitat. This proposed project would have no effect on Puget Sound Chinook salmon and its critical habitat, Puget Sound steelhead trout and its proposed critical habitat, Hood Canal summer chum and its critical habitat, Coastal Puget Sound bull trout and its critical habitat.

Sensitive Species: Potential effects of the proposed project on Regional Forester's Sensitive fish, amphibians, birds, mammals or plants species were evaluated. Effects to sensitive fish, amphibians, birds, and mammals species are as follows:



Species	No Impact	<i>May Impact Individuals Or Habitat, But Will Not Likely Contribute To A Trend Towards Federal Listing Or Cause A Loss Of Viability To the Population or Species</i>
Olympic mudminnow	X	
Salish Sucker	X	
Wash. Coast Chinook Salmon	X	
Puget Sound / St Georgia Chum Salmon	X	
Pacific Coast Chum Salmon	X	
Puget Sound/ St Georgia Coho Salmon	X	
SW Wa / L Columbia Coho Salmon	X	
L Pleasant Sockeye Salmon	X	
Lake Quinault Sockeye Salmon	X	
Puget Sound Coastal Cutthroat Trout	X	
Olympic Peninsula Coastal Cutthroat Trout	X	
Puget Oregonian (snail)	X	
Burrington's Jumping Slug	X	
Warty Jumping Slug	X	
Malone's Jumping Slug	X	
Blue-gray Taildropper Slug	X	
Hoko Vertigo (snail)	X	
Van Dyke's Salamander	X	
Cope's Giant Salamander	X	
Olympic Torrent Salamander	X	
Common Loon	X	
American Peregrine Falcon	X	
Townsend's Big-Eared Bat	X	
Pacific Fisher	X	
Western Pocket Gopher	X	

Potential effects of the proposed project on the Regional Forester's sensitive plant species (12/09/2011 list) known or suspected on the Olympic National Forest were evaluated. Since the footprint of the proposed project is relatively small and appropriate habitat for sensitive species in the project area either does not exist or would not be effected by activities associated with this special use permit, it was determined that a "no impact" statement can be made for all of these species.

Potential effects of the proposed project on Survey and Manage vascular plant, lichen, moss, and fungal species listed in the 2001 ROD were also analyzed. It was determined that either there is no record for these species in the watershed, or potential habitat does not exist within the project area.

Cultural Resources: The proposed project's area of potential effect is confined to an existing dispersed campground along the Dungeness River. There are no known historic properties within the area and there will be no ground disturbance. The project has little potential to affect historic properties and can be excluded from case-by-case review under Appendix A of the



Programmatic Agreement with the Washington State Historic Preservation Officer. In the event that archaeological or historical materials are discovered during project activities work in the immediate vicinity must stop, the area secured, and the concerned tribes and the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation notified.

**Implementation Date**

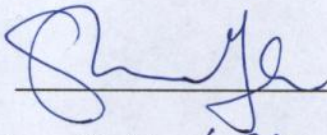
This decision will be implemented on or after March 21, 2012.

**Administrative Review or Appeal Opportunities**

This decision is not subject to administrative appeal.

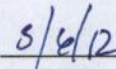
**Contact Person**

For additional information concerning this decision, contact Marc McHenry, Fish Biologist, Hood Canal Ranger District, PO Box 280, Quilcene, WA 98376, ph. 360-765-2231.



Dean Yoshina (for)

Hood Canal District Ranger



Date

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