



# Nez Perce Tribe



## Department of Fisheries Resources Management

Administration • Enforcement • Harvest • Production • Research • Resident Fish • Watershed

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March 20, 2014

Mr. Richard Werner  
Chief, Operations Division  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
201 N 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue  
Walla Walla, Washington 99362-1876

Dear Mr. Werner:

The Nez Perce Tribe (NPT) Department of Fisheries Resources Management (DFRM) is continuing its research on steelhead kelt reconditioning in the Snake River basin. This project is a collaborative study to investigate approaches to increase adult steelhead returns by utilizing the kelt life stage. The Federal Caucus - Bonneville Power Administration, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Bureau of Reclamation – have identified this project as one of the Recovery actions to be funded by Bonneville Power Administration. This effort involves the collection of steelhead at Lower Granite Dam (LWG) and other sites in the Snake and Clearwater rivers and transporting them to Dworshak National Fish Hatchery (DNFH). Similar to 2013, the day-to-day operations of the kelt holding tanks at Lower Granite will be operated by the NPT and CRITFC staff. The purpose of this letter is to describe our anticipated research activities and needs at the LWG juvenile fish bypass facility.

We intend to assist COE personnel at the LWG fish separator. We will monitor the collection of post-spawned steelhead that are placed into temporary holding until transport can occur. The condition of the fish will be assessed by taking length, weight, tissue samples, and other observations while these fish are sedated. An emphasis will be placed on the collection of B-run fish; however, A-run fish may also be selected to ensure a sufficient number of fish are obtained.

We will select up to 150 fish for transport to the DNFH holding facility. To minimize stress on trapped kelts, these fish will not be held more than one or two days prior to transport. Transport will occur in an insulated 450 gallon tank with life support systems of oxygen and re-circulated water. Fish not selected for transport will be PIT tagged and returned to the river.

In addition, we will be assisting the COE's subcontractor UC Davis/Blue Leaf with their overflow weir/orifice biological evaluation study using kelts. Select fish collected at the fish separator will be outfitted with tags and released to the bypass system's Gatewell 5B and resampled at the kelt holding tanks. Additional tissue samples may be taken from a subsample of collected kelts.

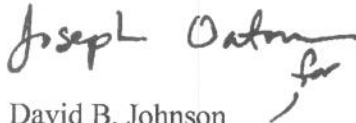
We anticipate NPT and CRITFC personnel to be actively involved in the daily monitoring of the kelt trapping and tagging operations at the facility from March 26<sup>th</sup> through July 11, 2014. The primary activities will be located at the juvenile fish separator and the kelt holding tanks.

Kelt research activities at Lower Granite are identified under the COE's Fish Passage Plan Appendix A: Special Project Operations and Studies Lower Granite. Adult fish handling and holding protocols will follow those established under Appendix G in conjunction with the operation protocols established by the COE's Juvenile Fish Transportation Plan in Appendix B. Furthermore, Activity Hazards Analyses have been completed for our kelt research operations at LWG.

Authorization and ESA permitting is covered under the 2014 Take Determination Letter (14-14 CRITFC 49). Activities specific to kelt collection, holding, handling and transport at Lower Granite Dam are addressed in the development of the permit. State transportation permits will be secured from Idaho and Washington and copies will be provided to Mike Halter at Lower Granite.

This letter serves as a written request to the Corps to conduct this research at the LWG juvenile fish facility in 2014. If you have any questions, please let me know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joseph Oatman" with a stylized flourish underneath.

David B. Johnson  
Program Manager  
Department of Fisheries Resources Management  
Nez Perce Tribe

cc: Moody, Halter, Setter, Dykstra – COE; Hatch, Branstetter, Pierce – CRITFC;  
Nagler, Jenkins – U of I; Johnson B., Hesse, Everett - NPT