



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**



PR 32-13

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, Aug. 23, 2013

CONTACT:

Michael Coffey, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 503-808-3722
Kevin Wingert, Bonneville Power Administration, 503-230-4140
Venetia Gempler, Bureau of Reclamation, 208-378-5020

Draft plan from Federal agencies details specific actions over next five years to benefit fish

Portland, Ore. – Federal agencies and their partners outlined today specific actions that will be taken between 2014 and 2018 to protect Columbia River Basin salmon and steelhead affected by the operation of federal dams on the lower Columbia and Snake rivers.

The draft Implementation Plan shows that actions identified and described by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Bureau of Reclamation and the Bonneville Power Administration – collectively known as the Federal Action Agencies – in hydro, habitat, hatcheries, predation management and research, monitoring and evaluation will meet the requirements to benefit fish as described in NOAA Fisheries’ biological opinion for operation of the dams.

Work under this BiOp is the largest effort of its kind ever undertaken in the Columbia River Basin and is based in sound science. Most populations of wild ESA-listed salmon and steelhead have increased in abundance since the first listings in the 1990s.

The draft implementation plan builds on past accomplishments and lessons during the first five years of the BiOp as well as incorporates new information and adjusts as needed to address emerging issues like cormorant predation.

In implementing projects under the BiOp and the Columbia Fish Accords, the action agencies have forged unprecedented partnerships with Tribes, states, landowners, irrigators and watershed councils throughout the region. The success of this program is built on these partnerships and collaboration.

In July, the Action Agencies released a draft 2013 Comprehensive Evaluation that assessed biological results under the first five years of 2008/2010 BiOp. That evaluation showed that the agencies, working with federal, state and local partners, had met or exceeded tributary habitat goals for more than half the salmon and steelhead populations in the Columbia River Basin.

Performance testing of juvenile fish passage at the mainstem dams along the lower Columbia and Snake rivers indicate that fish passage projects that have been tested are on track to meet the BiOp performance standards of 96 percent survival for spring migrating fish and 93 percent survival for summer migrants.

NOAA Fisheries will draw upon findings from the draft 2013 Comprehensive Evaluation as well as actions contained in the draft Implementation Plan in producing a new supplemental FCRPS BiOp for 2014.

The draft implementation plan is open to a 30-day public comment period with copies available at www.salmonrecovery.gov. The document will be open for public comment from Aug. 23 to Sept. 23. Public comments can be submitted online at www.bpa.gov/comment or by mailing comments to: BPA Public Involvement, P.O. Box 14428, Portland, OR 97293.

###