UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
PROGRAM PLANNING AND INTEGRATION
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

To All Interested Government Agencies and Public Groups:

Under the National Environmental Policy Act, an environmental review has been performed on the following action.

TITLE: **Issuance of an Endangered Species Act (ESA) Section 10(a)(1)(A) Permit for Enhancement and Scientific Purposes to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for Implementation of the Coho Salmon Program at the Iron Gate Hatchery under a Hatchery and Genetic Management Plan**

LOCATION: Iron Gate Hatchery, Klamath River, California

SUMMARY: The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) is applying for an Endangered Species Act (ESA) Section 10(a)(1)(A) permit for activities related to the coho program at Iron Gate Hatchery (IGH). The ESA Section 10 application incorporates a Hatchery and Genetic Management Plan (HGMP) developed by CDFW and PacifiCorp. Through implementation of this HGMP, and issuance of the ESA Section 10 permit, the coho program at Iron Gate Hatchery will be operated to conserve listed species. The HGMP covers activities related to the artificial production of coho salmon at IGH for the period 2014-2024. This includes the interim period until mainstem Klamath River dams of the Klamath Hydroelectric Project (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Project No. 2082) are anticipated to be removed (2020) pursuant to the Klamath Hydroelectric Settlement Agreement (KHSA).

Under the HGMP, an active broodstock management plan, based on real-time genetic analysis, will be implemented each year to reduce inbreeding. The broodstock will consist of 20 to 50 percent natural origin coho salmon to increase population diversity and fitness. Hatchery culture practices will be improved to increase egg-to-smolt survival rates. The increase in survival will be achieved by improving egg incubation conditions and covering raceways with netting (completed in 2011) to reduce bird predation on juveniles. Egg incubation conditions will be investigated to identify measures that will further improve survival.

There are several potential sources of take associated with the IGH coho salmon program including, take associated with the collection of coho salmon spawners at IGH, incidental take associated with monitoring and evaluation activities to enumerate natural origin and hatchery origin coho spawning escapement in streams associated with the Upper Klamath Population unit, and trapping of juvenile coho in Bogus Creek. These levels of take are not anticipated to increase the risk of extinction or cause jeopardy to any of the coho salmon populations in the action area. These levels of take represent a decrease in the quantity of adult coho salmon being used for broodstock annually, and will provide an overall beneficial effect on the Upper Klamath population unit by allowing more adult coho salmon to spawn naturally.

Monitoring and evaluation of information gathered through programs proposed in the HGMP are expected to improve the likelihood for effective application of management measures addressing human-caused factors for decline of the listed coho salmon population. Application of these measures should help protect and increase coho abundance and productivity in the Klamath

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Basin. Increases in coho salmon abundance and productivity are likely under the HGMP, and will potentially lead to the timely recovery of the population, and subsequent resumption of conservation-based fisheries when viable, self-sustaining coho salmon returns are re-established.

RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL:

William W. Stelle, Jr.
West Coast Regional Administrator
National Marine Fisheries Service
7600 Sand Point Way NE
Seattle, Washington 98115

The environmental review process led us to conclude that this action will not have a significant impact on the environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement was not prepared. A copy of the finding of no significant impact (FONSI), including the environmental assessment, is enclosed for your information.

Although NOAA is not soliciting comments on this completed EA/FONSI, we will consider any comments submitted that would assist us in preparing future NEPA documents. Please submit any written comments to the Responsible Official named above.

Sincerely,

TRONVIG.KRISTEN.A.1365886012

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*for* Patricia A. Montanio
NOAA NEPA Coordinator

Enclosure