



# United States Department of the Interior



**FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE**  
**Washington Fish and Wildlife Office**  
Central Washington Field Office  
215 Melody Lane, Suite 119  
Wenatchee, WA 98801

July 12, 2010

## MEMORANDUM

To: Vicki Gempko, Natural Resource Manager  
National Park Service, North Cascades National Park Complex  
Stehekin, Washington

From: Ken S. Berg, Manager  
Central Washington Field Office  
Wenatchee, Washington *Jessica D. Gonzales for*

Subject: Consultation on the Stehekin River Corridor Implementation Plan  
USFWS Reference Number: 13260-2010-F-0036  
Cross Reference: 13260-2010-B-0002, 13260-2010-I-0037

This correspondence transmits the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) Biological Opinion (BO) based upon our review of the proposed Stehekin River Corridor Implementation Plan (Project) in Chelan County, Washington. The Biological Assessment (BA) for this Project and additional information requested by the Service's Central Washington Field Office (CWFO) on December 11, 2009, were received by the Service on February 23, 2010. A complete record for this consultation is on file in the CWFO.

The attached Biological Opinion (BO) describes the effects of the Project on the northern spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis caurina*). The Service concludes in the attached BO that the implementation of the Project is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the northern spotted owl. The attached BO completes consultation on the Stehekin River Corridor Implementation Plan.

The Service appreciates the efforts of the National Park Service to minimize Project effects to the northern spotted owl. If you have further questions about this BO or your responsibilities under the Endangered Species Act, please contact Gregg Kurz of the CWFO in Wenatchee at 509-665-3508, extension 22, or via e-mail at [gregg\\_kurz@fws.gov](mailto:gregg_kurz@fws.gov).

## Executive Summary

The Project area is located along the lower nine miles of the Stehekin River valley, near the head of Lake Chelan, Washington, in a dry forest area. Most of the land is overseen by the National Park Service (NPS), and the remainder is small private parcels.

Since the 1995 there have been several large flood events in the Stehekin Valley, and compared to the previous 50 years, these events are becoming more common. The NPS, North Cascades National Park Complex (NOCA), has proposed a Stehekin River Corridor Implementation Plan (SRCIP) with five primary elements including: (1) rerouting a portion of the valley road out of the floodplain; (2) streambank erosion protection measures; (3) management of large woody debris; (4) recreation facilities development; and (5) identification of public lands for exchange.

One substantial project element, road reroute, will occur near a northern spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis caurina*) nest which was active intermittently between 1998 and 2007. During recent years (2008 and 2009) no spotted owls have been detected and a pair of barred owls occupied the nest. However, in 2010, a resident male was detected in protocol surveys. The Project's construction activities would occur in the summers of 2011 and 2012. The Project will result in approximately 24.5 acres of overall disturbance within northern spotted owl habitat, including 12.8 acres of habitat removal from the permanent removal of vegetation within the road prism and the short-term impacts associated with construction (e.g., noise, human presence, staging areas for equipment). Disturbance effects are anticipated to be discountable.

Based on the analysis presented in this Biological Opinion, Project effects are minor in terms of habitat impacts. Since effects at the Project scale appear to be minor, effects at the province or rangewide scales may not be measurable. As a result, the Service does not anticipate that the proposed action will jeopardize the continued existence of the spotted owl.