



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

National Marine Fisheries Service

P.O. Box 21668

Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668

February 5, 2004

Jerry Ingersoll
District Ranger
Ketchikan/Misty Fjords Ranger District
Tongass National Forest
3031 Tongass Avenue
Ketchikan, Alaska 99901

Re: Boundary Timber Sale Draft Environmental Assessment

Dear Mr. Ingersoll,

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has reviewed the Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) assessment and draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Boundary Timber sale. The proposed Boundary Timber sale is located on Revillagigedo Island northeast of Ketchikan. There are no class I or anadromous streams in the project area. However, the project area includes streams that flow into Ward Creek and White River which are both anadromous streams. In addition, logs will be transported via marine waters that have been identified as EFH.

Section 305(b) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act requires Federal agencies to consult with NMFS on all actions that may adversely affect EFH. NMFS is required to make conservation recommendations, which may include measures to avoid, minimize, mitigate or otherwise offset adverse effects. For the purposes of this EA, EFH includes Ward Creek, the White River and any marine waters into which logs will be placed for transportation or other purposes.

According to the EFH Assessment, a barge loading system will be used to transport timber to processing mills. The location of the log transfer facility (LTF) will not be on Forest Service land and will be determined by the purchaser of the timber sale. The Forest Service has determined that the proposed timber sale may adversely affect EFH, but that this impact will be minimized by implementing the Forest Plan Standard Guidelines and Best Management Practices.

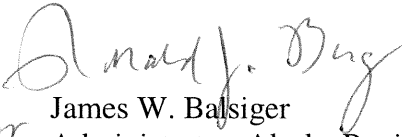
NMFS concurs that the proposed timber sale may adversely impact EFH. For potential impacts to Ward Creek and the White River, the Forest Plan Standard Guidelines and Best Management Practices should sufficiently minimize the impact to EFH. With respect to impacts associated with the LTF, NMFS makes the following conservation recommendations:



1. The requirement to use an existing log-to-barge transfer facility should be expressly included in the timber sale contract. If the use of an existing facility is not possible, the timber sale purchaser should be required to consult with NMFS prior to development of a new facility.
2. The timber sale contract also should include provisions requiring the purchaser to implement measures to control bark accumulation at the LTF.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Katharine Miller at 907-586-7643.

Sincerely,


For James W. Balsiger
Administrator, Alaska Region

cc: Applicant
EPA Juneau, Chris Meade
ADEC, ADF&G, AADGC, ADNR, USFWS, Juneau