



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

National Marine Fisheries Service

P.O. Box 21668

Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668

January 7, 2008

Tim Hazelwood
Hoonah Ranger District
P.O. Box 135
Hoonah, Alaska 99829

RE: Outback and Dove Tail Timber Sales, Comments

Dear Mr. Hazlewood:

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has reviewed the information provided regarding the Outback and Dove Tail timber sales. These sales are single tree selection method in uneven-aged stands and would be harvested utilizing a shovel and cable yarding system. The Outback timber sale is located along Forest road 85765 in VCU 2030, on Sitka Quad D-5 at T 45S, Section 18 and would harvest 35% of the volume of commercial size trees, or approximately 250 thousand board feet, in 30 acres. The Dove Tail timber sale is located along Forest road 8519 in VCU 2170, on Sitka Quad D-4 at T 46S, R63E, Sections 14, 15, 16 and 17 and would harvest 35% of the volume of commercial size trees, or approximately 250 thousand board feet, in 30 acres. Maps of both timber sale locations were provided to NMFS.

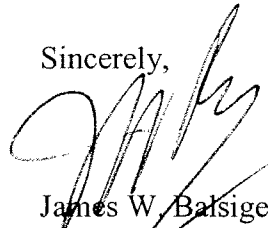
The map for the Outback timber sale shows an anadromous fish stream, Alaska Department of Fish and Game #114-32-10060, which is cataloged for chum and pink salmon in the project area. It appears from the scale provided on this map that the proposed timber sale may be within 100 feet of this cataloged anadromous fish stream. The map for the Dove Tail timber sale shows an anadromous fish stream, Alaska Department of Fish and Game #112-50-10250, and several of its tributaries, which are cataloged for chum, pink and coho salmon, including coho salmon rearing, in the project area. It appears from the map provided that one of the harvest units in the may cross the mainstem of this stream and that another may be within 100 feet of the mainstem and a tributary of this cataloged anadromous fish stream.

According to the Tongass National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan Standards and Guidelines, "No commercial timber harvest is allowed within 100 feet horizontal distance either side of Class I streams and Class II streams which flow directly into a Class I stream." Anadromous streams are Class I streams and are present and possibly encroached upon by timber harvest in the Outback and Dove Tail timber sales. No Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) Assessment has been provided for these projects. Section 305(b) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSFCMA) requires federal agencies to consult with NMFS on all actions that may adversely affect EFH. NMFS recommends that you determine whether the harvest units for these timber sales are within the standards and guidelines recommended riparian buffers, and if so, prepare an EFH assessment, which may include measures to avoid, minimize, mitigate or otherwise offset adverse effects, for NMFS review. NMFS may provide additional conservation recommendations.



Thank you for the opportunity to comment. If you have questions regarding our comments contact Linda Shaw at (907) 586-7585.

Sincerely,



James W. Balsiger
Administrator, Alaska Region

cc: *Chris Meade, EPA Juneau
*Tom Schumacher, ADF&G, Juneau
*Richard Enriquez and Bill Hanson, USFWS, Juneau
*Kevin Hanley, ADEC, Juneau
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