



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**  
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE  
West Coast Region  
1201 NE Lloyd Boulevard, Suite 1100  
Portland, OR 97232

October 24, 2013

RE: Proposed Rule to Reestablish Spring-Run Chinook Salmon in the Okanogan River Subbasin, Washington.

Dear Interested Parties:

We, the National Marine Fisheries Service, propose a rule and seek your comment on our action to designate and establish an experimental population of spring-run Chinook salmon in the Okanogan subbasin in Washington. This proposed designation is made under section 10(j) of the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The purpose of this action is to aid in the recovery of ESA listed Upper Columbia River (UCR) spring-run Chinook salmon.

UCR Chinook salmon have been listed under the ESA since 1999. The listed unit currently includes all naturally spawned populations of spring-run Chinook salmon in accessible reaches of Columbia River tributaries between Rock Island and Chief Joseph Dams, excluding the Okanogan River. Listed UCR spring-run Chinook salmon currently spawn in three river subbasins in eastern Washington: the Methow, Entiat and Wenatchee. A fourth population historically inhabited the Okanogan River subbasin, but was extirpated in the 1930s because of overfishing, hydropower development, and habitat degradation. This proposed experimental population reintroduction is recommended in the Upper Columbia Spring Chinook Salmon and Steelhead Recovery Plan and is designed in a way to not increase regulatory restrictions on landowners and third parties otherwise conducting lawful activities in the Okanogan subbasin.

The proposed rule and draft environmental assessment on this proposed action are available for your review and comment [see our website at [www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov/](http://www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov/) for both documents and other material on this proposed reintroduction].

Please provide your comments by December 9, 2013, through (1) **Federal e-Rulemaking Portal**: Go to <http://www.regulations.gov/#!docketDetail;D=NOAA-NMFS-2013-0140>, click the "Comment Now!" icon, complete the required fields and enter or attach your comments, or (2) **Mail**: Submit written comments to Chief, Protected Resources Division, NMFS, 1201 NE Lloyd Blvd. - Suite 1100, Portland, OR 97232.

For further information please contact Garth Griffin of my staff at (503) 231-2005.

Sincerely,

Donna Darm  
Associate Deputy Regional Administrator

