



IN REPLY REFER TO:

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION
Klamath Basin Area Office
6600 Washburn Way
Klamath Falls, OR 97603-9365



KO-100

2.2.4.23

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL ONLY

Penny Ruvelas, Associate Deputy Regional Administrator and Interim Assistant Regional
California Coastal Area Office
NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service
1655 Heindon Road
Arcata, California 95521

Subject: Notice of Intent to Initiate Formal Consultation under Section 7(a)(2) of the
Endangered Species Act for Klamath Project Operations

The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) is providing this letter to inform you of its intent to initiate formal consultation, pursuant to Section 7(a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.), with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service on operation of the Klamath Project (Project).

Recent changes to federal statutory and case law place legal requirements on Project operations, which can only be met through a new approach to operating the Project. Reclamation is currently in the process of developing new operating criteria for the Project for use beginning in water year 2027 (with April 2027 allocations) in conformance with new Department of the Interior policies, which address these recent legal changes. Thus, Reclamation expects that the Proposed Action analyzed in current ESA Section 7 compliance documents for the Project will be modified in a manner not previously analyzed requiring reinitiation of consultation (50 CFR § 402.16). By early 2026, Reclamation expects to begin development of a Biological Assessment (BA) to evaluate the potential effects of a new Proposed Action on federally listed species and designated critical habitat. Reclamation anticipates submitting a complete ESA consultation initiation package, including a final BA, by late fiscal year 2026 or early fiscal year 2027.

Please reach out to the California-Great Basin's Klamath Basin Area Manager Alan Heck at (541) 880-2588 or aheck@usbr.gov if you have any questions. Reclamation looks forward to working with you and your staff on this very important and time-sensitive initiative.

Sincerely,

Alan C. Heck, Jr.
Area Manager