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Province of
British Columbia

MINISTRY OF
ENVIRONMENT,
LANDS AND PARKS

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February 27, 1997

File No: 34000-01

Bob Murray
District Manager
Lakes Forest District
Ministry of Forests
Box 269 Burns Lake B.C.
V0J 1E0

Dear Bob:

Re: Instream Work Windows for Rainbow Trout in the Lakes District

The Riparian Management Guidebook provides a list of Instream Work Windows for fish species. These Work Windows are intended a general guide. They are approximations of the period of reduced risk for a species over a large area (fishery zone). The fishery zones are based on in large part on drainage boundaries.

The Lakes Forest District is in a somewhat unique position with respect to the fisheries zones in that it straddles the boundary between fishery zones 4 and 5. Fishery zone 4 follows the Fraser River watershed boundary in the Lakes Forest District. Fishery zone 5 follows the Skeena River watershed boundary. Thus watersheds like the Pinkut creek watershed which flow into Babine Lake and the Maxan Lake watershed which flows into the Bulkley river , are in fishery zone 5 while the rest of the Forest District is in fishery zone 4.

Instream work windows for rainbow trout, as given in the Riparian Area Guidebook, are:

Zone 4 - July 15 to April 15, and

Zone 5 - August 15 to January 31.

The large difference between timing windows between different fishery zones within the Forest District appear unwarranted.

Timing windows are designed to provide maximum protection during the most vulnerable life history phases for the species. For rainbow trout the most vulnerable life stages are associated with spawning; specifically the migration period and incubation period up until fry emerge from the gravel. In the Lakes Forest District, although there is some year to year variation depending on weather conditions; rainbow trout usually begin spawning around the end of April (April 30),and fry usually emerge by the third week of July, (July

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21)(personal communication, S. Hatlevik - Regional Fisheries Technician, BC Environment). There is no known difference in the timing of these events between portions of the Lakes Forest District in fisheries zone 4 and portions in fisheries zone 5.

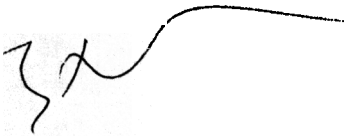
Based on this information a compromise instream work window for rainbow trout in the Lakes Forest District, is:

August 1 to March 31.

This instream work window should be considered in planning all activities which require works in and about a stream in the Lakes Forest District.

It should be noted that the instream work window is only a period of reduced risk. All appropriate measures to avoid the harmful disruption or destruction of fish habitat and to avoid the introduction of deleterious materials (eg. silt) into the stream must still be taken.

Yours Truly,



Tom Olson
Habitat Protection Officer, Lakes District

cc: B. Fuhr
K. Diemert
S. Hatlevik