



Department of Energy

Bonneville Power Administration
P.O. Box 3621
Portland, Oregon 97208-3621

ENVIRONMENT, FISH AND WILDLIFE

July 23, 2012

In reply refer to: KEC-4

To: Parties Interested in the Mid-Columbia Coho Restoration Program, Sponsored by the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation (Yakama Nation)

On July 19, 2012, the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) issued a Record of Decision (ROD) for the Yakama Nation's Mid Columbia Coho Restoration Program located in Chelan and Okanogan Counties, Washington. The ROD describes the agency's decision to continue funding the program, which has been ongoing since 1996. The ROD also describes how BPA analyzed the project proposal by preparing an environmental impact statement (EIS).

Copies Available

We are providing a copy of the ROD along with the final EIS on our website at: www.bpa.gov/go/midcolumbiacoho. If you would like to receive a hard copy of the ROD or final EIS, please call BPA's toll-free document request line at 1-800-622-4519. Please leave a message naming this project, giving your complete address.

Project Background

The Mid-Columbia Coho Restoration Program is an effort to restore self-sustaining populations of coho salmon to the Methow and Wenatchee basins. The program relies on knowledge, information and techniques developed as part of the Yakama Nation's Mid-Columbia Coho Reintroduction Feasibility Project, which has been ongoing since 1996. BPA prepared a final EIS for the program in March 2012. The final EIS describes the program and analyzes the potential environmental effects from program operations and facility construction. It also responds to the comments received during the comment period on the draft EIS.

Over the next 20 to 25 years, the Mid-Columbia Coho Restoration Program would expand the range of the existing program to restore a locally adapted, self-sustaining population of coho salmon in the Methow and Wenatchee basins, capable of supporting harvest. The proposed action includes the release of up to 2.16 million coho smolts over the life of the program. Hatcheries, incubation, and broodstock collection sites used in the existing program would continue to be used. The program also includes the use of up to 24 acclimation ponds for use by juvenile coho salmon located along the Methow and Wenatchee rivers.

Several of these ponds have already been developed and are in use. The remainder of the ponds requires some level of modification to effectively serve as semi-natural rearing and acclimation areas for juvenile coho salmon. The program also includes a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation program and the construction of a small new hatchery on the Wenatchee River.

Project Changes

Since the final EIS was issued in March 2012, the program has eliminated the following sites: Pete Creek, Mason, Chikamin, Minnow, Scheibler, Twisp Weir acclimation site, and the Dryden Hatchery incubation and rearing site. The following backup sites will now be primary sites: George Hatchery (also known as Natapoc), MSRF Chewuch, and Chewuch AF.

Next Steps

The Yakama Nation intends to begin construction on one of the Methow Basin sites, Gold Creek, in July or August 2012. The rest of the Methow Basin sites are proposed to begin construction in 2013, and the Wenatchee Basin sites may begin construction in 2014 or 2015. There will likely be new sites added to the program in the future. Any new sites proposed will be subject to further environmental review and analysis of the potential environmental effects. At that time, you will have an opportunity to comment on the added sites.

For More Information

If you have questions or would like more information about the project, please call me directly at 503-230-5373, or e-mail me at nhweintraub@bpa.gov.

Sincerely,

/s/ Nancy H. Weintraub

Nancy H. Weintraub
Environmental Protection Specialist