Supplement Analysis
for the
Columbia River Basin Tributary Habitat Restoration
(DOE/EA-2126/SA-77)

Pack River Delta 3.0 Restoration Project
BPA project number 1992-061-03
BPA contract number 84045 Rel 4

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy

Introduction

In December 2020, Bonneville Power Administration (Bonneville) and the Bureau of Reclamation completed the Columbia River Basin Tributary Habitat Restoration Programmatic Environmental Assessment (DOE/EA 2126) (Programmatic EA). The Programmatic EA analyzed the potential environmental impacts of implementing habitat restoration actions in the Columbia River Basin and its tributaries. In May of 2023, Bonneville completed a Supplement Analysis (SA), SA-34, that found that island creation and expansion actions did not represent a substantial change to the proposal evaluated in the Programmatic EA and were not significant new circumstance or information relevant to the environmental concerns that were not addressed by the Programmatic EA.

Consistent with the Programmatic EA, this site-specific SA analyzes the effects of the Pack River Delta 3.0 Restoration Project that would implement restoration actions assessed in the Programmatic EA in the Pack River Delta (Delta) along the shores of Lake Pend Oreille in Bonner County, Idaho. The project objectives are to raise and restore upland areas in the Delta by creating new islands where native vegetation can be established and provide wildlife habitat.

This SA analyzes the site-specific impacts of the Pack River Delta 3.0 Restoration Project to determine if it is within the scope of the analysis considered in the Programmatic EA. This SA also evaluates whether the proposed project presents no substantial new circumstances or information about the significance of the adverse effects that bear on the analysis and that were not addressed by the EA. The findings of this SA determine whether additional National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis is needed.

Proposed Activities

Bonneville proposes to fund the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) to raise and restore areas in the Pack River Delta in Bonner County, Idaho by creating three new islands, bringing them above summer-time lake levels so that native vegetation can be established.

The Pack River is the second largest tributary to Lake Pend Oreille (the Clark Fork River being the largest), entering at the north end of the lake approximately ten miles east of Sandpoint, Idaho. The Pack River provides important spawning and rearing habitat and a migration corridor for Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed bull trout (threatened).

The Pack River Delta 3.0 Restoration Project is intended to mitigate the loss of wildlife habitat caused by the operations of the Albeni Falls and Cabinet Gorge dams. Due to the placement of a railroad line breakwater, the Pack River Delta is protected against wind-driven wave erosion from the south, so the loss of wildlife habitat stems partially from the raising and lowering of Lake Pend Oreille by the

operation of Albeni Falls Dam. Further, the Pack River is an undammed river and delivers woody debris and sediment to the Delta. Because soils are exposed after vegetation has died and soils eroded due to fluctuating lake levels, much of the target area has turned into a mud flat, and the sediment delivered by the Pack River is not captured in the delta.

Construction of the Pack River Delta 3.0 Restoration Project would entail the excavation of barrow areas to provide fill that would be used to create the new raised island areas and enhance existing islands. Island creation would result in three new islands bringing them above summer-time lake levels. The total area created by the new islands would be about 8.4 acres. Once completed, the new island areas would be revegetated with native vegetation, which would help establish new emergent zones (partially submerged) surrounding the upland areas. These island creation activities would be conducted from November 2025 to February 2026 when the project area is exposed (not submerged) so that in-water work is not necessary. Excavating the barrow areas would also increase wetland habitat complexity by creating 5 acres of new deep-water habitat and pools. Once the upland areas are established, the new habitat would attract wildlife and improve recreation access and opportunities for sportsmen.

Construction access would be from Sunnyside Road, a local road maintained by Bonner County, Idaho. From Sunnyside Road, temporary access roads would be built to the various construction zones using interlocking construction matting. The Upland area adjacent to the lake is owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE).

These actions would support conservation of ESA-listed species considered in the 2020 ESA consultations with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on the operations and maintenance of the Columbia River System (CRS). This project also supports ongoing efforts to mitigate for effects of the Federal Columbia River Power System on fish and wildlife in the mainstem Columbia River and its tributaries pursuant to the Pacific Northwest Electric Power Planning and Conservation Act of 1980 (Northwest Power Act) (16 U.S.C. (USC) 839 *et seq*.).

Environmental Effects

The Pack River Delta 3.0 Restoration Project would require the use of heavy equipment, including a track-mounted excavator for excavating barrow areas, dump trucks for hauling excavated material, and a bulldozer for constructing new island areas. Operation of these machines for these tasks would disturb and displace soil, create noise, and produce vehicle emissions. Typical effects of these environmental disturbances are described in Chapter 3 of the Programmatic EA and summarized in this document.

Below is a description of the potential site-specific effects and an assessment of whether these effects are consistent with those described in the Programmatic EA. The Pack River Delta 3.0 Restoration Project is designed to improve wildlife habitats over the long term so the adverse effects from construction activity, as detailed below, would be short-term only.

1. Fish and Aquatic Species

The effects of using mechanized equipment and manually working in the Pack River Delta are consistent with the analysis in Section 3.3.1 of the Programmatic EA ("Fish and Aquatic Species"). Section 3.3.1.3 ("Effects Conclusion for the Proposed Action on Fish and Aquatic Species") describes overall low impacts to fish and aquatic species after considering moderate short term adverse effects and beneficial long-term effects.

Bull trout is the only ESA-listed fish that may be affected by the project. While the Pack River Delta is designated as critical habitat for bull trout, all the construction would be in exposed areas because of the reservoir being drawn down to low levels in the fall and winter. The Pack River Delta is designated as foraging, migration and over-wintering (FMO) critical habitat for bull trout, but is used primarily as a migratory corridor between Lake Pend Oreille and spawning areas in the upper Pack River. Because the project would occur in the shallow water portions of the Delta, away from the main channel, there would be no effect on bull trout critical habitat.

The Pack River Delta 3.0 Restoration Project's short-term adverse effects would include exposing, displacing, reconfiguring, or compacting earth using mechanized equipment in the Pack River Delta. Turbidity in the Pack River is not anticipated because there would be no instream excavation, dewatering, or reintroduction of flows over newly exposed soils and gravels. Because of this, effects to fish or other aquatic organisms or their habitats would be low.

The Pack River Delta 3.0 Restoration Project's long-term beneficial effects for fish and aquatic species would include creation of more complex habitats created by excavation of the barrow areas and the establishment of new raised vegetated islands. These beneficial effects are consistent with the analysis in the Programmatic EA.

2. Water Resources

The effects of using mechanized equipment and manually working in the Pack River Delta are consistent with the analysis in Section 3.3.2 of the Programmatic EA ("Water Resources"). Section 3.3.2.3 ("Effects Conclusion for the Proposed Action on Water Resources") describes overall low impacts on water quality after considering moderate short-term adverse effects and beneficial long-term effects.

Construction activities would not impact surface waters and newly created islands would be stabilized so that they do not contribute sediment to the water upon the raising of water levels. Little to no change in turbidity or to overall water quality would occur.

3. Vegetation

Because construction activities for the Pack River Delta 3.0 Restoration Project would occur in a mud flat area normally submerged by Lake Pond Oreille, there would be no effects on vegetation from project construction. The new island areas would be revegetated following construction so there would be an overall net benefit to vegetation, consistent with the analysis in the Programmatic EA.

4. Wetlands and Floodplains

The effects of using mechanized equipment and manually working in the Pack River Delta are consistent with the analysis in Section 3.3.4 of the Programmatic EA ("Wetlands and Floodplains"). Section 3.3.4.3 ("Effects Conclusion for the Proposed Action on Wetlands and Floodplains") describes overall low impacts to wetlands and floodplains after considering short-term adverse effects and beneficial long-term effects.

The Pack River Delta 3.0 Restoration Project is anticipated to have less impact than described in the Programmatic EA to wetlands and floodplains. The island creation portion of the project would utilize material from within the Pack River Delta and so additional material would not be added that would affect the Lake Pend Oreille floodplain. Approximately 6,000 cubic yards of rock would be imported to protect some of the island areas. The relatively small amount of material being imported, in relation to total area of the lake (150 sq miles), would not meaningfully diminish the Lake Pend Oreille floodplain capacity.

The project area would occur in the exposed lakebed of Lake Pend Oreille and is not considered to be a wetland. Therefore, this project would have no effect on wetlands.

5. Wildlife

The effects on wildlife and wildlife habitats from the Pack River Delta are consistent with the analysis in Section 3.3.5 of the Programmatic EA ("Wildlife"). Section 3.3.5.3 ("Effects Conclusion for the Proposed Action on Wildlife") describes overall low impacts to wildlife after considering short-term adverse effects and beneficial long-term effects.

No special-status species of concern or ESA-listed or state-listed wildlife species are present within the project area.

During the fall and winter months, when the mud flats are exposed, some waterfowl can be found utilizing the area when it is not covered in snow and ice. These birds would likely vacate the area during the construction period but can utilize similar mud flats nearby and return once construction is completed. Post-construction, wildlife would have access to increased habitat that would likely increase and improve over time. The adverse level of impacts would be low in the short term and beneficial in the long term, consistent with the analysis in the Programmatic EA.

6. Geology and Soils

The effects of using mechanized equipment and manually working in the Pack River Delta are consistent with the analysis in Section 3.3.6 of the Programmatic EA ("Geology and Soils"). Section 3.3.6.3 ("Effects Conclusion for the Proposed Action on Geology and Soils") describes moderate impacts to geology and soils.

Because of the soft and unstable soil conditions on the Pack River Delta floor, access routes would be built to the various construction zones using interlocking construction matting. This would result in minimal soil compaction and disturbance by heavy equipment which would be lower impacts than was considered in the Programmatic EA. Access to the Delta is directly from Sunnyside Road, so no new access roads constructed by grading or moving soil would be necessary. This level of impact associated with minor compaction under the construction matting would be low, which would be less than what was discussed in the analysis in the Programmatic EA.

7. Transportation

The Pack River Delta 3.0 Restoration Project effects on transportation would be consistent with the analysis in Section 3.3.7 of the Programmatic EA ("Transportation"). Section 3.3.7.3 ("Effects Conclusion for the Proposed Action on Transportation") describes low impacts to transportation.

The Pack River Delta 3.0 Restoration Project would not modify, close, or relocate any public roads. The project would affect transportation during construction as vehicles transporting workers and equipment to the site. Traffic disruption would occur when roads would be blocked by flaggers to allow for the movement of construction equipment. Further, vehicles transporting workers and equipment would be a small addition to typical traffic. For these reasons, the level of impact would be low, consistent with the analysis in the Programmatic EA.

8. Land Use and Recreation

The effects of the Pack River Delta 3.0 Restoration Project are consistent with the analysis in the Programmatic EA, Section 3.3.8, "Land Use and Recreation," which states that land use practices underlying project sites would not be changed for most projects, and recreation impacts would be low.

There would be no effect on land use because the land use designation would not change, and minor short-term effects on recreation would occur from the proposed project. Public recreational opportunities (hunting) on the Delta would be temporarily disrupted during construction. Once completed, the project would result in improved habitat for wildlife, resulting in beneficial effects for recreational users, such as hunters. Because the loss of hunting opportunities would be temporary, and other locations with hunting opportunities exist around Lake Pend Oreille, the level of impact would be low, consistent with the analysis in the Programmatic EA.

9. Visual Resources

The effects of the Pack River Delta 3.0 Restoration Project on the viewshed in the Delta area are consistent with the analysis in the Programmatic EA, Section 3.3.9, ("Visual Resources"). Section 3.3.9.3, ("Effects Conclusion for the Proposed Action on Visual Resources") which describes low impacts to visual resources.

Construction activities would be visible to travelers and residents along Sunnyside Road (directly west of the project area) resulting in short-term visual impacts as described in Section 3.3.9.2 of the Programmatic EA ("Environmental Consequences for Visual Resources").

The project area in November would normally be an exposed mud flat. The ground disturbance from island creation would be visible during construction and last for about four months. When construction is complete, the Pack River Delta would be altered but would be an improvement over the mud flat conditions that would normally be visible when Lake Pend Oreille is at winter-time low levels. During summer months when the lake level rises, the new island areas would be visible but would be visually consistent with the surroundings. This level of impact would be low, consistent with the analysis in the Programmatic EA.

10. Air Quality, Noise, and Public Health and Safety

The effects of the proposed project in the Pack River Delta are consistent with the analysis in Section 3.3.10 of the Programmatic EA ("Air Quality, Noise, and Public Health and Safety"). Section 3.3.10.3 ("Effects Conclusion for the Proposed Action on Air Quality, Noise, and Public Health and Safety") describes low impacts to air quality, noise, and public health and safety.

The Pack River Delta 3.0 Restoration Project would occur in a rural area known as Sunnyside, approximately 10 miles east of Sandpoint, Idaho. There are houses along Sunnyside Road, but they are more than 1,000 feet from the closest construction activities. Because of the distance and the forested edge of Lake Pend Oreille, construction noise would not be noticeable. Dust and exhaust from construction activities is unlikely to affect those residences. No long-term source of emissions or noise would be created. The Pack River Delta 3.0 Restoration Project has no potential to impact public safety infrastructure (e.g., roads, telecommunications, etc.) or to burden emergency services (e.g., police, fire, ambulance, etc.) in the long-term, but increased construction traffic could have a low impact in the short-term. This level of impact would be low.

11. Cultural Resources

The Pack River Delta 3.0 Restoration Project effects on cultural resources would be consistent with the analysis in Section 3.3.11 of the Programmatic EA ("Cultural Resources"). Section 3.3.11.3 ("Effects Conclusion for the Proposed Action on Cultural Resources") describes low impacts to cultural resources since potential effects would be resolved through the National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 consultation process.

Bonneville conducted a cultural resource survey and held consultations with the Idaho State Historic Preservation office, the Nez Perce Tribe, Coeur d'Alene Tribe, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, and Kalispel Tribe of Indians. On April 24, 2025, the Idaho State Historic Preservation Office agreed with the eligibility determinations of sites identified during the field survey. Bonneville and Idaho State Historic Preservation Office agreed that the project may proceed with a finding of no adverse effect. No other responses were received from consulting parties.

12. Socioeconomics and Environmental Justice

The Pack River Delta 3.0 Restoration Project effects are consistent with the analysis in Section 3.3.10 of the Programmatic EA ("Socioeconomics and Environmental Justice"). Section 3.3.10.3 ("Effects Conclusion for the Proposed Action on Socioeconomics and Environmental Justice") describes low impacts to socioeconomics and environmental justice.

As described in the Programmatic EA, the Pack River Delta 3.0 Restoration Project would not require additional permanent employees; require individuals to leave the local area or relocate to it; affect housing available for local populations; displace people; or eliminate residential suitability of lands being restored or in their vicinity. It could generate short-term employment for those directly implementing the restoration actions and would provide small short-term cash inputs to local businesses for fuel, equipment, and meals. This degree of effects would be low.

13. Climate Change

The proposed project's effects on the Pack River Delta are consistent with the analysis in Section 3.3.10 of the Programmatic EA ("Climate Change"). Section 3.3.10.3 ("Effects Conclusion for the Proposed Action on Climate Change") describes low impacts to climate change. Due to the short duration of construction (approximately four months) and the relatively small number of construction vehicles involved, temporary emissions of greenhouse gases from construction would result in a low overall contribution to climate change and greenhouse gas production.

Findings

The types of actions and the potential impacts related to the proposed Pack River Delta 3.0 Restoration Project are similar to those analyzed in the Columbia River Basin Tributary Habitat Restoration Programmatic Environmental Assessment (DOE/EA 2126) and Finding of No Significant Impact. There are no substantial changes in the EA's Proposed Action and no substantial new circumstances or information about the significance of the adverse effects that bear on the analysis in the EA's Proposed Action or its impacts within the meaning of the DOE National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Implementing Procedures (dated June 30, 2025) and 40 CFR § 1502.9.[1] Therefore, no further NEPA analysis or documentation is required.

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NEPA Compliance Officer

[1] Bonneville is aware that the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), on February 25, 2025, issued an interim final rule to remove its NEPA implementing regulations at 40 C.F.R. Parts 1500–1508. Based on CEQ guidance, and to promote completion of its NEPA review in a timely manner and without delay, in this SA Bonneville is voluntarily relying on the CEQ regulations, in addition to the DOE NEPA Implementing Procedures (dated June 30, 2025), to meet its obligations under NEPA, 42 U.S.C. §§ 4321 *et seq*.