



Department of Energy

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

ENVIRONMENT, FISH AND WILDLIFE

October 31, 2011

In reply refer to: KEC-4

To: People Interested in the Lolo Creek Permanent Weir Construction Project

The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), in cooperation with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), will be preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Lolo Creek Permanent Weir Construction Project. We will follow procedures of the National Environmental Policy Act. If the analysis in the EA supports a conclusion that there is no potential for significant impacts, then BPA and BLM will prepare a Finding of No Significant Impact, and may proceed with the project as authorized in a Decision Record through the BLM.

Background: A weir is a fence or other structure placed across the creek to block passage for the purpose of catching and retaining fish. The project site is located on federal land managed by the BLM on Lolo Creek, near the town of Weippe, Clearwater County, Idaho. The legal description is for the project is, Boise Meridian, T. 34 N., R. 4 E., sec. 17, NE ¼ NE ¼. (see enclosed maps).

Lolo Creek has been preliminarily determined to be suitable for Congressional designation into the Wild and Scenic River system, and is considered one of the best whitewater kayaking runs in Idaho. As such, the proposed permanent weir would be designed to maintain the free-flowing nature of Lolo Creek, and the site would be developed to accommodate safe use of the site by kayakers.

Proposal: BPA is proposing to fund the replacement of the existing 10 year old seasonal fish weir with a permanent weir designed to operate safely over a range of flows. Due to icing in the winter and high flows in the spring, the existing seasonal weir cannot be safely deployed during the typical adult steelhead migration period. After construction, the Nez Perce Tribe, the current holder of a right-of-way granted by the BLM, will continue to operate and maintain the weir. The weir will be used to monitor federally-listed Snake River steelhead and for the collection of spring Chinook salmon adults to support on-going supplementation programs in the watershed.

Preliminary Issues:

Issues currently identified by BLM and BPA specialists for analysis in the EA include:

1. How will the weir and associated site facilities be designed, constructed and operated to protect the ESA-listed Snake River steelhead, spring Chinook salmon, bull trout and other sensitive aquatic resources of concern?
2. How will the proposal affect the W&S River designation status and associated outstanding remarkable values of Lolo Creek?
3. How will the proposed action affect the BLM designated Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) and associated unique and high value resources.
4. What measures will be taken to protect water quality under the proposal?

5. How will operation of the facility affect local river hydraulics and the free-flowing nature of Lolo Creek?
6. How will put-in and take out areas for kayaking along with public parking and use facilities be provided by the proposal?
7. How will the proposal affect sensitive wildlife species?
8. What are the aesthetic features of the site and how will they be influenced by the proposal?
9. How will the proposal be managed to protect cultural resources including the Nez Perce National Historic Trail and the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail?
10. How will the proposal be managed to protect vegetation resources that occur in the project area?

How to be Involved: Your comments are requested during the scoping period to ensure any concerns you may have with the project are addressed in the EA. You will be invited to comment on the Preliminary EA when it is ready. If you would like to receive a copy of the EA, please check that box on the enclosed card and **return the card by December 2, 2011**. If you would like your name taken off the project mail list, please check that box. If the card is not returned, you will be notified when the Preliminary EA is available for review.

For More Information: If you need more information or have any questions or comments at this time, please write me at the address above, call me toll free at 1-800-622-4519, or e-mail me at dagambetta@bpa.gov. You may also submit comments to BPA online at www.bpa.gov/go/lolocreekweir. Thank you for your interest in our work.

Sincerely,

/s/ Daniel A. Gambetta

Daniel A. Gambetta
Environmental Project Manager

Enclosures:
Map
Reply Card
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