



Department of Energy

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

ENVIRONMENT, FISH AND WILDLIFE

December 4, 2003

To: People Interested in the Methow Valley Irrigation District (MVID) Fish Screen Replacement Proposal (Project No. 1996-034-01)

We would like to hear from you on the Preliminary Environmental Assessment (EA) for the MVID Project that was prepared by Bonneville Power Administration (BPA). The proposed project is located on the Methow and Twisp Rivers in Okanogan County, Washington. BPA proposes to fund fish screen replacements along the MVID east and west irrigation diversion canals. The Preliminary EA on this action is enclosed for your review and comments.

Background: In 1997, BPA completed the Methow Valley Irrigation District Project EA, which analyzed a range of alternatives for the MVID's irrigation system. BPA's 1997 EA addressed the replacement of MVID instream diversions and open canals with groundwater wells and pressurized pipe as the preferred alternative. The EA at that time also considered a partial upgrade alternative, dissolution of the MVID, and a no-action alternative. A Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was issued for the preferred alternative at that time. Some of the alternatives in the 1997 EA overlap with the currently proposed MVID fish screen replacements. However, since the 1997 EA and FONSI were completed, a number of circumstances relative to the project have changed. We have addressed these changes and the new proposal in this Preliminary EA.

Proposal: The scope of the current proposed action consists of replacing deteriorated, outdated, and ineffective fish screens along the MVID east and west diversions. The proposed new screens would comply with current biological protection criteria to reduce mortality and injury to both anadromous and resident fish. In anticipation of the Washington Department of Ecology's revised Administrative Order on MVID diversion flow rates, the fish screen replacement will be designed to accommodate a range of diversion flows.

Goals: The goals of this fish screen replacement proposal are to prevent injury and mortality of juvenile and adult fish, support the restoration of fish populations in the Twisp and Methow Rivers, comply with appropriate Federal and State standards and criteria for fish protection, and meet the terms of the National Marine Fisheries Service/MVID consent decree.

Additional Copies: The Preliminary EA, 1997 EA, and other project information are available on our website <http://www.efw.bpa.gov/cgi-bin/PSA/NEPA/SUMMARIES/MethowValley>. If you would like more copies of this Preliminary EA, or a copy of the 1997 EA, please call our toll-free document request line at: 1-800-622-4519. Leave a request by identifying the name of the document(s) you would like and give your name and complete mailing address.

Comment Close Date: Any comments you may have must be received at BPA by close of business January 2, 2004, to ensure your comments are considered in our decision on this project.

How to Comment: Your comments may be filed in one of the following ways: 1. Write a letter to Communications, Bonneville Power Administration - DM-7, P.O. Box 14428, Portland, OR, 97293-4428; 2. Call toll free at 1-800-622-4519; or 3. e-mail us at comment@bpa.gov.

Please be sure to label your comments “the MVID Fish Screen proposal” in your communications, and state your comments clearly. It will help us if you keep in mind the needs and objectives of the proposal. If you believe additions or corrections need be made, please support your recommended changes with substantiated information/data, if possible.

For More Information: If you need more information or have any questions, please call me at 503-230-7692 or e-mail me at: cjkeller@bpa.gov. You may also contact the Project Manager, Ms. Linda Hermeston, at 503-230-4764 or e-mail her at llhermeston@bpa.gov. Thank you for your interest in this project.

Sincerely,

/s/ Carl J. Keller

Carl J. Keller
Environmental Project Manager

Enclosure:
Preliminary EA