

United States Government

Department of Energy
Bonneville Power Administration

memorandum

DATE: June 7, 2005

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEC-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Watershed Management Program EIS (DOE/EIS-0265/SA-208)

TO: Christopher Furey, KEWR-4
Fish and Wildlife Project Manager

Proposed Action: Columbia Basin Water Transactions Program (Fiscal Year 2005)

Project No: 2002-013-00

Watershed Management Techniques or Actions Addressed Under This Supplement Analysis (See App. A of the Watershed Management Program EIS): 4.18: Purchase / Negotiate Water Right; 4.19: File for Instream Water Right

Location: Watersheds throughout the Columbia River Basin

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, implemented by Walla Walla Watershed Alliance (Washington), Oregon Water Trust, Washington Water Trust, Montana Water Trust, Trout Unlimited – Montana Water Project, Deschutes River Conservancy (Oregon), and Idaho Department of Water Resources

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA proposes to fund water rights acquisition projects in several basins across Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Montana. The funding will be administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation on behalf of the Columbia Basin Water Transactions Program. The water rights acquired will be left instream to increase flow and improve water quality. In general, the water left instream would otherwise have been withdrawn for irrigation or other consumptive use. Increasing instream flow of water-limited streams benefits fish listed under the Endangered Species Act.

The individual projects are detailed in the attached checklists and summary memoranda. Some of the transactions have been proposed for funding immediately, while others are pending further review. Transactions pending further review include two proposed transactions in Water Resources Basin 74, Lemhi County, Idaho, Tumalo Irrigation District conserved water project, Squaw Creek lease, and Lostine River forbearance in Oregon, and Rock Creek lease in Montana. Some of the proposed transactions may not be funded at all, or if approved may be deferred until fiscal year 2006.

The details available on the checklists for each transaction include subbasin, amount of water acquired, duration, location, type (permanent or temporary) and cost of the acquisitions. In most cases, the projects are temporary leases of water rights, usually proposed for the benefit of streams that tend to be dewatered during the irrigation season. Some are permanent acquisitions, while others involve the use of less common arrangements such as diversion reduction agreements or water banks. For more information, see the attached checklists.

Analysis: The compliance checklists for these projects were completed by staff of the qualified local entities that implement the transactions, and these checklists meet the standards and guidelines for the Watershed Management Program Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Record of Decision (ROD).

All of the water transactions are negotiated with voluntary participants, and none involve any construction or other ground disturbing work. Therefore, BPA does not engage in any cultural resources, endangered species, or other permitting activities. In some cases applicable state water law may require permits for the transactions, which would be completed by the local entities implementing the proposed projects. Additionally, all of the local entities implement public outreach processes which vary based on type of transaction and state or local policies.

Findings: The project is generally consistent with the Northwest Power Planning Council's Fish and Wildlife Program, as well as BPA's Watershed Management Program EIS (DOE/EIS-0265) and ROD. This Supplement Analysis finds that: 1) implementing the proposed action will not result in any substantial changes to the Watershed Management Program that are relevant to environmental concerns; and 2) there are no significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns and bearing on the Watershed Management Program or its impacts. Therefore, no further NEPA documentation is required.

/s/ Rick Yarde 6-8-05

Richard Yarde
Environmental Specialist – KEC-4

CONCUR:

/s/ Kathy Pierce

Katherine Semple Pierce
NEPA Compliance Officer – KEC-4

DATE: 6-8-05

Attachments:

Watershed Checklists and Memoranda

cc: (w/o attachments)

Mr. Andrew Purkey, NFWF, 806 SW Broadway, Suite 750, Portland, Oregon 97205