

United States Government

Department of Energy  
Bonneville Power Administration

# memorandum

DATE: June 9, 2005

REPLY TO  
ATTN OF: KEC-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Watershed Management Program (DOE/EIS-0265/SA-212)

TO: Sabrina Keen  
Fish and Wildlife Project Manager – KEWU-4

**Proposed Action:** Restoring Anadromous Fish Habitat in Lapwai Creek Project

**Project No:** 2002-070-00

**Watershed Management Techniques or Actions Addressed Under This Supplement Analysis**

**(See App. A of the Watershed Management Program EIS):** 1.6 Install large Woody Debris Structures; 1.7 Install Other Habitat Complexity Structures; 1.8 Bank Protection Through Vegetation Management; 1.10 Structural Bank Protection Using Engineered Structures; 1.13 Culvert Removal/Replacement to Improve Fish Passage; 2.1 Maintain Healthy Riparian Plant Communities; 2.7 Avoid Exotic Species; 2.9 Mechanical Removal of Vegetation; 2.10 Biological Vegetation Control; 2.11 Hand Pulling; 2.12 Prescribed Burning; 3.1 Site Characterization/Environmental Monitoring; 3.17 Sediment Basins; 3.18 Sediment and Water Control Basins; 6.5. Water Supply: Pipeline; 6.7 Water Supply: Trough; 6.8 Water Supply: Well; 6.10 Access: Fencing; 7.7 Reduce Risk of Road-Related Surface Erosion; 7.8 Drainage Control to Minimize Erosion and Sedimentation; 7.13 Grade Road; 7.14 Ditch and Culvert Cleaning; 7.19 Water Bars.

**Location:** Lapwai Creek Watershed within the Clearwater River Subbasin of the Mountain Snake Province, Nez Perce and Lewis County, Idaho

**Proposed by:** Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) and the Nez Perce Soil and Water Conservation District

**Description of the Proposed Action:** Lapwai Creek historically provided spawning and rearing habitat for A-run wild summer steelhead in the Clearwater River Subbasin. However, the regular occurrence of extreme high runoff events and low summer flows, high summer water temperatures, poor instream/riparian cover, and siltation of spawning gravels are limiting factors in the watershed that have reduced the suitability of Lapwai Creek and tributaries as quality spawning and rearing habitat for anadromous and resident cold water fish. In addition, sediment, nutrients, and bacteria from existing land-use practices adversely impact water quality. The primary sources of pollutants and the causes of habitat degradation are land use practices, including agricultural, livestock, forestry and roads.

The Nez Perce Soil and Water Conservation District developed this Project to enhance steelhead trout natural production within the Lapwai Creek watershed by improving salmonid spawning and rearing habitat. The project funds coordination, planning, technical assistance, BMP design and implementation, monitoring, and educational outreach to identify and correct problems associated with agricultural and livestock activities impacting water quality and salmonid habitat. The project accelerates the implementation of the Lapwai Creek Public Law 566 small watershed program.

It also addresses specific needs identified in the Clearwater Subbasin Summary 2001 Draft and the 2000 Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program documents. Watershed improvement activities include: Livestock waste management systems, fencing, erosion control practices, water developments, control of weeds, riparian/wetland enhancements, and projects to create in-stream habitat complexity.

Measures will be implemented to promote healthy native plant communities in riparian areas and floodplains. Revegetation practices include seeding and planting in riparian and floodplain areas to protect and stabilize banks and minimize erosion and sedimentation. Vegetation management will include control of invasive plant species that are considered noxious weeds. The collected data will be used in planning efforts to prioritize effective habitat restoration activities, changes in current land management practices, and vegetation management activities.

Habitat restoration measures that will be implemented include measures to prevent or limit further channelization, installation of habitat complexity structure including large woody debris and large boulders, enhancement of fish passage through the removal of barriers, and enhancement of spawning and rearing habitat.

Changes will be made to existing land and management practices to minimize adverse effects to wildlife and fish habitat. This will address impacts from grazing animals, through the installation of off-channel water facilities for livestock, fencing riparian areas in order to restrict cattle access, and managing livestock waste. Existing road maintenance practices will be modified in order to improve drainage and minimize the amount of sediment that reaches waterways.

**Analysis:** The compliance checklist for this project was completed by Lynn Rasmussen, project manager with the Nez Perce Soil and Water Conservation District (signed on March 11, 2005, attached). The Project meets the standards and guidelines for the Watershed Management Program Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Record of Decision (ROD).

Pursuant to its obligations under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), BPA requested a list of listed and proposed species with the potential to occur in the project area from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The letter from the USFWS (dated May 2005, attached) states that habitat for the following species under USFWS jurisdiction may occur in the project area: gray wolf (experimental/non-essential population, Canada lynx, bald eagle, bull trout, and Spaulding's catchfly. The letter also listed the following listed species under the jurisdiction of NOAA Fisheries with the potential to occur in the project area: spring/summer chinook salmon, sockeye salmon, and steelhead.

Local wildlife and fisheries biologists confirmed that steelhead is the only listed species known to occur in the project area. Based on the following information that biologists provided, BPA made a determination of No Effect as a result of project activities for all the species listed above, except steelhead, and did not initiate informal consultation. As explained below, consultation was done for steelhead, with NOAA Fisheries.

- Gray wolf: No known occurrences in the watershed, habitat is not suitable because it is primarily non-irrigated cropland (pers. comm.. Ray Henecke, Biologist, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, June 1, 2005)
- Canada lynx: No suitable habitat within the project area (pers. comm. Ray Henecke, Biologist, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, June 1, 2005)

- Bald eagle: Wintering areas occur on the mainstem of the Clearwater River; to which Lapwai Creek is a tributary; there will be no effects because all project activities occur outside the wintering season (pers. comm. Ray Henecke, Biologist, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, June 1, 2005)
- Bull trout: No known presence in the project area (pers. comm. Ray Henecke, Biologist, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, June 1, 2005 and Clint Chandler, Fish Biologist, Nez Perce Tribe)
- Fall chinook salmon: No known presence in Lapwai Creek but they are known to utilize the mainstem Clearwater River; project activities along Lapwai Creek are not expected to impact the water quality of the Clearwater River except in a beneficial way over the long term (pers. comm. Ray Henecke, Biologist, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, June 1, 2005 and Clint Chandler, Fish Biologist, Nez Perce Tribe)
- Spring/summer chinook salmon: No known presence in the project area; the Nez Perce Tribal Fisheries Biologists have surveyed lower Lapwai Creek and found juvenile Chinook using the lower portion of Lapwai Creek as refugia (no spawning activities) 0.25 miles upstream of the confluence of Lapwai Creek and the Clearwater River; project activities within Lapwai Creek are not expected to impact the water quality of the lower Lapwai Creek area or Clearwater River except in a beneficial way over the long term (pers. comm. Ray Henecke, Biologist, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, June 1, 2005 and Clint Chandler, Fish Biologist, Nez Perce Tribe)
- Sockeye salmon: No known presence in the project area (pers. comm. Ray Henecke, Biologist, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, June 1, 2005 and Clint Chandler, Fish Biologist, Nez Perce Tribe)
- Fall chinook: No known presence in the project area (pers. comm. Ray Henecke, Biologist, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, June 1, 2005 and Clint Chandler, Fish Biologist, Nez Perce Tribe)
- Spaulding's catchfly: There are no known locations in the project area and no potential habitat for this species (native grasslands, shrublands, and forested areas with an Idaho fescue understory and other native plant associates) in areas where activities are planned. There is one area within the watershed with potential habitat, the Winchester/Culdesac Canyon and if activities are contemplated in this area, surveys will be done early in the summer to determine if the species is present; if present USFWS will be consulted prior to implementation of project activities.

In the future if any activities are proposed that could affect any of these listed species, consultation with USFWS will be initiated if there could be any effect to this species. Consultation will also be initiated if any project activities occur in areas where listed species could be affected.

One listed fish species occurs in the project area. Steelhead, a threatened species under the jurisdiction of NOAA fisheries, occurs in most of the Project area waterways. Project activities that could affect this species have or will undergo Endangered Species Act Section 7 Consultation using the BPA Fish and Habitat Improvement Program (HIP) Biological Opinion (BO), if it is applicable. This programmatic consultation also encompasses consultation with NOAA for Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. In order to conduct Section 7 and EFH consultation using the HIP BO, all proposed activities must fall within the activities covered, all effects must have been considered, the activity must be conducted in accordance with the applicable terms and conditions identified in the HIP BO. If requirements to use the HIP BO are not met, individual Section 7 consultation will be carried out if project activities could result in an effect to Steelhead.

A cultural resource review of the portions of the proposed project sites that will be subject to ground disturbance has or will be completed prior to implementation of those activities. This review includes a literature search and a field survey by a qualified cultural resource specialist. Tribes with an interest in the area and the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) are consulted prior to implementation of project activities.

If cultural deposits are found during any phase of the proposed project, or if the nature of the undertaking changes ground-disturbing work will cease, and a cultural resource specialist and the SHPO will be contacted immediately.

Standard protection measures for activities in or near streams and wetlands will be followed during the implementation of the Project. The necessary permit approvals for this project have either been obtained or are in the process of being obtained. No construction will be authorized to begin until the applicant has obtained all required permits and approvals.

Public involvement has taken place as part of the Project. The Project will be implemented on private land with the permission of landowners.

Public meetings held each year and newsletters sent to watershed residents on a regular basis provide project updates and educational items. A public survey was sent out to watershed residents in June 2004. Contacts are made on a regular basis with agencies and Tribes, including the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Nez Perce County, Idaho Department of environmental Quality, Idaho Soil Conservation Commission, NOAA Fisheries, and staff at the Nez Perce Tribe.

**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/ Kimberly St. Hilaire  
Kimberly R. St.Hilaire  
Environmental Protection Specialist

CONCUR:

/s/ Katherine Pierce  
Katherine Pierce  
Acting NEPA Compliance Officer

DATE: June 10, 2005

Attachments:  
NEPA Compliance Checklist for Watershed Management Projects, signed March 11, 2005  
USFWS Species Letter, Snake River Fish and Wildlife Office, May, 2005

cc: (w/ attachments)  
Ms. Lynn Rasmussen, Project Manager, Nez Perce Soil and Water Conservation District