

United States Government

Department of Energy

Bonneville Power Administration

memorandum

DATE: April 19, 2006

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEC-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Watershed Management Program Final EIS (DOE/EIS-0265/SA-259)

TO: Jan Brady - KEWR-4
Fish and Wildlife Project Manager

Project Title: Idaho Fish Screening Improvement - SEF-15 Diversion Project

Project No: 1994-015-00 - SEF-15

Watershed Management Techniques or Actions Addressed Under This Supplement Analysis (See Appendix A of the Watershed Management Program EIS): 4.23 Intake and Return Diversions Screens; 4.25 Consolidate/Replace Irrigation Diversion Dams

Location: East Fork Salmon River, T9N, R17E, Sec. 28

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) and Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG)

Description of the Proposed Action: This memorandum provides environmental clearance for the installation and construction of a new point of diversion fish screen on the East Fork of the Salmon River (SEF-15). The project objectives are to improve safe upstream and downstream fish passage for all species and provide unhindered passage to spawning and rearing habitat within the watershed. The work would replace an existing rotary drum screen in the irrigation ditch with a new vertical flat plate screen and headgate control structure located at the point of diversion. This new screen is designed to meet current NOAA Fisheries Juvenile Fish Screen Criteria and NMFS criteria for anadromous fish passage. The project will eliminate juvenile fish entrainment problems. The new point of diversion fish screen will compliment the Bureau of Reclamation diversion structure.

The work is planned to occur during the low water period in the spring of 2006. Prior to any construction, the immediate construction area and downstream impact area will be intensively observed by an IDFG biologist for the presence of adult steelhead or redds. If they are found, all work will be suspended for a more acceptable construction time. A cofferdam will be utilized to divert stream channel flow around the area of construction. An alternative (approximately 4 ft. high by 10 feet wide by 90 feet long earthen/rock cofferdam will be constructed within the stream channel to dewater the area where the new screen will be installed. A fish salvage operation will be conducted by an IDFG biologist for any fish that might become stranded within the dewatered area of the coffer dam. An excavator working in the stream channel will be necessary for the construction and removal of the cofferdam. Once dewatered, conventional forms will be constructed and concrete walls poured for the new structure. Pumping behind the cofferdam will be required during construction with the discharge directed into the irrigation ditch. Installation of the new structure is anticipated to last approximately three weeks.

Access to the site for construction will be via existing roads currently used by IDFG screen maintenance personnel. The entire land is on private property.

Analysis: The BPA NEPA compliance checklist for the SEF-15 Diversion Project was prepared by Mr. Patrick D Murphy, IDFG Fishery Biologist in Salmon, Idaho on March 28, 2006. Information from these checklists meets the standards and guidelines for the Watershed Management Program Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Record of Decision (ROD).

The species listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) that could be in the project area are the Snake River sockeye salmon (t), Snake River spring Chinook salmon (t), Snake River steelhead (t), bull trout (t), and designated Critical Habitat for steelhead. It is uncertain when the optimal instream work window is at the project site because various salmonid species known to occupy in this stretch of the East Fork have different life cycles and therefore use the river at different stages and timeframes.

The IDFG Screen Program has programmatic coverage for this project. The project is covered under an ESA Section 6 Cooperative Agreement with the USFWS and a corresponding ESA Section 7 Biological Opinion on the validity of the Section 6 Agreement. The Section 6 Agreement (dated January 17, 1995) covers all species under the authority of the USFWS. Additionally, the Idaho Screen Program has support by the ESA Section 7 informal consultation with a Biological Evaluation dated January 14, 2000 followed by concurrence from the National Marine Fisheries Service (now NOAA Fisheries) dated January 31, 2000, and concurrence from the USFWS on May 18, 2000. This covers installation of fish screens and head gate control structures affecting all species under NMFS's authority. A NOAA Fisheries concurrence letter, dated September 22, 2003, concludes that fish screen activities are not likely to adversely affect listed Snake River salmon and steelhead, designated critical habitat, or Essential Fish Habitat. The concurrence extends into the future without an end date. There are no ESA-listed threatened or endangered plants or animal species that would be affected by the proposed actions at SEF-15.

Because of the proposed in-water nature of work with this diversion, IDFG assisted BPA in initiating ESA compliance in accordance with the Habitat Improvement Program (HIP) Biological Opinion for anadromous fish. Accordingly, IDFG submitted a March 29, 2006, HIP Form 1 that addresses realistic project effects, fish presence in the project area, anticipated project effects, and offered conservation measures relevant to the proposed diversion improvements. It is noted that the East Fork Salmon River is a major salmonid producer in the upper Salmon River Basin.

In accordance with the HIP BO, the following measures are being offered by the IDGF to comply with conservation of the Federally-listed salmonids:

1. The work will occur when fish are least likely to occur in the project area and be affected. Construction is planned after steelhead and bull trout have emerged from the gravels. There may be overlap with some adult steelhead spawning in the watershed prior to high water, and the project biologist will survey the immediate construction area and downstream impact area for adult steelhead or redds prior to any construction activities. If spawning salmonids or redds are observed, construction will be suspended until such time that fish are not in the immediate project area,
2. The screens would be periodically maintained, such as cleaning debris or replacing parts, to ensure their proper functioning and meet project objectives,
3. Localized sediment discharges would be mitigated by the use of Best Management Practices to require use of coffer dams to isolate instream work from fish, silt barriers to minimize the rate and volume of silt discharges, and other means to trap silt,

4. The project is designed for safe fish passage that will prevent entrainment and entrapment in accordance with: a. NOAA Fisheries fish criteria, b. "Anadromous Salmon Passage Facility Guidelines and Criteria", and c. an interactive design process with NOAA Fisheries' engineering staff,
5. Fish screens will be sized to match the historic water use,
6. Operations and maintenance will be conducted in accordance with an Operation and Maintenance Plan,
7. A project design to enable irrigators to comply with state water right rules and regulations,
8. Use of the Catalogue of Stormwater Best Management Practices for Idaho Cities and Counties will be used as the construction standard/direction,
9. Use of BMP 8 will address construction spill prevention and control; Contractors will be required to have on the construction site a spill containment kit; All possible steps will be taken to minimize machine lubricants from entering the East Fork Salmon River; Construction staging will occur well away from the stream course,
10. Clean rip-rap rock materials will be deposited instream,
11. Sedges, willows, and other herbaceous plants will be used to accelerate the revegetation process along stream banks; disturbance of existing vegetation on ditch banks and river banks will be minimized.

We believe the effects to the aquatic system and listed fish from project implementation are consistent and commensurate with the HIP BO, and that stated measures will be employed.

An intensive cultural resource survey was conducted at the project area on October 28, 2004 by Bruce Blackmer of the Natural Resources Conservation Service. An Idaho NRCS Archaeological and Historical Inventory Record Form A was prepared (NRCS project no. NRCS-04-5327; Potaman Peak/Bowery Creek USGS 7.5 min. topo quadrangle map). This form revealed that cultural resources were not identified but that if cultural resources are encountered during the course of the project, then all ground disturbing activities will cease until a qualified archaeologist is consulted. Additionally, as part of the 745-acre Baker Ranch Conservation Easement Project in 2002, the SHPO reviewed a cultural resources investigation (in their August 28, 2002 letter) that included the SEF-15 property. No cultural resources were identified at the project site.

The project is small and does not affect large numbers of people. The Upper Salmon Basin model Watershed program circulars and local newspaper articles are written about projects similar to this SEF-15. The Salmon River is sparsely populated and the Salmon Recovery effort is very large. Exposure of the project has been by word-of-mouth, residents have been involved in similar projects, including state code, local political interest, and agency cooperative efforts. The following are partners for this project: landowners, the Salmon River Coalition, Natural Resources Conservation Service, NOAA Fisheries, FWS, Bureau of Reclamation, Upper Salmon Basin Watershed, Shoshone-Bannock Tribe, and IDFG.

This water diversion improvement is exempt from a 404 permit in accordance with CRF33 223.4(a)(3). Likewise, because of the 404 exemption, no IDEQ permit/authorization is required.

Findings: The fisheries improvements are generally consistent with: the Northwest Power and Conservation Council's Fish and Wildlife Program; BPA's Watershed Management Program Final EIS (DOE/EIS-0265) and ROD. The project conforms to the IDFG fish screen standards; NOAA Fisheries Salmonid Fish Passage Facility Guidelines and Criteria; the State's Fishery Management Plan, Idaho Bull Trout Recovery Plan; NOAA Fisheries Salmon Recovery Plan; and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Bull Trout Recovery Strategy. 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. The proponent shall comply with the terms, provisions, and conditions of the appropriate permits and authorizations. Environmental provisions are on the attachment. Support documentation to this environmental clearance may be located in the KEC project file.

/s/ Carl J. Keller

Carl J. Keller

Fish and Wildlife Biologist - KEC-4

CONCUR:

/s/ Katherine S. Pierce

Katherine S. Pierce

NEPA Compliance Officer -KEC-4

DATE: April 20, 2006

Attachment

Environmental Provisions

cc: (w/ attachment)

Mr. Patrick Murphy, Staff Fishery Biologist, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, P.O. Box 1336, Salmon, ID 83467

Mr. Lynn D. Stratton, Screen Program Coordinator, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, P.O. Box 1336, Salmon, ID 83467

Attachment

ENVIRONMENTAL PROVISIONS

East Fork Salmon River (SEF-15)

The following provisions apply:

- The contractor shall comply with the appropriate ESA documentation designed to protect and conserve listed species from the possibility of human-caused adverse effects during project construction, including Section 6 Cooperative Agreement, Section 7 consultation, and the Habitat Improvement Plan Biological Opinion, accordingly. This includes the following proposed conservation measures:
 1. Immediately before construction, the construction area will be surveyed by an IDFG biologist for the presence of adult steelhead or redds; The work will occur after gravel emergence and when fish are least likely to occur in the project area and be affected; If spawning salmonids or redds are observed, construction will be suspended until such time that fish are not in the immediate project area; A fish salvage operation will be conducted for any fish that may become stranded within the dewatered area of the coffer dam.
 2. The screens would be periodically maintained to ensure their proper functioning and meet project objectives.
 3. Localized sediment discharges would be mitigated by the use of Best Management Practices to include use of coffer dams to isolate instream work from fish, silt barriers to minimize the discharge rate, and other means to trap silt.
 4. Project construction shall be in accordance with: a. NOAA Fisheries fish criteria, b. “Anadromous Salmon Passage Facility Guidelines and Criteria”, and c. an interactive design process with NOAA Fisheries’ engineering staff.
 5. Fish screens will be sized to match the historic water use.
 6. implementation of an Operation and Maintenance Plan.
 7. A project design to enable irrigators to comply with state water right rules and regulations.
 8. Use of the Catalogue of Stormwater Best Management Practices for Idaho Cities and Counties.
 9. Use of BMP 8 to address construction spill prevention and control; Contractors to have a spill containment kit at the project site; All possible steps will be taken to minimize machine lubricants from entering the East Fork Salmon River; Construction staging will occur well away from the stream course.
 10. Clean rip-rap rock materials will be deposited instream.
 11. Sedges, willows, and other herbaceous plants will be used to accelerate the revegetation process along stream banks; disturbance of existing vegetation on ditch banks and river banks will be minimized.
- If historic/cultural resources are identified at the project site during project construction, then all ground disturbing activities will cease until a qualified archaeologist is consulted.
- Newly disturbed soil and vegetation resources will be replanted according to the IDFG recommended seeds and procedures in accordance with soil type, availability of native seeds, and soil moisture.
- The project will be consistent and compliant with the: Northwest Power and Conservation Council’s Fish and Wildlife Program; BPA’s Watershed Management Program Final EIS (DOE/EIS-0265); NOAA Fisheries Anadromous Salmonid Passage Facility Guidelines and Criteria; State’s Fishery Management Plan, NOAA Fisheries Salmon Recovery Plan, FWS Bull Trout Recovery Plan, Best Management Practices, and Idaho Code specific to installing fish screens, control structures, and fish passage provisions.
- If there are any changes in construction activities that require relocation or change of work parameters, or for actions that have not been previously evaluated as work sites, construction shall not proceed until the KEC Environmental Lead for this project can evaluate those changes.

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