

United States Government

Department of Energy
Bonneville Power Administration

memorandum

DATE: September 19, 2005

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEC-4

SUBJECT: Supplemental Analysis for the Watershed Management Program EIS (DOE/EIS-0265/SA-233)

to: Linda Hermeston
Fish and Wildlife Project Manager – KEWL-4

Proposed Action: Twisp/Methow Salmon Recovery Foundation (MSRF) Side Channel Reconnection Project - Phase 1

Project No: 2005-009-00

Watershed Management Techniques or Actions Addressed Under This Supplement Analysis (See App. A of the Watershed Management Program EIS): 1.3 Restoration of Channelized River and Stream Reaches; 1.6 Install Large Woody Debris Structures; 1.7 Install Other Habitat Complexity Structures; 1.8 Bank Protection Through Vegetation Management; 1.17 Rearing Habitat Enhancements; 2.1 Maintain Healthy Riparian Plant Communities; 2.7 Avoid Exotic Species; 2.9 Mechanical Vegetation Removal; 2.11 Hand Pulling; 7.2 Install Hydraulic Structures at Low Streamflows; 7.10 Erosion Control and Revegetation at Project Completion; 8.11 Equipment Servicing; 8.22 Site Protection; 8.23 Monitor Revegetated Areas; 9.22 Construction: Erosion and Sediment Control Plans; 9.23 Construction: Erosion and Sediment Control Structures; 9.24 Construction: Inspect Erosion and Sediment Control Structures

Location: RM 1.9 Twisp River, Okanogan County, Washington

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) and US Bureau of Reclamation.

Description of the Proposed Action: The Twisp/MSRF Side Channel Reconnection project proposes to restore a blocked side channel on the floodplain of the lower Twisp River by opening a dike to deliver water into a series of five ponds that have been constructed to provide off-channel rearing habitat for juvenile salmonids. Two of the ponds are used for experimental acclimation of hatchery juveniles using water supplied from a pump in the Twisp River. These acclimation uses would be shifted to the lowest pond in the system (Pond 5) following the work to reconnect the channel. This project would reconnect the upper four ponds with the Twisp River, providing valuable off-channel habitat for native fish. The project would primarily benefit Upper Columbia spring Chinook and summer steelhead that are listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

The project would restore floodplain connectivity to the wetland/side channel complex. The present diversion intake is a culvert underneath an existing rip-rap dike that is approximately 10 feet high and several hundred feet long. The dike would remain to protect a residence immediately downstream, but the project includes designing a control headgate through the dike for diversion into the delivery channel that would function through the year and

provide fish passage. The plan is to construct meanders and add depth and habitat complexity to the delivery channel, including placement of woody debris and boulders for cover.

A meandering return channel would be constructed to connect each of the upper four ponds to allow fish to enter and leave the downstream end of the channel and pond system. This project will be completed in two phases.

Specific actions covered by this Supplement Analysis include the following for Phase 1:

- Installation of a new head gate structure together with required excavation and fill,

- Placement and removal of a cofferdam waterward of the dike,

- Cutting and grouting the existing intake pipe,

- Removal and replacement of three culverts within the intake canal alignment,

- Minor modifications to the intake channel (rock and wood replacement),

- Revegetation, limited to seeding disturbed areas and replacement of removed individual shrub and trees, and

- Weed control methods, strictly limited to mechanical methods and plantings as needed.

Land ownership is private and no acquisitions are proposed

Analysis: The compliance checklist for this project was completed by Chris Johnson, Chewuch Basin Council, and meets the standards and guidelines for the Watershed Management Program Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) (DOE/EIS-0265, July 1997) and Record of Decision (ROD). Although the project is fully described in the checklist, only the Phase 1 actions have been fully examined and are addressed in the SA. Additional NEPA analysis would be required prior to beginning Phase 2 of this project.

A list of threatened or endangered species for the project area includes Upper Columbia spring Chinook salmon, Upper Columbia summer steelhead, Bald eagle, Northern spotted owl, Gray wolf, Grizzly bear, Canada lynx, Ute ladies' tresses and Upper Columbia Bull trout. The Twisp River is considered to be a productive system for native summer steelhead but populations have declined over the past century and are now sustained with hatchery production. The Twisp River provides spawning and rearing habitat for 20 to 30% of the spring Chinook population that inhabits the Methow watershed. Optimal conditions for rearing habitat occur in low gradient, meandering streams such as those that would be created by this project.

Critical Habitat has been proposed for bull trout but none is designated in the project area. Northern spotted owl is also listed as threatened with critical habitat, however, the Twisp/MSRP project is not within or adjacent to any Northern spotted owl critical habitat units. There is no suitable habitat for nesting, roosting, foraging, or dispersal because of the riparian forest type and open canopy conditions at the site.

Preliminary Section 7 consultation with biologists Karl Halupka and Mark Miller, USFWS, resulted in the preparation of a BA which was submitted to USFWS with an effects determination as follows: Gray wolf, Northern spotted owl, Canada lynx, Ute ladies' tresses - no effect; Bald eagle and Bull trout - may affect, not likely to adversely affect. Concurrence with these findings was received from USFWS on September 19, 2005.

This project is designed to conform to the NMFS Biological Opinion for the BPA Habitat Improvement Program (NMFS ref 2003/00750). It incorporates the general conservation measures presented in the HIP BO for construction activities (Section 1.2.2 and 1.2.3, pages 27 to 41) as well as the specific conservation measures for improvement of irrigation diversions (Section 1.2.8.5, page 60). Therefore, no additional ESA consultation with NOAA Fisheries is needed.

A cultural resource survey was completed by Mark DeLeon, BOR Archeologist on July 11, 2005. The area of potential effect (APE) was visually examined for the presence or absence of historic properties and a literature review was conducted. "The area was found to be subject to active fluvial processes, and is an active alluvial landform." No cultural or historical properties were found within the proposed project site.

An environmental land audit would be conducted by Mark Hermeston, BPA, to survey for the presence of hazardous or toxic wastes prior to construction.

Okanogan County is the lead agency for applicable aquatic resource permits (shorelines, HPA, 404(d), wetlands) required to protect aquatic habitat through the Joint Aquatic Resources Permit Applications (JARPA) process. A pre-application meeting took place May 11, 2005, for the Twisp/MSRF Side Channel Reconnection Project and other FY'05 projects, to determine specific jurisdictions and permit requirements in order that appropriate State and Federal agencies were notified. All appropriate JARPA permits would be secured prior to the start of the construction activities.

This project is consistent with the Management Plan for the Methow Subbasin Plan and Salmon Recovery Plan. Affected tribes (Colville Confederated Tribes (CCT) and Yakama Nation (YN)) have been involved in project planning wherein tribal rights and interests are addressed. US BOR has coordinated all engineering support, design and peer review. A Twisp/MSRF Side Channel Reconnection Project Site Rehabilitation Plan has been developed identifying seeding, planting and vegetation control measures. Weed control would be accomplished and coordinated with adjacent landowners and the Okanogan Weed Control Board.

Coordination meetings have been held quarterly during the past two years to discuss the Updated Proposed Actions (UPA) habitat proposals with willing landowners, local governments, conservation and special interest groups, tribes, the Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board and others. Specific project teams have been designated to pursue coordination and implementation of the approved projects including the Twisp/MSRF Side Channel Reconnection Project. Participants include BOR, WDFW, USFS, USCOE, NOAA Fisheries, USFWS, DOE and BPA.

The public involvement program has evolved over several years and has included public notices, public meetings, agency coordination meetings, radio advertisements and discussions, stories in local newspaper and information available via various Internet web links. This project has widespread support for salmon recovery efforts among CCT, YN, Chewuch Basin Council, local governments, landowners, Okanogan County Commissioners, Winthrop and Twisp town councils.

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 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/ Patricia R. Smith

Patricia R. Smith

Environmental Protection Specialist – KEC-4

CONCUR:

/s/ Katherine S. Pierce

Katherine S. Pierce

NEPA Compliance Officer – KEC-4

DATE: September 9, 2005

Documents on File:

NEPA Checklist for Watershed Management Projects

Project BA w/TES listing, Map, & Site Drawings

USFWS Project Concurrence

Project Site Rehabilitation Plan

Project O&M Plan

Project PC&A Plan

HIP Consistency Form 1

HIP Custom Report

BOR CR Survey Findings & Determination Letter, Dated 9/15/05

cc:

Mr. Greg Knott, US Bureau of Reclamation

Mr. Don Philllips, US Fish and Wildlife Service

Mr. Chris Johnson, Chewuch Basin Council