

United States Government

Department of Energy
Bonneville Power Administration

memorandum

DATE: October 24, 2005

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEC-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Watershed Management Program EIS (DOE/EIS-0265/SA-238)

TO: Jay Marcotte
Fish and Wildlife Project Manager - KEWL-4

Proposed Action: Walla Walla River Basin Fish Habitat Enhancement

Project No: 1996-046-01

Watershed Management Techniques or Actions Addressed Under This Supplement

Analysis (See App. A of the Watershed Management Program EIS): 1.8 Bank Protection Through Vegetation Management; 2.1 Maintain Healthy Riparian Plant Communities; 2.7 Avoid Exotic Species; 2.9 Mechanical Vegetation Removal; 2.11 Hand Pulling; 2.12 Prescribed Burning; 3.1 Plant/protect cover; 3.29 Herbicide Application; 6.12 Vegetation Stabilization: Pasture Planting; 6.13 Range Seeding; 6.15 Bush/weed management; 9.6 Prohibit further channelization.

Location: Walla Walla County, Washington

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR).

Description of the Proposed Action: The goal of this continuing project is to restore and protect habitat critical to the survival of native salmonid fishes in the Walla Walla River Basin. The specific action items proposed for BPA funding in the CTUIR's Statement of Work (contract CR-64181) includes the following actions:

- Planting 10 acres of native trees and shrubs (Lofthouse);
- Replant weed tarps on 18 acres (Lampson);
- Planting 5 acres of native trees and shrubs (McCain) that are being grown at the CTUIR Nursery;
- Weed and undesirable vegetation control by hand pulling undesirable plants, mowing, and applying herbicides;
- Removing 3,000 yards of gravel and boulder from McDonald Dike to assimilate naturally-occurring hydrodynamics;
- Validate data.

An environmental compliance checklist was completed for these actions (dated June 2, 2005) by Mr. Jed Volkman of the CTUIR, and meets the standards and guidelines for the Watershed Management Program Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision. All project actions listed above are included in the checklist except for the McDonald Dike removal.

Analysis:

Endangered Species Act. Listed species that could be present include bald eagle and summer steelhead. It is not probable that planting trees and shrubs, replanting weed tarps, or removing undesirable vegetation would effect bald eagles, as no bald eagles are known to inhabit the immediate work areas. There are no bald eagles known in the McDonald Dike project area and no proposed activities are planned within the Walla Walla River or in any other fishable waters. Therefore there would be no anticipated project effect on summer steelhead.

Cultural resource information. The CTUIR Cultural Resources Department has reviewed the action items identified above and recommended in a June 29, 2005 email that among the proposed actions they reviewed, only the proposed fence needed to have a pedestrian survey. We concluded that any cultural resources that could be in the subsurface soil will not be displaced by the tree and shrub plantings, weed tarp planting, and weed control actions.

The proposed McDonald Dike removal activity was surveyed in 1996 by Ray Tracy of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and no cultural resources were located at that time, prior to building the dike. A consultation letter was forwarded to the Washington SHPO on October 7, 2005, and the SHPO response of October 17, 2005 (Log No. 101405-12-BPA) agreed with our finding that no historic properties will be affected by the dike removal. If archaeological materials are discovered during project activities, work must stop, the areas secured, and the SHPO and BPA archaeologist notified so that the circumstance can be evaluated.

Public involvement information. Most of the proposed activities are being cost-shared, or a variety of parties are actively participating from a variety of forums including the Walla Walla County Conservation District, Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – Wall Walla District, Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund, Walla Walla Watershed Alliance, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, NOAA Fisheries, and Oregon Department of State Lands. A variety of private landowners are also involved with these projects and were consulted. The CTUIR conservation easements that have been engaged with private landowners require that the project areas be protected from activities that may compromise recovery of fish.

The proponents will continue to conduct local outreach efforts at the community level to obtain input, identify landowner and resource agency concerns, provide educational opportunities, and promote stream habitat restoration and protection.

No environmental land audits or permits are required for the proposed work. Any future actions watershed and fisheries actions proposed for BPA funding will first require an environmental review by KEC.

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. In addition, the actions are consistent with the Walla Walla Subbasin Plan, Northwest Power Planning Council, 2005 and with the Wy-Kan-Ush-Mi Wa-Kish-Wit Columbia River Treaty Tribes. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife provided a

Determination of Nonsignificance on June 27, 2005 for the McDonald Dike removal, in accordance with the state's SEPA/NEPA regulatory review.

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. Support material associated with this environmental clearance is found in the project file. Therefore, no further NEPA documentation is required.

/s/ Carl J. Keller

Carl J. Keller

Fish and Wildlife Biologist

CONCUR:

/s/ Katherine S. Pierce

Katherine S. Pierce

Acting NEPA Compliance Officer

DATE: October 25, 2005

cc:

Mr. Jed Volkman, Fisheries Habitat Biologist, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, P.O. Box 638, Pendleton, OR 97801