

United States Government

Department of Energy
Bonneville Power Administration

memorandum

DATE: March 1, 2006

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEC-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Watershed Management Program EIS (DOE/EIS-0265/SA-253)

TO: John Baugher - KEWL-4
Fish and Wildlife Project Manager

Project Title: Wind River Watershed Project

Project No: 1998-019-00

**Watershed Management Techniques or Actions Addressed Under This Supplement Analysis
(See Appendix A of the Watershed Management Program EIS):**

2.1 Maintain Healthy Riparian Plant Communities

2.8 Mechanical Vegetation Removal

Location: Skamania County, WA

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) and Underwood Conservation District (UCD)

Description of the Proposed Action: The project's focus is on restoration of Wind River Watershed steelhead, federally listed as threatened in 1998. The project involves on the ground restoration work, including the planting of native vegetation in riparian areas and control of non-native vegetation. Some of the lands are privately owned and other lands are owned and managed by the U.S. Forest Service.

Trees and shrubs will be planted in areas within the Wind River Watershed that have been identified as deficient in cover by woody vegetation. Planting is done by hand, using techniques such as a rebar probe for planting hardwood cuttings and a hoedad for planting seedlings.

Weed removal will be done, focusing on Scot's broom removal. Scot's broom is cut by hand at the base of the plant. Herbicides are not used. Removal of weeds is done in order to enhance the survival of native woody species.

Analysis: The compliance checklist for this project (completed by Jim White, Manager of the UCD) meets the standards and guidelines for the Watershed Management Program Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Record of Decision (ROD).

Federally Listed Endangered Species: Project activities will have no effect on federally listed threatened or endangered species. Fish species and Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) will not be affected. There will be no in-water work. Planting will be done with techniques that will result in minimal soil disturbance and sediment will not enter waterways. The presence of workers planting trees near waterways is not expected to affect fish because the disturbance will be temporary and is not expected to impair the ability of the fish to engage in essential life functions, including normal behavior patterns, for long enough to have any effect. There will be no effect to bird species, such as bald eagle or spotted owl. There are no known nest sites, occurrences, critical habitat, or potential habitat in the project area.

Cultural Resources: BPA addressed the potential for cultural resources to occur on private lands. The USFS did not require surveys on their land because their programmatic agreement with the SHPO states that plantings occurring in flood deposits require no cultural resources documentation (pers. comm. Cheryl Mack, USFWS archeologist to Nicole Stutte, former BPA archeologist, 9/29/2005). BPA contacted the WA State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) on November 4, 2005 initiating Section 106 consultation under the National Historic Preservation Act and BPA received concurrence on the proposed methodology on November 16, 2005. In November 2005, BPA also initiated consultation with the Yakama Indian Nation, Nez Perce Tribe, Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs, and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. A BPA archeologist conducted a survey of the project sites on November 9, 2005 and found no historic resources. The report was submitted to the Tribes and the SHPO. The SHPO responded on February 24, 2006, concurring with the determination that no historic resources would be affected (see attached letter). The Cultural Resources department of the Nez Perce Tribe also concurred with the results (pers. comm. Vera Sonneck, Director of Cultural Resources, Nez Perce Tribe, phone message to Kimberly St.Hilaire, BPA Environmental Specialist, on February 21, 2006).

The UCD carries on ongoing public involvement to involve stakeholders in proposed activities through the Wind River Watershed Council (Council). The Council holds monthly meetings that provide stakeholders the opportunity to hear about proposed activities, to ask questions, and provide comments. The meeting times are posted in public places within the local community and announced in the local newspaper, the Skamania Pioneer. The proposals are reviewed by the Technical Advisory Committee, made up of local fish, wildlife, and natural resource personnel and experts.

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 R. St Hilaire
Kimberly R. St.Hilaire
Environmental Specialist

CONCUR:

/s/ James M. Kehoe for
Katherine S. Pierce
NEPA Compliance Officer - KEC-4

Date: March 1, 2006

Attachments:
NEPA Compliance Checklist for Watershed Management Projects, dated February 17, 2006
WA SHPO Concurrence Letter, dated February 24, 2006

cc: (w/ attachments)
Mr. Jim White, Manager, Underwood Conservation District