

United States Government

Department of Energy
Bonneville Power Administration

memorandum

DATE: September 17, 1998

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: ECN-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Watershed Management Program EIS, Project No. 98-25

TO: Thomas C. McKinney – NEPA Compliance Officer

Proposed Action: Early Winters Creek Habitat Restoration for Steelhead and Chinook

Budget No.: F5002

Watershed Management Techniques or Actions Addressed Under This Supplement Analysis (See App. A of the Watershed Management Program EIS): 1.2 Prevent Further Channelization, 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, 1.16 Spawning habitat enhancements, 1.17 Rearing habitat enhancement, 2.1 Maintain healthy riparian plant communities, 2.11 hand pulling, 2.15 Acquisition of sensitive riparian resources, 10.1 Relocation trails and campgrounds, 10.3 Improve campground design, 10.4 Outdoors education programs, 10.5 Fence sensitive areas from recreationists.

Location: Okanogan County, Washington.

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), The Pacific Watershed Institute (PWI), and the Okanogan National Forest's Methow Valley District (MVRD).

Description of the Proposed Action: The Early Winters Watershed Analysis (1996) recommended establishing protection and restoration measures for the lower portion of Early Winters Creek. This proposed instream and riparian habitat restoration project is designed to address the issues identified in the watershed analysis by restoring and enhancing fisheries and wildlife habitat in the area from the Forest Service's Early Winters Creek Campground to the junction of Early Winter's Creek with the Methow River.

State Route 20 highway construction, levees built to protect private property, and the development of Early Winters Campground by the Forest Service, combined with past stream cleaning and channelization has limited the ability of the stream to move into multiple channels. As a result, it is now incising and deepening its main channel, creating higher gradient large cobble riffles which are characterized by decreased levels of pool habitat, large woody debris (LWD), and spawning gravels.

Although the restriction to channel movement from highway construction is relatively permanent, some channel complexity and alluvial fan function can be restored by constructing 10-20 boulder complexes in the mainstem channel to the east and excavating 5 backwater pools in the side channel to the west. In addition, existing unstable deciduous LWD would be

augmented by placement of coniferous rootwads pinned with large boulders. Some old flood control gabions would also be removed where they are no longer effective. The proposed action will also benefit existing spawning and rearing habitat downstream by increasing instream flow and reducing sediment inputs into the mainstem Methow River.

Trees used for habitat improvement in this proposal would not be obtained from Federal lands or with Federal funds. Their removal and transport is documented in other non-Federal decision documents, and is not included in this analysis.

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

Section 7 consultation was conducted with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) under the requirements of the Endangered Species Act (Act). Of concern are the potential impacts from proposed project construction activities to bull trout, spring chinook salmon and steelhead trout. As a result a biological assessment was completed and sent to USFWS and NMFS. Verbal concurrence was received from both USFWS and NMFS that the proposed action will adversely affect, but will not jeopardize the bull trout, spring chinook salmon and steelhead trout. Written concurrence will follow, but is not available at this time.

The campground has long been recorded as a cultural site. Artifacts have been recovered from the surface over the years. The site has also been used by Methow Indians up into historic times (the 1920's and 30's) as a staging area for hunting/gathering trips into the high country. The highway along Early Winters Creek is a long-established Indian trail. The project would have no affect on the cultural resources of the campground. If a site were discovered during construction of new facilities, it would be protected by avoiding the area. The interpretive signs that would be installed describing the Methow Indians' use of the area would be beneficial to the resource since it would raise awareness levels of pre-historic activities.

Findings: The project is generally consistent with Section 7.8H.2, 7.10, and 10.2 of the Northwest Power Planning Council's Fish and Wildlife Program. The attached Supplement Analysis finds 1) that the proposed actions are substantially consistent with the Watershed Management Program EIS (DOE/EIS-0265) and ROD, and; 2) that there are no new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns and bearing on the proposed actions or their impacts. Therefore, no further NEPA documentation is required.

Eric N. Powers
Environmental Project Lead
Environment, Fish and Wildlife Group

Concur:

Thomas C. McKinney
NEPA Compliance Officer

DATE: _____

Attachments:
NEPA Compliance Checklist
Early Winters Campground Environmental Assessment

cc:

B. Beraud - EC-4

L. Croff - ECP-4

N. Weintraub - ECN-4

D. Byrnes - EWN-4

M. Shaw - EWP-4

P. Key - LN-7

J. Smith – Pacific Watershed Institute

Official File - ECN (EQ-14-5 (WM))

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