

United States Government

Department of Energy

Bonneville Power Administration

memorandum

DATE: September 12, 2003

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEC-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Watershed Management Program EIS (DOE/EIS-0265/SA-122)

TO: Jessica Wilcox
Fish and Wildlife Project Manager, KEWL-4

Proposed Action: Big Creek Passage and Screening

Project No: 2002-002-00

Wildlife Management Techniques or Actions Addressed Under This Supplement Analysis (See App. A of the Wildlife Mitigation Program EIS): 1.15 Fish Passage Enhancement – Fishways, 4.23 Intake and Return Diversion Screens, 9.23 Construction – Erosion and Sediment Control Structures

Location: Kittitas County, Washington

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)

Description of the Proposed Action: The Bonneville Power Administration is proposing to fund a fish passage improvement project with the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife on Big Creek in Kittitas County, Washington. The project will involve the installation of fish passage and screening structures on an existing dam and two adjacent irrigation diversions in order to restore anadromous fish access and productivity to the Big Creek watershed. The existing Big Creek concrete dam was constructed in November of 1976 and included a fishway. Flooding in 1977 undermined the dam and destroyed the fishway. In 1978 the dam was repaired, but the fishway has remained inoperable since that time. The current project would provide fish passage over the concrete dam by constructing a series of passable weirs instream. In addition, the two existing unscreened diversions would be reconfigured and equipped with self-cleaning fish screens suitable for remote sites.

Analysis: The compliance checklist for this project was completed by Eric Egbers with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (April 23, 2003), and meets the standards and guidelines for the Watershed Management Program Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Record of Decision (ROD).

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) listed species that may occur in the general vicinity of the project area are bull trout, gray wolf, Canada lynx, grizzly bear, Northern spotted owl, bald eagle, Ute ladies'tresses, and Middle Columbia River steelhead. Pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, BPA submitted a Biological Assessment (BA) for the Big Creek Project to NOAA Fisheries and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on April 30, 2003 and, submitted updated information concerning Canada lynx to USFWS on June 18, 2003.

As part of the BA, BPA determined that the proposed actions would have no effect on Canada lynx. BPA also concluded that the proposed actions may affect, but are not likely to adversely affect bull trout, gray wolf, grizzly bear, Northern spotted owl, bald eagle, Ute ladies'tresses and that the proposed project may adversely affect Middle Columbia River steelhead. In addition, BPA determined that the proposed actions may adversely affect Essential Fish Habitat for chinook and coho salmon.

USFWS issued a letter of concurrence on these findings on June 26, 2003. NOAA Fisheries issued a Biological Opinion for the project on September 4, 2003, (see attached). NOAA Fisheries concluded that the proposed actions were not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of Middle Columbia River steelhead. Within the Biological Opinion, NOAA Fisheries identified a set of Reasonable and Prudent Measures and non-discretionary Terms and Conditions for the project that are designed to minimize take of steelhead and minimize potential effects to Essential Fish Habitat. All identified Reasonable and Prudent Measures and Terms and Conditions contained in the attached Biological Opinion must be implemented accordingly.

In compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, BPA submitted a letter of no effect to the Washington Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation. In that letter, BPA concluded that there will be no affect on prehistoric or historic resources associated with the Big Creek project given the present site conditions and proposed activities. BPA agreed that in the unlikely event that archaeological material is encountered during developments that might occur as part of this project, an archaeologist will immediately be notified and work halted in the vicinity of the finds until they can be inspected and assessed. The WA Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation concurred with these findings and recommendations on June 26, 2003.

Standard water quality protection procedures and Best Management Practices will be followed during the implementation of this project. No construction is authorized to begin until the proponent has obtained all applicable local, state, and federal permits and approvals. This includes Washington State Environmental Policy Act requirements, a Substantial Development (Shoreline) Permit, Floodplain Permit, Hydraulic Project Approval, a Section 404 Permit, and a Section 401 Water Quality Certification.

Public involvement has taken place as part of the Big Creek Project. Public notice of the project will take place through the Washington State Environmental Policy Act process. Discussions have also been held with local landowners, the County and Tribes, and various State and Federal agencies.

Findings: The project is generally consistent with Section 7.6A.2, 7.6B.3, & 7.8E.1, of the Northwest Power Planning Council's Fish and Wildlife Program. This 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.

/s/ Shannon C. Stewart
Shannon C. Stewart
Environmental Specialist

CONCUR:

/s/ Thomas C. McKinney
Thomas C. McKinney
NEPA Compliance Officer

DATE: September 12, 2003

Attachments:

NEPA Compliance Checklist

NOAA Fisheries Biological Opinion, September 4, 2003

USFWS Letter of Concurrence, June 26, 2003

WA Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation Letter of Concurrence, May 29, 2003

cc: (w/ attachments)

Mr. William Meyer – Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Mr. Eric Egbers – Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife