

United States Government

Department of Energy

Bonneville Power Administration

# memorandum

DATE: February 13, 2004

REPLY TO  
ATTN OF: KEC-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Watershed Management Program Final EIS (DOE/EIS-0265/SA 134)

to: Mickey Carter  
Fish and Wildlife Project Manager, KEWU-4

**Proposed Action:** Challis Creek 8/8A (Highline Canal) – To provide fish screen, remove a fish barrier and install a steppass fish ladder

**Project No:** 1994-015-00

**Watershed Management Techniques or Actions Addressed Under This Supplement Analysis (See App.):** 1.15 Fish Passage Enhancement-Fishway; 4.23 Intake and return Diversion Screens; 4.25 Consolidate/Replace Irrigation Diversion Dams

**Location:** Challis Creek, Upper Salmon River Basin, Custer County, Idaho

**Proposed by:** Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) and Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG)

**Description of the Proposed Action:** BPA proposes to fund IDFG for the 1. Construction of a fish screen on an unscreened diversion, 2. Removal of a barrier to fish movements and replacement with an Obermeyer inflatable weir, and 3. Installation of an Alaska Steppass fish ladder. These actions would improve natural stream conditions in Challis Creek. One goal of the project is to preclude fish from entering the irrigation ditch and remove obstructions to fish in the project reach of the creek. Another goal is to consolidate two diversions into one. The inflatable weir will allow natural stream bedload movement particularly during high water events. The Steppass ladder design slows water passage enabling more species of fish to pass more easily, has compact efficiency, is more mobile than other fishways, is very low maintenance, is of long-lasting durability, and assembles relatively easily. A copy of the actual plans are located in the KEC files.

The project conforms to the IDFG's goals, including the State's Fishery Management Plan, NOAA Fisheries' Salmon Recovery Plan, Bull Trout Recovery Plan, and FWS's Bull Trout Recovery Strategy.

**Analysis:** The NEPA compliance checklist for the projects was completed by Lynn Stratton, Screen Program Coordinator with the IDFG Screen Shop in Salmon, Idaho. Information contained meets the standards and guidelines for the Watershed Management Program Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Record of Decision (ROD).

The species listed under the Endangered Species Act that could be in the project area are the gray wolf (t), Canada lynx (t), bald eagle (t), grizzly bear (t), Snake River spring chinook salmon (t), Snake River steelhead (t), bull trout (t), and designated Critical Habitat for steelhead. There are no known listed plants in the project area. A Biological Assessment for the project, dated July 2003, on anadromous fish was prepared by IDFG and submitted to NOAA Fisheries for Section 7 consultation. Preparation of the BA was initiated to assist NOAA Fisheries in its responsibilities to comply with the ESA prior to its issuance of Mitchell Act funds for the project. A NOAA Fisheries concurrence letter, dated September 22, 2003, concludes that the Highline project is not likely to adversely affect listed Snake River salmon and steelhead, designated critical habitat, or EFH.

To comply with ESA, the IDFG has also engaged in a Section 6 Cooperative Agreement (dated January 17, 1995) with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that establishes a cooperative program for the IDFG to carry out conservation activities to benefit applicable listed threatened and endangered species. This agreement includes the taking of species that must be consistent with this agreement, emergency provision as necessary, recordkeeping for the conservation of listed species, notification to the FWS of any change in circumstances, and other administrative and procedural provisions. This agreement remains in effect in perpetuity for all species under the FWS's jurisdiction.

A cultural resources survey of the project site was conducted and A Cultural Resource Survey of the Upper Salmon River Anadromous Fish Passage Project Challis Creek Area Sites, Custer County, Idaho was conducted by Claudio T. Walsworth in November 2003 and one cultural site was discovered. The report was sent to the State Historic Preservation Office, and on December 19, 2003 the Deputy SHPO and Compliance Coordinator with the Idaho State Historical Society replied with the requirement that project work be monitored during construction and a letter report documenting the monitoring be sent to that office after construction.

The project was authorized under the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Nationwide Permits 1, 14, and 33 (33CFR 330, Appendix A) dated January 6, 2004, which is subject to various conditions that must be followed. Similarly, the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality issued a Water Quality Certification on January 9, 2004 in accordance with section 401 of the Clean Water Act. Accordingly, certain identified conditions must be followed.

Idaho Code requires irrigators to install fish screens, control structures, and fish passage at diversions. The project is isolated and does not affect a large number of people as the Salmon basin is sparsely populated. Nevertheless, the salmon recovery effort is large. Exposure of the project has been by word-of-mouth, resident involvement in similar projects, state code, local political interest, and agency cooperative efforts. Local newspaper articles and Upper Salmon Basin Watershed Project circulars have notified the public of the project intentions. The following group of partners have been kept informed of the development of this project: the Bureau of Land Management, Salmon River Coalition, Natural Resources Conservation Service, NOAA Fisheries, Custer Water and Soil Conservation District, FWS, Upper Salmon Basin Watershed, Idaho Department of Water Resources. Further consultation has been with the Shoshone-Bannock Tribe, and Challis Creek landowners and irrigators.

**Findings:** The project is generally consistent with the Northwest Power and Conservation Council's Fish and Wildlife Program, as well as BPA's Watershed Management Program Final 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. The signed NEPA Compliance Checklist is located in the KEC-4 project files, as well as the NOAA Fisheries concurrence letter, Biological Assessment, Section 6 Cooperative Agreement, COE Nationwide permit conditions, Water Quality Certification, and December 19, 2003 SHPO letter.

/s/ Carl J. Keller

Carl J. Keller

Fish and Wildlife Biologist

CONCUR:

/s/ Robert Beraud for

Thomas C. McKinney

NEPA Compliance Officer

DATE: February 18, 2004

cc: (w/o attachments)

Mr. Lynn D. Stratton, Screen Program Coordinator, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, P.O. Box 1336, Salmon, ID 83467