

United States Government

Department of Energy
Bonneville Power Administration

memorandum

DATE: July 10, 2000

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KECN-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Watershed Management Program EIS (DOE/EIS-0265/SA-32)

TO: Mark Shaw – KEWN-4
Project Manager

Proposed Action: Grande Ronde Model Watershed Program, Imnaha/Parks Ditch Water Conservation Project: Improved irrigation delivery system increasing streamflow and decreasing overall diversion of water.

Project No: 2000-062-00

Budget No: F5610

Watershed Management Techniques of Actions Addressed Under This Supplement Analysis (See App. A. of the Watershed Management Program EIS):

- 4.2 Water Measuring Devices
- 4.10 Water Conveyance: Pipeline
- 4.18 Purchase/Negotiate Water Right

Location: Imnaha Subbasin, Imnaha, Oregon. T3S, R48E, S14, 15, 22, 23, 26 and 27 along Imnaha River.

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) and Grande Ronde Model Watershed Program (GRMWP).

Description of the Proposed Action: The goal of this project is to enhance and maintain a healthy watershed in the Grande Ronde River Basin. Major indicators of a healthy watershed are improved quantity and quality of streamflows. Stream temperatures, sediment, low summer stream flow and in-stream cover are habitat concerns that have been associated with agricultural land use in the watershed. This proposal will incorporate the possibility of a valuable and substantial instream water savings being established on the Imnaha River from the landowners diversion to the mouth of the river. Installation of a pipeline to replace the open-ditch conveyance of water is from the point-of-diversion to the point of application. The project includes the installation of a water measuring device and application of the Oregon Conserved Water Statute.

The three and one-half mile long Parks Ditch serve approximately 196 acres of land with irrigation rights out of Imnaha River and tributaries, for a total of approximately 7.34 cubic feet per second allowed at the point of diversion from the river. During the irrigation season, the entire amount of water allowed under the water rights is diverted down the ditch. This proposed action will be to excavate and pipe approximately 18,600 feet of ditch with PVC pipe to eliminate the loss of up to 3 cubic feet per second of flow and keep the same in stream. Additionally, the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board has required that the landowner attempt to implement the Allocation of Conserved Water process in order to protect the conserved portion of the water. Twenty-five percent of this conserved water can then be used on additional lands under a new water right certificate. In exchange for this “spreading” of the original water right, the remaining seventy-five percent of the conserved water is allocated to the state for instream uses, and will be issued a new certificate. The landowners will have up to five years once the

pipeline has been installed to be sure that the project will work before the project is final and the new certificates are issued.

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

A Species List (SP #1-4-99-346G) was used to determine listed species. This list was obtained by the U.S. Forest Service for the Hells Canyon Natural Resource Area (HCNR) which includes this area. Threatened or endangered species present in the project area are Gray wolf, Lynx, Grizzly bear, Snake River chinook salmon, Snake River summer steelhead, Bull trout, Bald eagle, MacFarlanes' four o'clock and Ute ladies' -tresses.

The project area does not contain critical habitat for listed wildlife species. Gray wolf, grizzly bear, and lynx are not known to occur in the project area and would not be affected by proposed activities. Bald eagle can occur in the project area (wintering habitat) but will not be affected by construction activities during the spring and summer. MacFarlane's four o'clock and Ute ladies' -tresses are not present in the project area. MacFarlane's four o'clock is found from 1000-3000 ft. elevation in the Snake and Salmon River canyons. Ute ladies'-tresses occurs in wetlands, and riparian areas. The pipeline will be located in portions of the existing ditch or in farmed fields, neither of which are wet sites. Snake River spring chinook, summer steelhead and bull trout can occur in the Imnaha River but will not be affected by proposed activities which will occur in and around the irrigation ditch.

Oregon Water Resources Department developed the project in cooperation with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and Nez Perce Tribe fisheries biologist wherein project activities were designed to protect aquatic systems and to result in no effect to ESA species. There is no in-river work to be done.

Project actions are not expected to disturb previously undisturbed ground, however, should an alternate route along side the ditch be required, surveys will be conducted by Nez Perce tribal personnel prior to start of work for presence of cultural resources. Appropriate measures will be taken during construction to identify and protect cultural resources that may be discovered during construction.

Findings: The project is generally consistent with Section 7.6, of the Northwest Power Planning Council's Fish and Wildlife Program. The attached Supplement Analysis find 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/ Patricia Smith

Patricia R. Smith

Environmental Project Manager – KECN-4

CONCUR: /s/ Robert W. Beraud
Thomas C. McKinney
NEPA Compliance Officer

DATE: 7/11/00

Attachments:

NEPA Compliance Checklist

Project Proposal w/ Project Area Maps

cc: (w/attachments)

H. Nigam – DOE/EH-42

B. Beraud – KECN-4

T. McKinney – KECN-4

P. Smith – KECN-4

N. Weintraub – KECN-4

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Nils Christoffersen - Wallowa Resources

Lyle Kuchenbecker - Grande Ronde Model Watershed Program

Official File – (EQ-14)

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