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United States Government **Department of Energy**

Bonneville Power Administration

memorandum

DATE: February 28, 2001

REPLY TO ATTN OF: KEC-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Watershed Management Program EIS, (DOE/EIS-0265/SA-49)

TO: Jay Marcotte - KEWN-4
Fish and Wildlife Project Manager

Proposed Action: Walla Walla Basin Passage Improvements Project, Milton Ditch Consolidation

Work Order No: 00002458/01

Watershed Management Techniques or Actions Addressed Under This Supplement Analysis (See App. A of the Watershed Management Program EIS): 1.15 Fish Passage Enhancement - Fishways, 4.8 Water Convenyance: Ditches and Canal, 4.25 Consolidate/Replace Irrigation Diversion Dams.

Location: Milton-Freewater, Umatilla County, Oregon.

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR).

1. Introduction: The Milton Ditch Consolidation Project is one component of the Walla Walla Passage Improvement Project proposed jointly by the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR). This effort is in coordination with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD), Walla Walla River Irrigation District (WWRID), Hudson Bay District Company, Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council, Washington Department of Ecology, Milton-Freewater Water Control District, City of Milton-Freewater Public Works Department, a private property owner, and Montgomery Watson. BPA is proposed to fund the Milton Ditch Consolidation Project.

2. Description of the Proposed Action: This project proposes to consolidate the Milton Ditch Diversion with the Little Walla Walla Diversion thereby establishing a valuable and substantial instream water savings on the Walla Walla River. The Milton Ditch point of diversion is from above Couse Creek on the Walla Walla River to below the Little Walla Walla River Screens. Water would be diverted from behind the Little Walla Walla River Screens through an existing canal system, and pumped to Milton Ditch users through a new point of diversion on the Pleasant View Canal. A new pipeline would be installed conveying water from the point-of-diversion at Pleasant View to the point of application. The project will apply the Oregon Conserved Water Statue and include the installation of a water measuring device.

3. Background: The Walla Walla River Irrigation District (WWRID) owns and operates the Milton Ditch Diversion on the Walla Walla River. Currently, the diversion is located several miles upstream on the Little Walla Walla River, irrigates approximately 217 acres, and delivers water rights of approximately 8 cfs measured at the point of diversion. Much of the diverted flow travels approximately 2 miles from the first point of delivery and seeps through the canal and back to the groundwater.

The proposed Milton Ditch consolidation would move the point of diversion to behind the Little Walla Walla River screens and deliver through an existing canal system to a turnout on the Pleasant View Canal where the Milton Ditch water would be pumped and delivered to users through a new pipeline.

This conservation effort could be of great benefit to all the cooperators. The Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) 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 could 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 would be allocated to the state for instream uses, and would be issued a new certificate.

4. Analysis: The primary goal of the proposed consolidation is to improve fish passage on the Couse Creek and save water instream though conservation efforts. Withdrawing water from behind the Little Walla Walla screens would allow the gravel push-up dam to be abandoned, removing a fish passage barrier from the mouth of Couse Creek.

The proposed consolidation of Milton Ditch with the Little Walla Walla River primarily consists of the following actions:

- abandoning the existing gravel push-up dam
- modification and upgrades of the existing canal with improvements to intake structure
- construction of a pump station, installation of new water pipeline, and stand tank

Table 1: Activities & Impacts

Activity	Impacts
Abandon existing gravel push-up dam	No impact. This gravel dam washes out each year with the natural flood events. The existing gravel dam will eventually be washed downstream and will not be replaced. Couse Creek will become accessible to fish during key rearing, migrating and spawning periods. Existing Little WW River screens will safely screen juveniles from the canal system. Long-term net benefits are expected by removing the existing barrier to acquatic life in Couse Creek, allowing fish to make their way to

	upstream spawning beds.
Modifications and upgrades to existing canal including intake structure, concrete pier and stoplogs	No impact. Construction will occur within the Pleasant View Canal outside the irrigation season when the canal is dewatered. Long-term net benefits are expected.
Construction of pump station and stand tank and installation of new pipeline	Low to no impact. The pump station and stand tank would be built on cultivated or previously disturbed areas. The pump station yard would include some above-grade strainers and associated piping, a yard vault, gravel driveway, buried piping and pump cans. Heavy rip rap will be placed below the stand tank overflow for erosion protection and discharges into an existing swale draining into the existing Milton ditch. Approximately 10,000 feet of new PVC pipeline would be installed in three main sections. The pipelines would generally run along existing roadways and disturbed open fields. The entire length of the pipeline surface would be restored to its original condition after pipeline construction. Significant water savings is expected by reducing seepage losses in the delivery of the Milton Ditch water. Water conserved through the use of the pipeline would be available to increase instream flows.

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

Section 7 consultation was initiated with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) under the requirements of the Endangered Species Act. Of concern are the potential impacts from proposed project diversion and construction activities to the bald eagle, mid-columbia steelhead, bull trout, and critical habitat of the middle and upper Columbia River steelhead, Snake River steelhead, Snake River Sockeye, Upper Columbia River and Snake River fall/spring/ and summer chinook. This project does not involve any instream work in the Little Walla Walla River and all project work would occur behind currently screened diversions that meet the NMFS criteria. Construction would occur within the Pleasant View Canal outside the irrigation season when the canal is dewatered. Additionally, there are no documented Bald Eagle nesting sites near the proposed project site and the cottonwood galleries available for roosting and foraging would not be disturbed (personal communication Mark Kirsch, ODFW, 2/22/01). BPA has determined, therefore, that the proposed action would have no effect on listed species or critical habitat.

A Cultural Resources Survey of the project area was conducted in October 2000 ("A Cultural Resource Survey of a Portion of the BPA's Milton Ditch Consolidation Project Area, Umatilla County, Oregon", Wilt and Roulette, Applied Arch. Research, October 26, 2000). No cultural resources were identified in the project area. The proposed project would have no effect on cultural resources. However, should an alternate route be required, additional surveys would be conducted prior to work and appropriate measures taken during construction to identify and protect cultural resources, plant and/or wetlands that may be discovered during construction.

Findings: The project is generally consistent with Section 7.10C 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.

/s/ Patricia R. Smith

Patricia R. Smith
Environmental Project Lead

Concur:

/s/ Thomas C. McKinney

Thomas C. McKinney
NEPA Compliance Officer

DATE: *2/28/2001*

Attachment:
NEPA Compliance Checklist

Documentation on file:
Cultural Resources Survey

cc:
J. Volkman, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation