

United States Government

Department of Energy
Bonneville Power Administration

memorandum

DATE: May 11, 2006

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEC-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Wildlife Mitigation Program EIS (DOE/EIS-0246/SA-52)

TO: Joe DeHerrera - KEWU-4
Fish and Wildlife Project Manager

Proposed Action: Hellsgate Big Game Winter Range-Wildlife Mitigation Project

Project No: 1992-048-00

Wildlife Management Techniques or Actions Addressed Under This Supplement Analysis (See App. A of the Wildlife Mitigation Program Final EIS, DOE/EIS-0246): 7.0 Vegetation Management, 7.1 Herbicides, and 8 Species Management

Location: Okanogan and Ferry Counties, Washington

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) and Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation (CCT)

Description of the Proposed Action: Background – This is an ongoing project intended to mitigate wildlife losses resulting from hydropower activities at the Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee Dams (Please see SA dated December 22, 2005 on proposed '05 activities). The proposed activities in the 2006 SOW (Jan. 1, 2006 – Dec. 31, 2006) including the following work element actions: environmental compliance documentation, develop and update management plans, conduct inventory and habitat assessment using HEP, construct and maintain fences, control undesirable weeds, remove trespass livestock, conduct annual wildlife population estimates, provide habitat/species information, continue ongoing coordination, maintain project equipment, and maintain buildings and grounds, and project administration and reporting.

The CCT does not propose land acquisition as part of this SOW. Also proposed is that all ground-disturbing and fence construction activities will be cleared by the CCT's History and Archaeology Department before the activity occurs.

The lands are dedicated and managed for wildlife, funding is for reasonable operation and maintenance, and project lands will be evaluated for baseline conditions, and data will be used to develop site-specific management plans.

Analysis: In March 1995, the CCT, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and BPA cooperatively completed a final environmental assessment entitled "Hellsgate Winter Range: Wildlife Mitigation Project Final Environmental Assessment". The proposed activities in the 2006 SOW are consistent with this EA. In addition, the information contained in the September 29, 2004 SA write-up, for the most part, provides environmental coverage for the current proposed activities.

CCT reports that the project is dedicated to the protection of wildlife species and that no actions would jeopardize federally listed species and or their habitats. The same ESA species in the September 2004 SA for this project apply: bald eagles, Canada lynx, and bull trout. No listed species under the jurisdiction of

NOAA Fisheries are present in the project area and based on the activities proposed and the likelihood of those species being present in the project area during construction, we again make a “no effect” determination for each of the ESA-listed species. For future project activities under BPA finding authority, the CCT Fish and Wildlife Department will annually reassess potential project effects on listed species and their habitats, and keep BPA apprised of those actions accordingly, so that ESA consultation may appropriately be initiated as necessary.

The EA, described above, contains provisions related to cultural resources that have been agreed between the Tribe’s Business Council, their Natural Resources Committee, BPA’s Office of General Counsel, and BPA’s Environment, Fish and Wildlife. Accordingly, to avoid cultural and historic resource impacts, the Tribe will integrate management planning for historic and cultural resources as defined under the National Historic Preservation Act as amended. Cultural resource surveys shall be done before initiating project ground-disturbing activities and sensitive sites will be avoided if possible in implementing actions. In particular, maps are to be forwarded to the CCT Tribes’ History and Archaeology Department (and concurrently to BPA) to assess the undertaking and likelihood of affect. For BPA funded activities, no fence building or other ground disturbance will be initiated unless BPA issues it clearance in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act.

To date, only small-scale enhancement activities have occurred on mitigation units purchased before 1999. However, any planned specific activities that could affect cultural resources may necessitate consultation with the CCT Tribal Historic Preservation Office for appropriate conservation and protection. The Tribal cultural resources staff will participate by coordinating the cultural resources surveys for ground disturbing activities. When constructing new fences, the cultural resource department is invited to walk the fence line to determine need for protection. If cultural resources are discovered during fence building, all work will stop and the department will be notified.

The consulted parties in the development of the aforementioned actions include: the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and U.S. Department of Agriculture, Interagency Scientific Review Committee, and NW Power and Conservation Council.

Any herbicidal application will comply with the USDA guidelines and recommendations on the labels for each product. Livestock grazing will not be allowed unless it will benefit wildlife. All vegetative planting will be grown at the Tribal greenhouse and be approved by the CCT’s Natural Resources Committee. Local seed stock will be used on disturbed areas. Quarterly and annual reports would be provided to BPA. Additional parameters are outlined in the MOA described earlier. Support documents to this SA are located in the KEC project files.

This Supplement Analysis finds that 1) the proposed actions are substantially consistent with the Transmission System Vegetation Management Program FEIS (DOE/EIS-0285) and ROD, and; 2) 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.

Findings: The project is generally consistent with the Northwest Power Planning Council’s Fish and Wildlife Program, the Hellsgate Final EA, and BPA’s Wildlife Mitigation Program EIS (DOE/EIS-0246) and ROD.

This Supplement Analysis finds that: 1) implementing the proposed action will not result in any substantial changes to the Wildlife Mitigation Program or 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 Wildlife Mitigation Program, Watershed Management Program, or their impacts. Therefore, no further NEPA documentation is required.

/s/ Douglas F. Corkran

Douglas F. Corkran

Fish and Wildlife Biologist

CONCUR:

/s/ Kathy Pierce

Kathy Pierce

NEPA Compliance Officer

DATE: May 16, 2006

cc:

Mr. Matt Berger- Colville Confederated Tribes, Fish and Wildlife Department, P.O. Box 150,
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