

United States Government

Department of Energy
Bonneville Power Administration

memorandum

DATE: November 18, 2005

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEC-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Watershed Management Program EIS (DOE/EIS-0265/SA-243)

TO: Jay Marcotte
Fish and Wildlife Project Manager – KEWL-4

Proposed Action: Yakima Tributary Access and Habitat Program – Snow Mountain Ranch--
South Fork Cowiche Creek Dam Removal and Creek Restoration

Project No: 2002-025-01

**Watershed Management Techniques or Actions Addressed Under This Supplement
Analysis (See Appendix A of the Watershed Management Program EIS):**

- 1.3 Restoration of Channelized River and Stream Reaches
- 1.6 Install Large Woody Debris Structures
- 1.7 Install Other Habitat Complexity Structures
- 1.9 Structural Bank Protection using Bioengineering Methods
- 2.7 Avoid Exotic Species
- 2.11 Hand Pulling
- 4.23 Intake and Return Diversion Screens
- 4.25 Consolidate/Replace Irrigation Diversion Dams

Location: Yakima County, Washington

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) and North Yakima Conservation
District

Description of the Proposed Action: The Bonneville Power Administration is proposing to fund a fish habitat improvement project with the North Yakima Conservation District on the South Fork Cowiche Creek--Snow Mountain Ranch. A side channel to the South Fork Cowiche Creek had been plugged by a previous landowner to prevent irrigation water from flowing back to the creek through the side channel. This plug will be removed and continuity of surface flow will be restored.

The project is intended to:

- Restore adult and juvenile fish passage for anadromous species (particularly steelhead trout);
- Prevent further stream bed degradation above the dam;
- Reconnect abandoned side channels to the main channel;
- Increase stream length by restoring surface water connections with historic channels and side channels;
- Increase sinuosity; and

- Encourage aggradation in order to maintain or raise existing bed elevations and retain sediment; and raise the water table to enhance floodplain connectivity and promote future growth and establishment of native riparian vegetation in areas that are currently dominated by exotic grasses.

To prevent the creek from avulsing into the side channel during high flow after the regrade, large logs with attached rootwads will be placed near the top end of the channel to restrict flow into the side channel. The crest of a concrete check dam will be lowered using a concrete saw and backhoe.

Accumulated sediment may be removed and/or redistributed from behind the dam to re-establish the stream grade. The channel to the south of the creek, which is believed to be an old meander bend that was abandoned when the dam was constructed, is approximately 350 feet long. Relocating the creek into its former channel will add 140 feet to the distance that the stream has to travel. This will reduce the stream gradient through this reach while enhancing floodplain connectivity. In order to reconnect the creek to its former channel, the dike that runs along the south side of the creek will be breached. A full-spanning debris jam will be installed in the main channel, composed of a minimum of one large log and one large attached rootwad cabled together. This configuration will redirect only a portion of the flow into the new channel in the short term. A series of four logs with attached rootwads will be buried back into the banks along the lower end of the restored (historic) channel. Four additional logs with attached rootwads will be keyed back into the banks of the former (diked) main channel to reduce flow capacity in the main stem, and provide bank stability and near-bank habitat for fish. The irrigation ditch to the north of the old check dam will be partially plugged below its confluence with the side channel. The plug will consist of boulders, logs and/or rootwads placed within irrigation ditch to add roughness to the channel and limit flow through the conveyance canal. The canal will be permanently blocked and sealed approximately 750 feet below the point of diversion, so that any water in the canal is forced to flow into the forested side channels that lead back to the creek. Irrigation water will no longer be withdrawn from this canal.

Analysis: The compliance checklist for this project was completed by Mike Tobin with the North Yakima Conservation District and meets the standards and guidelines for the Watershed Management Program Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Record of Decision (ROD).

In complying with requirements of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), the listed species that may occur in the general vicinity of the project area (Mid-Columbia steelhead trout, bull trout, grizzly bear, spotted owl, gray wolf, Canada lynx, marbled murrelet, Ute ladies' tresses, and bald eagle) would not be adversely affected by the proposed project with the possible exception of steelhead trout. There is no evidence that bull trout are present within the project area. Resident bull trout were reported previously within the Cowiche Creek headwaters, over fifteen miles above the proposed project site. However, more recent surveys within the same location have failed to substantiate the earlier siting (William Meyer, WDFW, personal communication, August, 2004).

There is no potential to affect grizzly bears or their habitat during this project due to the nature of the proposed work and the fact that the project is located in close proximity to areas of regular human use. The nearest probable grizzly bear siting was reported in 1993 approximately 15 miles northwest of the project area (WDFW, 2005). The project location is outside the known range of the spotted owl, and is not located adjacent to suitable habitat for the species. The nearest spotted owl nest was documented in 1996, approximately 15 miles from the project site (WDFW, 2005). The closest spotted owl siting was reported in 2002, approximately 14 miles from the project site. There is no potential to affect gray wolves or their habitat during this project due to the nature of the proposed work and the fact the project is in close proximity to areas of regular human use, which gray wolves avoid. The closest probable sighting of a gray wolf occurred in 1989, approximately 10 miles from the project site (WDFW, 2005). Canada lynx generally prefer higher elevation coniferous forests (Ruggiero et al. 1999). The nearest verified sighting of a Canada lynx occurred in 1987, approximately 16 miles from the project site (WDFW, 2005). The project location is also outside the known range of marbled murrelets, and is not located adjacent to possible habitat for the species. The WDFW Wildlife Heritage Database was consulted and no eastern Cascade sightings of marbled murrelet occur within at least 25 miles (WDFW, 2005).

As of September of 2004, there were no known populations of Ute Ladies' Tresses anywhere in Yakima County (WA Natural Heritage Program, 2005). Bald eagles have not been observed or documented near the project site, and the nearest documented bald eagle roosting site was documented in 1991, approximately 12 miles away (Wildlife Heritage Database, 2005).

The proposed project is located in potential spawning, rearing and/or migration habitat used by steelhead trout, however no steelhead have actually been documented within the project area. The proposed project has the potential to impact steelhead in the short term as a result of habitat modification and/or sedimentation. The proposed project may adversely affect Mid Columbia River Steelhead or their habitat for the duration of the project, but over the long term will enhance local spawning and rearing habitat, and enhance riparian vegetation within the action area. BPA has determined that if conducted in accordance with the applicable terms and conditions identified in the ESA Section 7 Consultation Biological Opinion (BO) and Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act Essential Fish Habitat Consultation for BPA's Habitat Improvement Program (HIP BO), the South Fork Cowlitz Creek—Snow Mountain Project meets the requirements of consistency and no further consultation is required.

In complying with the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, a cultural resources inventory was conducted on the South Fork Cowlitz Creek—Snow Mountain Ranch Project by Central Washington University, concluding that the proposed undertaking will have no adverse effect on historic properties. BPA archaeologists reviewed the findings and concur with the determination and concurrence is expected from the Washington State Historic Preservation Office. In addition, BPA sent a letter to Mr. Johnson Meninick of the Yakama Nation on May 18, 2004, requesting concurrence on the area of potential affect and seeking information on any known historic properties or cultural resources in the project area; no response was provided.

In the unlikely event that archaeological material is discovered during project implementation, work will be halted in the vicinity of the finds until an inspection and assessment can be done.

Findings: The project is generally consistent with the Northwest Power Planning Council's Fish and Wildlife Program, as well as BPA's Watershed Management Program 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.

/s/ Donald L. Rose for
Dawn R. Boorse
Environmental Specialist

CONCUR:

/s/ Katherine S. Pierce
Katherine S. Pierce
NEPA Compliance Officer

DATE: November 18, 2005

Attachment:
NEPA Compliance Checklist

cc: (w/o attachment)
Mr. Mike Tobin – North Yakima Conservation District
Mr. Stephen Kropp – Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife