

United States Government

Department of Energy

Bonneville Power Administration

memorandum

DATE: August 19, 2003

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEC-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Watershed Management Program EIS (DOE/EIS-0265/SA-118)

to: John Baugher – KEWL-4
Fish and Wildlife Project Manager

Proposed Action: Crims Island Parcel Acquisition—Preserve and Restore Columbia River Estuary Islands to Enhance Juvenile Salmonid and Columbian White-tailed Deer Habitat

Project No: 2003-008-00

Watershed Management Techniques or Actions Addressed Under This Supplement Analysis (See App. A of the Watershed Management Program EIS): 2.15 Acquisition of Sensitive Riparian Resources

Location: Between River Miles 54 and 57 in the Columbia River, upriver from Clatskanie, OR and downriver from Longview, WA, Columbia County, OR.

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and Columbia Land Trust (CLT).

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA, in conjunction with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Columbia Land Trust, proposes to acquire approximately 451 acres of privately-owned land on Crims Island, between River Miles 54 and 57, in Columbia County, Oregon. This acquisition includes approximately 451 acres of tidal emergent marsh, swamp, slough, and riparian forest habitat in the upper Columbia River Estuary. Crims Island contains a variety of fish habitats, including spawning beds, overwintering and rearing areas, resting pools, and protective cover for anadromous fish. Species at risk within the Columbia River Estuary, which reside for some part of their life history on the Crims Island parcel, include Upper Willamette chinook, upper Willamette steelhead, Columbia River chum, lower Columbia steelhead, middle Columbia steelhead, upper Columbia steelhead, Snake River steelhead, Snake River sockeye, lower Columbia chinook, upper Columbia spring-run chinook, Snake River spring/summer-run chinook, and Snake River Fall Chinook. The Endangered Columbian white-tailed deer would also be reintroduced to establish a new subpopulation of the deer on secure habitat, restoring this native species to the upper estuary. The Columbia Land Trust will temporarily hold title to the land for a time period of no longer than one year, at which time title will transfer to USFWS, who will manage the land as an addition to the Julia Butler Hansen National Wildlife Refuge for wildlife habitat protection and enhancement.

This Supplement Analysis covers the acquisition of the property on Crims Island only. Once acquisition is complete, a management plan will be developed by USFWS for the property that outlines the restoration and enhancement activities to be implemented. These may include reconnecting subtidal channels to the mainstem Columbia, controlling invasive exotic plants, reestablishing tidal flow to

100 acres of wooded swamp by excavating a man-made plug in a channel, restoration of riparian forest, etc. Prior to the implementation of any restoration or enhancement activities on the site, additional NEPA analysis will be required.

Analysis: The compliance checklist for this project was completed by Maureen Smith with USFWS and meets the standards and guidelines for the Watershed Management Program Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Record of Decision (ROD). A management plan will be prepared for the property after it is acquired and will follow the guidelines and mitigation measures detailed in the Watershed Management Program EIS and ROD.

No plant or animal species listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) will be affected by the acquisition of the property on Crims Island. ESA-listed species that may be present in the project vicinity include Upper Willamette chinook, upper Willamette steelhead, Columbia River chum, lower Columbia steelhead, middle Columbia steelhead, upper Columbia steelhead, Snake River steelhead, Snake River sockeye, lower Columbia chinook, upper Columbia spring chinook, Snake River spring/summer chinook, Snake River fall chinook, Columbian white-tailed deer, and bald eagle. ESA Section 7 consultation will be conducted by USFWS, as necessary, prior to the implementation of any restoration or enhancement activities on the property.

Because USFWS, a federal agency, will ultimately hold title to the land when any specific management, restoration, or enhancement activity on the Crims Island property is conducted, no cultural resource review was needed at this time. A letter from Anan Raymond, a Regional Archaeologist, confirmed that, "In accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife (FWS) policy, a change in ownership does not constitute an undertaking or require compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) at this time." Please see attached for full letter.

No ground disturbing activities are scheduled for the Crims Island property at this time. Prior to any future construction, development, or ground disturbing activities on the site, further archaeological studies will need to be conducted to determine the presence of cultural and/or historic resources. In the unlikely event that archaeological material is encountered during the interim period when CLT holds the title, an archaeologist will immediately be notified and actions halted in the vicinity of the finds until they can be inspected and assessed.

A Level I Pre-acquisition Contaminant Survey of the Crims Island property was completed on March 20 and April 1, 2003, by Environmental Contaminant Specialists with USFWS, and was reviewed by Frederick Walasavage, an Environmental Specialist with BPA, on April 23, 2003. Based on this assessment, it was determined that there are no significant recognized environmental concerns identified at the property that would impact the acquisition of these lands.

Public involvement associated with this project has included discussions with interested parties, letters sent to adjacent landowners, and legal notices published in various local newspapers. The comments received in response to letters sent out and the newspaper notices published were positive, and posed no concern regarding the acquisition. Additional public involvement will be required during the development of a management plan for the Crims Island property when it is added to the Julia Butler Hansen National Wildlife Refuge.

Findings: The project is generally consistent with Section 7.6A.2, 7.6B.3, & 7.8E.1, of the Northwest Power and Conservation Council's Fish and Wildlife Program. This 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 for the acquisition of the proposed project area.

/s/ Kelly Mason 8-19-03
Kelly Mason
Environmental Specialist

CONCUR:

/s./ Tom McKinney DATE: 8-19-03
Thomas C. McKinney
NEPA Compliance Officer

Attachments:

NEPA Compliance Checklist

ELA Review “Level I Pre-acquisition Contaminant Survey”—Fred Walasavage

Letter from USFWS Regional Archaeologist for National Historic Preservation Act compliance

cc: (w/o attachments)

Ms. Maureen Smith – USFWS

Ms. Cherie Kearney – Columbia Land Trust