

United States Government

Department of Energy
Bonneville Power Administration

memorandum

DATE: October 1, 2001

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KECN-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Watershed Management Program EIS (DOE/EIS-0265/SA-65)

TO: Peter Lofy - KEWL
Fish and Wildlife Project Manager

Proposed Action: Acquire Tucannon River Water Rights

Project No: 23047

Watershed Management Techniques or Actions Addressed Under This Supplement Analysis (See App. A of the Watershed Management Program EIS): 4.18 Purchase / Negotiate Water Right; 4.19 File for Instream Water Right.

Location: Tucannon River near Dayton, Columbia County, Washington.

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) and the Washington Water Trust.

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA proposes to fund a project that will increase the instream flow of the Tucannon River by leasing 1.39 cubic feet per second (cfs) of water per year from a private landowner, for a period of 15 years. The landowner holds a water right for 500 acre-feet per year with a priority date of 1900. The Washington Water Trust has already negotiated the purchase with the landowner and is pursuing appropriate permits through the Washington Department of Ecology. The water right acquired would be transferred to the Washington State Trust Water Right Program. The Washington Water Trust would monitor the project by making site visits during the irrigation season to ensure that leased water is remaining instream. The enhanced instream flow would directly improve habitat of Snake River Chinook salmon, Snake River steelhead, and bull trout by increasing flow, improving water temperature, and improving fish passage. The enhanced instream flow would also have collateral benefits to downstream riparian habitat and listed fish.

Analysis: The compliance checklist for this project was completed by Sarah Ogier of the Washington Water Trust, and meets the standards and guidelines for the Watershed Management Program Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Record of Decision (ROD).

The Tucannon River is the last Snake River tributary in the state of Washington with a run of spring chinook salmon. In addition to chinook, steelhead and bull trout are found in the Tucannon River. These three species are all listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. Consultation was initiated with the National Marine Fisheries Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Each agency has concurred with the finding that the proposed project may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect chinook, steelhead, or bull trout.

The water right being leased is for diversion of the Tucannon River, and has a priority date of 1900. Acquisition of a surface water right will result in immediate enhancement of instream flow. The Washington Water Trust has taken steps necessary to transfer the right to the state's Water Trust Program. The Trust has also negotiated only that portion of the water right that represents the landowner's actual consumptive use of the historic water right, minimizing the risk associated with over-allocation of surface water. In its proposal the Washington Water Trust has adequately addressed the drawbacks associated with acquisition of water rights which are identified in the Watershed Management Program EIS.

The National Marine Fisheries Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have concurred with BPA's finding that the project is not likely to adversely affect any species listed or critical habitat designated under the Endangered Species Act.

Findings: The project is generally consistent with the Northwest Power Planning Council's Fish and Wildlife Program. This Supplement Analysis finds 1) that the proposed actions are substantively 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/ Richard Yarde 10-01-2001

Richard Yarde
Environmental Specialist

CONCUR:

/s/ Thomas C. McKinney DATE: 10-01-2001

Thomas C. McKinney
NEPA Compliance Officer

Attachments:

Checklist
Letters of concurrence from NMFS, FWS

cc: (w/ attachments)
Sarah Ogier
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