

United States Government

Department of Energy
Bonneville Power Administration

memorandum

DATE: October 6, 2005

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEC-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Watershed Management Program EIS (DOE/EIS-0265/SA-236)

TO: Linda Hermeston
Fish and Wildlife Project Manager – KEWL-4

Proposed Action: Chewuch Diversion Dam Fish Passage Renovation Project

Project No: 2005-008-00

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; 2.7 Avoid Exotic Species; 2.9 Mechanical Vegetation Removal; 2.11 Handpulling; 3.37 Spill Contingency Planning; 7.4 Divert Water Around Construction of Large Structures; 7.5 Avoid Stream Crossings Outside of Construction Windows; 7.10 Erosion Control and Revegetation at Project Completion; 8.2 Minimize Disturbances within SMA; 8.22 Site Protection; 8.23 Monitor Revegetation Areas; 9.22 Construction: Erosion and Sediment Control Plans; 9.23 Construction: Erosion and Sediment Control Structures; 9.24 Construction: Inspect Erosion and Sediment Control Structures.

Location: Chewuch Diversion Dam located at RM 7 on the Chewuch River, Tributary to the Methow River, Okanogan County, Washington State, Columbia River Basin.

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE). (Action Agencies)

Description & Background of the Proposed Action: This project is part of the Updated Proposed Action (UPA) habitat projects to meet the Action Agencies' metric goals for the Wenatchee, Entiat and Methow subbasins. The UPA program is to improve the quality of tributary habitat to help provide "off-sets" to the impacts of hydro operations on the survival of certain listed andadromous species in the Federal Columbia River Power System (FCRPS). The Action Agencies have agreed to address specific limiting factors on the survival of these ESUs in specified areas of their passage, spawning and rearing habitats. The effects of the November 24, 2004 UPA were evaluated in a revised BO on the FCRPS issued by NOAA Fisheries on November 30, 2004 pursuant to section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The Council and ISRP have reviewed and approved the UPA project implementation for the BO. The proposed projects and locations are consistent with the priorities within the draft Subbasin Plans.

The Chewuch Diversion Dam Fish Passage Renovation Project would rebuild the present fish passage structure, dam and associated ditch headworks to meet current standards and ensure correct functioning of the fish passage facilities.

Analysis: The compliance checklist for this project was completed by Chris Johnson, Chewuch Basin Council, and meets the standards and guidelines for the Watershed Management Program Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) (DOE/EIS-0265) and Record of Decision (ROD).

The proposed project intends to address artificial barriers to fish passage (such as diversion dams for irrigation) as a major limiting habitat condition for fish passage in the Chewuch River. The Chewuch River is a historically important spring Chinook salmon and summer steelhead spawning stream. These anadromous fish migrate up the Chewuch as adults to reach spawning habitat above the Chewuch Diversion Dam and as smolts they need to get through the diversion dam on their downstream journey to the ocean. According to the USFS Chewuch River Watershed Analysis (1994) the Chewuch was an excellent producing area for Chinook salmon and supported large runs in the early days. Diversion dams constructed in the Methow Subbasin have caused a major decline in the Chinook and the extirpation of the native coho salmon run. Bull trout spawn in the upper reaches of the Chewuch River and some of the tributary streams. The fluvial forms migrate downstream to the mainstem Methow and Columbia Rivers for part of the year and are also adversely affected by diversion dams that obstruct passage.

The Chewuch Canal Company has been in operation since approximately 1910 and currently diverts 31 c.f.s. from the Chewuch to service a variety of agricultural and recreational uses in the Methow Valley. The source of water for the canal is the Chewuch Dam. The present concrete diversion dam is deteriorating as it is undermined during high flows. It does not meet current WDFW standards for percentage of low flows and there is no facility for downstream fish movement over the dam. The proposed improvements would provide fish passage at all life stages and headgate control to prevent fish stranding in the irrigation canal.

This diversion dam is also used to divert water for the Douglas County PUD fish acclimation facility located near the Chewuch Fish Screen. Currently there is no headgate at the diversion which exposes the first 300' of the canal before the fish screen and the Douglas County fish acclimation ponds to erosion and failure during high water.

A list of ESA species present was obtained and a Biological Assessment for Species under USFWS Jurisdiction written by John Jacobowski, USFS for BOR in July 2005. Section 7 consultation resulted in USFWS concurrence with the effect determinations of "may affect, likely to adversely affect" the Columbia River DPS of bull trout, and "may affect, not likely to adversely affect" the bald eagle, gray wolf, and grizzly bear. USFWS issued a Biological Opinion on September 28, 2005, with an incidental take statement providing BPA with an exemption from the Section 9 prohibitions described in the Endangered Species Act, and mandatory "reasonable and prudent measures" and "terms and conditions" that are designed to minimize incidental take.

This project is designed to conform to the NMFS Biological Opinion for the BPA Habitat Improvement Program (NMFS ref 2003/00750). It incorporated the general conservation measures presented in the HIP BO for construction activities (Section 1.22 and 1.2.3, pages 27 to 41) as well as the specific conservation measures for improvement of irrigation diversion dams (Section 1.2 through 8.5, page 60).

In addition, Bryan Nordland, NMFS, has participated during the development of the project designs. Therefore, Section 7 consultation with NOAA Fisheries was completed using the HIP BO and all effects of the project activities are within the range of effects addressed in the Opinion. On file is the relevant documentation such as Form 1 HIP BO Consistency Form and Custom Report from the HIP BO.

A cultural resource background search and field survey was conducted by Mark DeLeon, US BOR archaeologist on July 12, 2005. A report was submitted to BPA on September 23, 2005 with a finding of "no potential to cause effects and no further Section 106 review necessary on this undertaking." During the week of October 3, 2005, Steve Tromley, BPA archaeologist consulted with the Washington Department of Archaeology & Preservation, State Historic Preservation Office, and received verbal concurrence with the report findings.

An Environmental land audit was completed by Mark Hermeston, BPA environmental physical scientist. A review of the property included a review of records, site reconnaissance, evaluation of surrounding properties, and interviews with landowners and/or occupants to determine if there were any recognized environmental conditions associated with the site. Results indicate that there are no hazardous or toxic wastes present. This project does not involve land acquisition.

Okanogan County is the lead contact for applicable aquatic resource permits through JARPA. WDFW would provide the HPA permit and COE provide 404(d) wetland permits. All appropriate permits would be obtained prior to construction.

Coordination meetings have been held quarterly during the past two years to discuss the Updated Proposed Actions (UPA) habitat proposals with willing landowners, local governments, conservation and special interest groups, tribes, the Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board and others. Specific project teams have been designated to pursue coordination and implementation of the approved projects including the Chewuch Dam Renovation Project. Participants include BOR, WDFW, USFS, USCOE, NOAA Fisheries, USFWS, DOE and BPA.

The public involvement program has evolved over several years and has included public notices, public meetings, agency coordination meetings, radio advertisements and discussions, stories in local newspaper and information available via various Internet web links. This project has widespread support for salmon recovery efforts among Colville Confederated Tribe (CCT), Yakama Nation (YN), Chewuch Basin Council, local governments, landowners, Okanogan County Commissioners, Winthrop and Twisp town councils.

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/ Patricia R. Smith

Patricia R. Smith

Environmental Protection Specialist – KEC-4

CONCUR:

/s/ Katherine Pierce

Katherine Pierce

NEPA Compliance Officer – KEC-4

DATE: October 6, 2005

Documents on File:

Chewuch NEPA Checklist

HIP Consistency Form 1

Custom Report from HIP BO

Cultural Resources Survey Report

Revised Chewuch BA

USFWS BO

cc:

Mr. Greg Knott, US Bureau of Reclamation, PO Box 918, Twisp, WA 98856

Mr. Chris Johnson, Chewuch Basin Council, PO Box 1608, Okanogan, WA 98840

Mr. Don Phillips, US Forest Service, 24 West Chewuch Road, Winthrop, WA 98862