

United States Government

Department of Energy
Bonneville Power Administration

memorandum

DATE: August 18, 1998

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: ECN-4

SUBJECT: Supplemental Analysis for the Watershed Management Program EIC, Project No. 9801800

TO: Thomas C. McKinney – NEPA Compliance Officer

Proposed Action: John Day Watershed Restoration

Budget No.: F5018

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

4.25 Consolidate/Replace Irrigation Diversion Dams

Location: Grant County, Oregon. John Day Basin.

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), The North Fork John Day Watershed Council (Council), Monument Soil and Water Conservation District (MSWCD), The Prineville Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and other cooperators.

Description of the Proposed Action: Gravel push-up dams represent impediments to anadromous fish, resident fish, and recreational users. Hastily constructed and ill-conceived push-up dams within the John Day Basin have received statewide attention, have been frequently photographed and described as “eyesores.” There are over 40 pumping stations located on the lower North Fork John Day between Kimberly and the mouth of Wall Creek (a 20-mile reach). Fully one half of these pumping stations require some degree of instream flow modification during periods of low flow. These modifications collectively result in numerous migration impediments, large pools of stranding water, and increased sediment loads both during construction and washout.

Many push-up dams remain instream until they are washed out during spring runoff. These washouts result in exponential increases in turbidity and erosive capability. Although the usefulness of push-up dams is short term, the damage to the watershed is long-term.

This project will monitor water temperature in the pools behind push-up dams to determine if these constructs acts as “heat sinks,” which eventually release warmer water into the free-flowing stream. Temperature degradation on the reach of the North Fork between Wall Creek and Kimberly can best be improved by enhancing tributary flows, increasing riparian vegetation, and removing obstructions, which result in broad, shallow pools. This project addresses the latter of these components—the component which has received the least attention, yet is most quickly and easily modified.

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

Section 7 consultation was conducted with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) under the requirements of the Endangered Species Act (Act). Of concern are the potential impacts from proposed project construction activities to bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*), listed on June 10, 1998, as a threatened species under the Act. As a result, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) developed a biological assessment for these projects as they affect bull trout. The USFWS concurred on August 3, 1998, that these projects are “not likely to adversely affect” bull trout.

A Cultural Resources Survey of the 4 different project areas was conducted by the Oregon BLM Prineville District archaeologist. No cultural resources were discovered as a result of this inventory. The most likely reason is that all locations are within the active floodplain and are subjected to periodic flooding. It is recommended that all sites be developed as proposed without further mitigative measures. However, any cultural resource materials discovered as a result of leveling activities will require the operator to stop work and immediately contact the BLM Prineville District Office so that an assessment of the situation can be made as quickly as possible.

Findings: The project is generally consistent with Section 7.10, and 10.2 of the Northwest Power Planning Council’s Fish and Wildlife Program. The attached 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.

Eric N. Powers
Environmental Project Lead
Environment, Fish and Wildlife Group

Concur:

Thomas C. McKinney
NEPA Compliance Officer

DATE: _____

Attachments:

NEPA Compliance Checklist
Cultural Resources Concurrence Letter from SHPO
USFWS Concurrence Letter on Bull Trout BA

cc:

B. Beraud - EC-4

L. Croff - ECP-4

N. Weintraub - ECN-4

J. Baugher - EWN-4

M. Shaw - EWP-4

P. Key - LN-7

R. Stubblefield - Council

Official File - ECN (EQ-15)

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