

United States Government

Department of Energy

Bonneville Power Administration

memorandum

DATE: February 17, 2005

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEC-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Watershed Management Program EIS (DOE/EIS-0265/SA-203)

TO: Sabrina Keen
Fish and Wildlife Project Manager - KEW-4

Proposed Action: Protect and Restore Mill Creek Watershed

Project No: 2000-036-00

Watershed Management Techniques or Actions Addressed Under This Supplement Analysis (See App. A of the Watershed Management Program EIS): 1.8 Bank Protection through Vegetation Management, 1.13 Culvert Removal/Replacement to Improve Fish Passage, 6.10 Access: Fencing.

Location: Idaho County, Idaho

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) and the Nez Perce Tribe

Description of the Proposed Action: The Bonneville Power Administration is proposing to fund watershed improvement actions in the Mill Creek Watershed in Idaho County, Idaho with the Nez Perce Tribe. Activities will include replacement of culverts to improve fish passage on tributaries to Mill Creek, fence maintenance to protect critical meadow habitat, and riparian planting on upper Mill Creek. The culverts proposed for replacement are located on the following tributaries to Mill Creek: Merton Creek, Black George Creek (two culverts), Corral Creek, Camp Creek and Hepner Creek. These culverts are located in the Nez Perce National Forest.

Analysis: In place of a NEPA compliance checklist, a Decision Memo from the USDA Forest Service was submitted by Heidi McRoberts with the Nez Perce Tribe (February 15, 2005). The information contained in the Decision Memo meets the standards and guidelines for the Watershed Management Program Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Record of Decision (ROD).

In compliance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), a Biological Assessment and Essential Fish Habitat Analysis for threatened and sensitive species for the Mill Creek culvert replacement projects was submitted for consultation in 2004. The Biological Assessment determined that the culvert replacements may affect, but are not likely to adversely affect steelhead trout and bull trout in the project area and may impact individuals and habitat, but with no loss of viability or trends toward federal listing for Snake River chinook salmon. It was also determined that the projects may affect, but are not likely to adversely modify proposed bull trout critical habitat. The US Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA Fisheries reviewed these findings and concurred with these determinations (June 7, 2004; May 21, 2004). No effect to ESA-listed species is expected to occur from the proposed fence maintenance and riparian planting activities.

In compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, surveys were conducted for Native American religious or cultural sites, archaeological sites, and historic properties in areas that may be affected by the proposed culvert replacement projects. A finding of no properties affected was made. A Nez Perce Tribal archaeologist was involved in the survey and findings and no tribal concerns were

identified for this project. No effect to cultural and/or historic resources is expected to occur from the proposed fence maintenance and riparian planting activities. In the unlikely event that archaeological material is discovered during project implementation, an archaeologist should be notified immediately and work halted in the vicinity of the finds until they can be inspected and assessed.

Standard water quality protection procedures and Best Management Practices should be followed during the implementation of the Mill Creek Watershed activities. No construction is authorized to begin until the proponent has obtained all applicable local, state, and federal permits and approvals.

Public involvement has occurred as part of the Mill Creek Watershed project. The project was listed in the USDA Forest Service's Schedule of Proposed Actions and direct mailings were sent to individuals, agencies, and interested parties on the District NEPA mailing list. Two comments were received and responses were provided.

Findings: The project is generally consistent with Section 7.6A.2, 7.6B.3, & 7.8E.1, of the Northwest Power Planning 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.

/s/ Shannon C. Stewart

Shannon C. Stewart

Environmental Specialist – KEC-4

CONCUR:

/s/ Thomas C. McKinney

Thomas C. McKinney

NEPA Compliance Officer – KEC-4

DATE: February 17, 2005

Attachments:

USDA Forest Service Decision Memo - Mill Creek Culvert Replacement Project, May 2004

USFWS Letter of Concurrence, June 7, 2004

NOAA Fisheries Letter of Concurrence, May 21, 2004

cc: (w/ attachments)

Ms. Heidi McRoberts – Nez Perce Tribe