

United States Government

Department of Energy  
Bonneville Power Administration

# memorandum

DATE: June 11, 2002

REPLY TO  
ATTN OF: KEC-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Wildlife Mitigation Program EIS (DOE/EIS-0246/SA-25)

TO: Ron Morinaka, KEWU-4  
Fish and Wildlife Project Manager

**Proposed Action:** Purchase of Fisher River Conservation Easement (Fiscal Years 2002-2004)

**Project No:** 2002-044-00

**Wildlife Management Techniques or Actions Addressed Under This Supplement Analysis**  
**(See App. A of the Wildlife Mitigation Program EIS):** 1.2 Easement Acquisition

**Location:** near Libby, Lincoln County, Montana

**Proposed by:** Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) and Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

**Description of the Proposed Action:** BPA proposes to fund a portion of the cost of a conservation easement on 56,400 acres of land along the Fisher River to preclude development and protect riparian habitat. The land is owned by the Plum Creek Timber Company, and Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (MFWP) will own and monitor the perpetual easement. The goal of the project is to protect approximately 142,000 acres owned by Plum Creek Timber Company: 56,400 in the Fisher River valley and 86,000 in the Thompson River valley. The total cost for the easement over 142,000 acres is estimated at around \$30 million. BPA will contribute \$500,000 toward the smaller parcel in the Fisher River valley, for each of fiscal years 2002, 2003, and 2004, for a total of \$1.5 million. A number of other public and private entities will fund the remainder of the easement, with MFWP contributing the majority.

This Supplement Analysis considers BPA's contribution to the acquisition of the conservation easement only. The conservation easement generally preserves the status quo by prohibiting future subdivision and development. If BPA is involved in future management actions, additional NEPA analysis will be required prior to implementation of those actions.

**Analysis:** The compliance checklist for this project was completed by Alan Wood of MFWP, and meets the standards and guidelines for the Wildlife Mitigation Program Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Record of Decision (ROD). The MFWP completed an environmental assessment under the Montana Environmental Policy Act, and the Decision Notice and Final Environmental Assessment were published on November 9, 2000.

No plant or animal species, or their designated critical habitat, listed or proposed for listing under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) will be affected by the purchase of the conservation easement. Listed species known to exist in the vicinity of the property include the bald eagle,

grizzly bear, gray wolf, Canada lynx, and bull trout. If BPA is involved in any future management actions, the agency may engage in Section 7 consultation, if necessary.

As part of its public involvement and cultural resources analyses for the environmental assessment, MFWP consulted with the State Historic Preservation Office and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes to identify any tribal concerns or the location of cultural and historic resources on the properties. It has been determined that the purchase of the conservation easement will have no adverse affects on historic properties.

MFWP also conducted extensive public involvement with private and public stakeholders in the vicinity of the project. A number of public meetings were held, with notice published in local newspapers. Staff met with hundreds of interested parties over the course of approximately two years. The environmental assessment documents this process and summarizes the public comments and agency responses. According to MFWP, the majority of regional stakeholders were in favor of the proposed project.

**Findings:** The project is generally consistent with the Northwest Power Planning Council's Fish and Wildlife Program, as well as BPA's Wildlife Mitigation Program EIS (DOE/EIS-0246) and ROD. This Supplement Analysis finds that: 1) implementing the proposed action will not result in any substantial changes to the Wildlife Mitigation 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 Wildlife Mitigation Program or its impacts. Therefore, no further NEPA documentation is required.

/s/ Richard Yarde 6-13-2002

Richard Yarde  
Environmental Specialist

CONCUR:

/s/ Thomas C. McKinney DATE: 6-13-2002

Thomas C. McKinney  
NEPA Compliance Officer

**Attachments:**

Environmental Checklist  
Draft Environmental Assessment

cc: (w/out attachments)  
Mr. Brian Marotz  
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
490 North Meridian Road  
Kalispell MT 59901