

United States Government

Department of Energy

Bonneville Power Administration

memorandum

DATE: October 23, 2001

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KECN-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Watershed Management Program EIS (DOE/EIS-0265/SA-70)

TO: David Byrnes - KEWL-4
Fish and Wildlife Project Manager

Proposed Action: Yakima Basin Side Channels Project, Scatter Creek/Plum Creek Land Acquisition Phase I.

Project No: 1997-051-00

Wildlife Management Techniques or Actions Addressed Under This Supplement Analysis (See App. A of the Wildlife Mitigation Program EIS): 2.15 Acquisition of Sensitive Riparian Resources.

Location: Yakima River Basin, Kittitas County, Washington

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) and the Yakama Nation

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA proposes to purchase 4 privately owned parcels totaling approximately 61 acres in the Yakima River Basin in Kittitas County, Washington as part of the Yakima River Side Channels Project. Title to the land will be transferred to the United States Government, Bonneville Power Administration for fish and wildlife habitat protection and enhancement. The goal of this project is to contribute toward the rebuilding of Yakima Basin spring chinook salmon and steelhead populations by improving survival during their first year of life. This will be accomplished by protecting and restoring off-channel rearing habitats associated with the mainstem of the Yakima River. Historically, these habitats have been severely degraded through the construction of transportation corridors, irrigation developments, and diking activities.

The subject parcels are located near the Cle Elum reach of the Yakima River which contains a variety of aquatic and riparian habitats that support native fish, reptiles, and amphibians, as well as waterfowl. Conservation of these parcels will contribute to the rebuilding of steelhead and chinook salmon runs in the Yakima River system. These lands are located in a portion of the watershed where a large percentage of the basin's spring chinook salmon spawn. Upon hatching, young salmon fry move into the shallow areas along the river margins to begin their early growth. These parcels contain numerous shallow backwater channels and wetlands that are protected by a thick over-story of native trees and brush. These features are important for the development of the young fish during their first year of life. This project proposes to preserve these 61 acres in their natural condition, which will ensure that this critical fish rearing habitat is maintained in the future.

Approximately 400 acres were included in the overall Scatter Creek/Plum Creek land acquisition proposal. This Supplement Analysis covers only the acquisition of the subject 61 acres. BPA is

proposing to acquire the remaining property on a staggered schedule over the next two to three years. Additional land acquisition actions will require separate NEPA documentation. All required environmental and cultural resource surveys referenced in this Supplement Analysis were conducted on the total 400 acre area.

Analysis: The compliance checklist for this project was completed by Melvin Sampson with The Yakama Nation and meets the standards and guidelines for the Watershed Management Program Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Record of Decision (ROD). A management plan will be prepared for the property after it is purchased and will follow the guidelines and mitigation measures detailed in the Watershed Management Program EIS and ROD.

No plant or animal species listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) will be affected by the fee-title purchase of the subject properties. ESA-listed species that may be present in the project vicinity include bald eagle, bull trout, Canada lynx, Northern spotted owl, Ute ladies' tresses, and steelhead. ESA Section 7 consultation will be conducted by BPA and The Yakama Nation, as necessary, prior to the implementation of any restoration or enhancement activities on the properties.

A cultural resource literature review and field survey of the Scatter Creek/Plum Creek parcels was conducted by Applied Archaeological Research (AAR) on July 4, 2001. Two historic sites, a prehistoric site, and a prehistoric isolate were identified during these surveys. Based on the findings and recommendations of AAR, BPA determined that there would be no effect on cultural properties associated with the proposed Scatter Creek/Plum Creek land acquisition action. Prior to any future construction, development, or transfer from Federal control of the subject property though, further archaeological studies will be required. In addition, the management plan for this property should include a cultural resource protection and anti-vandalism plan developed in conjunction with the WA Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (OAHP). The WA OAHP concurred with these conclusions and recommendations on August 2, 2001. In the unlikely event that archaeological or historic materials are discovered during project activities, work in the immediate vicinity of the finds will be discontinued and the area secured until the WA OAHP is notified.

A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment of the Scatter Creek/Plum Creek parcels was completed on May 15, 2001 by Frederick Walasavage an Environmental Specialist with BPA. Based on this assessment, it was determined that there are no recognized environmental conditions associated with the subject properties that would impact the acquisition of these lands.

Public involvement associated with this project has included written notification and solicitation of comments to interested parties, adjacent landowners, local tribes, government agencies, and non-governmental organizations. Project notifications were also published in the local newspaper. Public response from these notifications included numerous questions about the project location and purpose. Once clarification was provided, interested parties expressed general support for the project. Because of initial favorable comments on this project, it was decided that subsequent public meetings and/or workshops were not warranted.

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

CONCUR:

/s/ Thomas C. McKinney

Thomas C. McKinney
NEPA Compliance Officer

DATE: 10-25-2001

Attachments:

NEPA Compliance Checklist
Washington State OAHP Letter

cc: (w/o attachment)

Scott Nicolai- Yakama Nation, YKFP
M. Wolcott – TR-3

bcc: (w/o attachment)

L. Croff - KEC-4

N. Weintraub - KEC-4

P. Key - LC-7

bcc: (w/ attachment)

Official File - KEC (EQ-14)

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