

United States Government

Department of Energy
Bonneville Power Administration

memorandum

DATE: May 20, 2002

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEC-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Watershed Management Program EIS (DOE/EIS-0265/SA-79)

TO: Joe DeHerrera
Fish and Wildlife Project Manager, KEWU-4

Proposed Action: Eisminger/ CREP Dike Relocation

Project No: 1992-026-01

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, 2.1 Maintain Healthy Riparian Plant Communities, 2.3 Creation of Wetlands to Provide Near Channel Habitat and Store Water for Land Use, 2.7 Avoid Exotic Species, 2.4 Provide Filter Strips to Catch Sediment and Other Pollutants, 6.1 Deferred Grazing.

Location: Union County, Oregon

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) and the Union Soil and Water Conservation District

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA proposes to partially fund a project with the Union County Soil and Water Conservation District that will relocate 4,500 feet of existing dike along the Grande Ronde River, re-create native wetlands, relocate an existing powerline, and establish a riparian forest buffer. These actions are part of a Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) project. The project is cooperatively funded by the Natural Resource Conservation Service, Farm Service Agency, Oregon Department of Forestry, BPA, and the landowner. BPA funds will be used to move an existing powerline. The goal of the proposed project is to: protect valuable cropland from flooding; improve floodplain function by allowing the river better access to the floodplain during periods of high water; improve riparian and floodplain sediment filtering capacity; improve riparian quality and function; and restore wetlands.

Analysis: The compliance checklist for this project was completed by Sarah Hendrickson with the Union Soil and Water Conservation District (signed by Lyle Kuchenbecker, 4/9/02) and meets the standards and guidelines for the Watershed Management Program Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Record of Decision (ROD).

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) listed species that occur in the general vicinity of the proposed Eisminger project are bull trout, bald eagle, Howell's spectacular thelypody, Snake River steelhead, and Snake River spring/summer chinook salmon. Pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, the Farm Service Agency submitted a Biological Assessment (BA) for

the Eisminger project to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) on October 12, 2001 and to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on August 14, 2001.

The NMFS concurred with the finding that the proposed actions are not likely to adversely affect Snake River steelhead and Snake River spring/summer chinook salmon, or their designated critical habitats in the project area (February 19, 2002). Pursuant to Section 305(b) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, NMFS also evaluated potential impacts to Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) for Snake River spring/summer chinook salmon as part of this consultation. NMFS concluded that the proposed actions may adversely affect EFH for chinook salmon but did not provide additional conservation recommendations. The conservation measures outlined in the BA to address ESA concerns will also be adequate to avoid, minimize, or otherwise offset potential adverse effects to designated EFH.

The USFWS determined that consultation on Howell's spectacular thelypody was not necessary because habitat for this species is not present in the Eisminger project area. USFWS concurred with the finding that the proposed actions as described in the BA are not likely to adversely affect bull trout and bald eagle (September 7, 2001).

A cultural resource review of the proposed project site was completed by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) on August 8, 2001. This review included a literature search and a field survey by a qualified cultural resource specialist. The project area is located on agricultural land that has been previously disturbed. The existing dike that will be relocated was constructed in the 1950's. As a result of the cultural resource review, no cultural or historic resources were identified in the project area. The project will therefore have no effect on cultural or historic resources. If cultural deposits are found during any phase of the proposed project, if the nature of the undertaking changes, or if additional lands are to be included in the project area, a cultural resource specialist will be contacted immediately. The Oregon State Historic Preservation Office was contacted concerning this review and concurred with NRCS's findings and conditions (per Eileen Larkin, May 14, 2002).

Standard protection measures for activities in or near streams and wetlands will be followed during the implementation of the Eisminger project. The necessary Oregon Division of State Lands and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers permit approvals for this project have either been obtained or are in process. No construction will be authorized to begin until the applicant has obtained all required permits and approvals.

Public involvement has taken place as part of the Eisminger/ CREP Dike Relocation project. The project will be implemented on private land in conjunction with a willing landowner. Consultation has taken place between the funding agencies and adjacent landowners, NMFS, USFWS, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Union County, and the Grande Ronde Model Watershed Program. Public involvement has also taken place through general CREP informational sources including public meetings, newspaper articles, and local workshops.

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/ Shannon Stewart – 5-20-02

Shannon C. Stewart
Environmental Specialist

CONCUR:

/s/ Tom McKinney

DATE: 5-20-02

Thomas C. McKinney
NEPA Compliance Officer

Attachments:

NEPA Compliance Checklist

USFWS Letter of Concurrence, September 7, 2001

NMFS Letter of Concurrence, February 19, 2002

Request for Cultural Resource Review, August 8, 2001

cc: (w/ attachments)

Sarah Hendrickson, Union Soil and Water Conservation District