

United States Government

Department of Energy

Bonneville Power Administration

memorandum

DATE: October 18, 2002

**REPLY TO
ATTN OF:** KEC-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Watershed Management Program EIS (DOE/EIS-0265/SA-94)

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

Proposed Action: Yakima Basin Side Channels Project, Browitt Property Acquisition

Project No: 1997-051-00

Watershed Management Techniques or Actions Addressed Under This Supplement Analysis (See App. A of the Watershed Management 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 approximately 42 acres of privately-owned land 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 parcel is 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. These lands are located in a portion of the watershed where a large percentage of the basin's spring chinook salmon spawn. The Browitt Property contains 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 young fish during their first year of life. The Browitt Property will be preserved in its natural condition to ensure that this critical fish-rearing habitat is maintained in the future.

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 Browitt Property. 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 property.

A cultural resource literature review and field survey of a 310-acre area that includes the Browitt Property 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 Browitt Property acquisition. 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, an archaeologist will immediately be notified and work halted in the vicinity of the finds until they can be inspected and assessed.

A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment of the Browitt Property was completed on November 29, 2000 by Frederick Walasavage an Environmental Specialist with BPA. Based on this assessment, it was determined that there were no recognized environmental conditions associated with the subject property 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, it was decided that subsequent public meetings and/or workshops were not warranted for this project.

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.

CONCUR:

/s/ Shannon C. Stewart 10-18-2002
Shannon C. Stewart
Environmental Specialist

/s/ James Kehoe for DATE: 10-18-2002
Thomas C. McKinney
NEPA Compliance Officer

Attachments:
NEPA Compliance Checklist
Washington State OAHP Letter, August 2, 2001
Phase I Environmental Site Assessment Letter, November 29, 2000

cc: (w/o attachment)
Scott Nicolai - Yakama Nation, YKFP
M. Wolcott - TRT-TPP-4