

United States Government

Department of Energy  
Bonneville Power Administration

# memorandum

DATE: October 21, 2002

REPLY TO  
ATTN OF: KEC-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Watershed Management Program EIS (DOE/EIS-0265/SA-95)

TO: Ron Morinaka (KEWU – 4)  
Fish and Wildlife Project Manager, COTR

**Proposed Action:** Libby Creek Channel Stabilization Project

**Project No:** 199500400

**Watershed Management Program (See App. A : Available Management Techniques):** 1.6 Install Large Woody Debris Structures; 1.7 Install Other Habitat Complexity Structures; 1.9 Structural Bank Protection using Bioengineering Methods; 1.16 Spawning Habitat Enhancements; 1.17 Rearing Habitat Enhancements; 2.1 Maintain Healthy Riparian Plant Communities.

**Location:** On Libby Creek, located about 18 miles southwest of the town of Libby, Montana within T. 27N, R. 31 West, Sect. 1, in Lincoln County

**Proposed by:** Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) and the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks (MFWP)

**Description of the Proposed Action:** BPA proposes to fund MFWP to construct a channel stabilization project, which would restore the dimension, pattern, and profile of 3,200 feet of Libby Creek. The project calls for shaping cut banks to a 2:1 slope, installing root wads and tree revetments; and planting and restoring native grasses and riparian shrubs along the margin of the channel. Cross vanes (constructed from rock) and trees will also be established to control channel gradient within the project area.

This project is one restoration phase on Libby Creek, and was identified as important by the Libby Area Conservation District, MFWP, U.S. Forest Service, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Libby Creek is also the focus of restoration efforts based, in part, on the finding of the Montana Governor's Bull Trout Restoration Technical Committee. This Committee identified Libby Creek as critical spawning and migratory habitat for the threatened bull trout. This project reach of Libby Creek is also rearing habitat for resident redband trout and resident and fluvial bull trout migrating from the Kootenai River.

The proposed project will require use of a 320 class track excavator, a D7 class bulldozer, and a dump truck. Equipment access will be accomplished via existing roads located within the Liberty Placer Mining property. Minor road improvement may be required to permit access to the stream channel. After project completion, all road access will be removed via road reclamation. The project will be constructed between September 1, 2002 and November 15,

2002 during the time when Libby Creek flows are at base level. Construction is expected to last no longer than three weeks during this period.

Libby Creek has been degraded by past management practices including road building, hydraulic and dredge mining, and riparian logging. These activities have resulted in accelerated bank erosion along a number of meander bends, channel degradation, and poor fish habitat. The current stream channel is over-widened and shallow, having limited pool habitat.

The project will be monitored to determine if objectives are met. Pre- and post-monitoring data collected to date within the project area include 13 permanent stream channel cross sections located in, above, and below the proposed project, a longitudinal profile, and numerous photo points. These monitoring activities will allow the determination of how channel morphology and dimension change in time.

**Analysis:** The compliance checklist for this project was completed by Jim Dunnigan of the MFWP and meets the standards and guidelines for the Watershed Management Program Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Record of Decision (ROD) (July 30, 2002).

Short-term impacts of the project largely relate to ground disturbing activities during the three-week construction phase. Such impacts would result from channel restoration, bank sloping, vegetation establishment, and associated work. On the long term, the proposed project is expected to improve fish and wildlife habitat, aesthetics, and water quality within the project area and should also increase trout populations in both Libby Creek and the Kootenai River over the long term. The proposed project activities would provide for greater channel stability and reduce sediment loading, resulting in a healthier habitat for aquatic life. Planting riparian vegetation along the stream margin would create more diverse habitat for riparian dependent wildlife. The project is intended to compliment present and future restoration projects in Libby Creek.

The following species listed under the Endangered Species Act may occur in the general vicinity of the project: Kootenai River white sturgeon, bull trout, gray wolf, grizzly bear, bald eagle, Canada lynx, water howelia, and Spalding's campion. Pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, BPA submitted the *Biological Assessment (BA) for the Libby Creek Channel Stabilization (Upper Cleveland Reach)* to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on August 2, 2002 and requested concurrence. On September 10, 2002, the USFWS concurred with BPA's Biological Assessment determination (Attachment 1) that the proposed project is not likely to adversely affect the grizzly bear and bald eagle. This statement is conditioned upon implementation of the proposed conservation measures identified on page 5 of the BA (Attachment 2). The USFWS further determined that the project is exempted from take prohibitions for incidental take of bull trout through the cooperative agreement with the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks pursuant to section 6 of the Endangered Species Act. The USFWS did not respond to the BA's "no effect" determination for the water howelia, Spalding's campion, white sturgeon, gray wolf, and Canada lynx because they are not required to respond to this determination.

Under section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, BPA initiated consultation on July 26, 2002 with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of Flathead, and Kootenai Tribe of Idaho. A cultural resource inventory was conducted by Mr. Jim Calvi on July 18 and 22, 2002, and the results revealed that no cultural resources were located on the natural and cultural landscape of the project area and that the project would have no effect on cultural and/or historic resources. In its undated letter (envelope postmarked Oct. 9, 2002), the State Archaeologist/Deputy SHPO responded with acceptance of the CR Report (Attachment 3) without mitigative conditions.

Standard in-channel water quality protection procedures will be followed during the implementation of the project. Applications for the following have been filed with the respective agencies: a section 404 application under the Clean Water Act permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, a 3A permit from the Montana Department of Environmental Quality, a 318 permit from the Lincoln County Conservation District; and a floodplain permit from the Lincoln County Planning Department. All permits will be acquired prior to initiating ground disturbing work on this project.

The proposed project will be constructed on private property, and project planning has included consultation with the Libby Placer Company, USFWS, U.S. Forest Service, Libby Area Conservation District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Plum Creek Timber Company, SHPO, and private landowners. The local media were notified of public meetings held on the planning of this project, and the MFWP has been forthright in soliciting public input to the project.

**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.

CONCUR:

/s/ Carl J. Keller 10-21-2002  
 Carl J. Keller  
 Fish and Wildlife Biologist

Robert W. Beraud for  
 Thomas C. McKinney  
 NEPA Compliance Officer

DATE: 10-21-200

Attachments:

1. USFWS concurrence letter of September 10, 2002
2. Biological Assessment for the Libby Creek Channel Stabilization (Upper Cleveland Reach)
3. SHPO acceptance letter postmarked October 9, 2002

cc: (w/ attachments)

Mr. Jim Dunnigan, MT Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, 475 Fish Hatchery Road, Libby MT 59923

bcc: (w/o attachments)

L. Croff - KEC-4

C. Keller – KEC-4

N. Weintraub - KEC-4

P. Key - LC-7

bcc: (w/ attachments)

Official File - KEC (EQ-14)

CJKeller:cjk:7692:10/15/02

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