

memorandum

DATE: October 7, 2013

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEC-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for Mid-Columbia Coho Restoration Program Final EIS (DOE/EIS-0425-SA-2)

TO: Roy Beaty,
Project Manager - KEWU-4

Proposed Action: Mid-Columbia Coho Restoration Program Acclimation Pond Modification – Blue Buck Pond

Project No.: 1996-040-00

Location: Methow River Basin, Okanogan County, Washington

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA)

Introduction: In 2012, BPA completed the Mid-Columbia Coho Restoration Program Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) (DOE/EIS-0425) and issued a Record of Decision documenting its decision to fund the Yakama Nation (YN) to implement the remaining phases of its comprehensive coho restoration program in the Wenatchee and Methow river basins. The program has been developing a locally adapted broodstock and establishing naturally reproducing, self-sustaining coho populations in multiple tributaries throughout the two basins since 1996. The action proposed in the EIS included a small new hatchery in the Wenatchee basin and 24 acclimation ponds in targeted tributaries in the two basins. Since the EIS was completed, the YN found that a modification is required at one of the acclimation ponds addressed in the EIS—Blue Buck Pond—in order for it to be fully functional for the program.

Analysis: This supplement analysis was prepared to determine if the proposed modification to the Blue Buck acclimation pond represents a substantial change to the coho program considered in the EIS that is relevant to environmental concerns. It also evaluates whether the acclimation pond modification represents significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns. The findings of this supplement analysis determine whether a supplemental EIS is needed pursuant to 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) § 1502.9(c).

The design and implementation of the coho program, including coho release and production numbers, are the same as described in the 2012 EIS and Record of Decision and would not change as a result of the pond modification. Blue Buck is an existing pond, and its use for the program was evaluated in the 2012 EIS under the name Parmley.

Blue Buck acclimation pond is located in the Methow Basin. It is an existing 0.11-acre farm pond that is fed from a diversion on Beaver Creek in the lower part of the Methow Basin; the pond outlet discharges back into Beaver Creek. The YN is proposing to excavate accumulated sediment from the existing pond to maintain the acclimation capacity for up to 50,000 coho every year. The proposed excavation would not alter the site operations described in the EIS.

This modification does not represent a substantial change to the existing project or significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns. There is existing road access directly adjacent to the site. Sediment would be excavated from the pond with a tracked backhoe and then would

be moved by truck to an approved, permitted upland disposal site. Approximately 137 cubic yards of fill would be removed, but the pond perimeter would not be enlarged. Excavation activities could stir up sediment in the pond, but similar best management practices (silt barrier, turbidity monitoring) to those discussed in the EIS and Record of Decision would be utilized to prevent sediment-laden water from entering Beaver Creek.

There are no wetlands present at the site. Any vegetation that could be matted or disturbed by excavation activities in the pond would be only temporarily disturbed and would be replanted with similar species, if necessary. No ESA-listed plants occur at the acclimation site. The only habitat listed under the WDFW PHS program that occurs in the site is riparian habitat along Beaver Creek, but this habitat would not be affected by the modification.

ESA-listed steelhead, and bull trout may be present in Beaver Creek downstream of the outlet of Blue Buck pond, and both species are potentially present in the pond itself. YN biologists would snorkel the pond prior to any in-water excavation activities to move fish out of the excavation area. Impacts (e.g., construction noise, potential accidental releases of fuel, turbid water releases, etc.) to fish would be similar to those addressed in the EIS. Impacts to Pacific lamprey are unlikely because lamprey prefer higher flows than those in the pond.

Impacts to ESA-listed gray wolves and other wildlife, such as mule deer, are comparable to those analyzed in the EIS. These species would be expected to avoid the area during the construction, and construction timing would not impact newborn fawns. No wildlife habitat would be permanently disturbed due to the modification.

As part of consultation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service on overall impacts to listed species from the coho program, BPA has submitted a letter to both services under Section 7(d) of the Endangered Species Act that addresses the proposed modifications to Blue Buck pond. Work would be conducted in accordance with measures outlined in the letter.

The State of Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation and the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation concurred with BPA's finding that no historic properties would be affected by the modification at the Blue Buck acclimation pond.

Findings: This supplement analysis finds that the potential impacts from the proposed Blue Buck acclimation pond modification have been examined, reviewed, and consulted upon and are similar to those analyzed in the Mid-Columbia Coho Restoration Program EIS (DOE/EIS-0425), Record of Decision, and related biological assessments and biological opinions. There are no substantial changes in the proposed action and no significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns bearing on the proposed action or its impacts within the meaning of 10 CFR § 1021.314(c)(1) and 40 CFR § 1502.9(c). Therefore, a supplemental EIS to the Mid-Columbia Coho Restoration Program EIS is not needed.

/s/ Nancy H. Weintraub
Nancy H. Weintraub
Senior Environmental Protection Specialist – KEC-4

CONCUR:

/s/ Stacy Mason Date: *October 7, 2013*
Stacy Mason
NEPA Compliance Officer – KEC-4

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