

Hood River Spring Chinook Salmon Program and Umatilla River Summer Steelhead Program

As Described in the

Columbia River Basin Hatcheries Environmental Assessment

Finding of No Significant Impact
Bonneville Power Administration
DOE/EA-2132
March 2022

INTRODUCTION

Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) announces its environmental findings for its proposal to provide funds to the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs (CTWS), Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), and Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) under the Pacific Northwest Power Planning and Conservation Act of 1980 (Northwest Power Act) for continued funding for the Hood River Spring Chinook Salmon Program and the Umatilla River Summer Steelhead Program in Marrow, Hood River, and Umatilla Counties, Oregon. In December 2021, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) issued the *Columbia River Basin Hatcheries* Final Environmental Assessment (EA). Under the Council on Environmental Quality's regulations for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), BPA hereby adopts the NMFS EA (DOE/EA-2132) which describes and analyzes BPA-funded activities associated with the Hood River Spring Chinook Salmon Program and Umatilla River Summer Steelhead Program as described in the EA under 40 CFR 1506.3 and incorporates the EA by reference.

The BPA-funded activities are described in the NMFS EA as part of the Proposed Action. NMFS issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) on the Proposed Action in January 2022. Based on its analysis and public comments received, BPA has determined that the Proposed Action is not a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment, within the meaning of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (42 United States Code [USC] 4321 et seq.). Therefore, the preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS) is not required and BPA is issuing this FONSI for the Proposed Action. The Proposed Action is not the type of action that normally requires preparation of an EIS and is not without precedent.

PUBLIC AVAILABILITY

The Final EA and this FONSI will be posted on BPA's project website: <https://www.bpa.gov/environmental-initiatives/efw/project-reviews/hood-river-and-umatilla-hatcheries>

COMMENT PERIOD

NMFS held a public commenting period for the Draft EA from July 14, 2020 through August 13, 2020. NMFS did not receive any comments. BPA also provided additional opportunity for public comment from September 1, 2020 through September 16, 2020 and BPA received one comment:

Comment 0001:

"The problem I see with this project is that it's the fruit of the poisonous tree. I don't know how you can get around it, but section 14.4 is most troubling because it reads as follows: On May 2,

2008, Bonneville signed the 2008 Columbia Basin Fish Accords and extended this agreement in 2018. The 2018 Fish Accord Extension includes funding commitments for portions of the Hood River 8 Winter Steelhead, Hood River Spring Chinook and Umatilla River Summer Steelhead programs, subject to compliance with applicable law, including environmental review under NEPA.”

BPA Response:

Thank you for your comment.

PROPOSED ACTION (ALTERNATIVE 2)

BPA would provide funding for the Hood River Spring Chinook Salmon Program and Umatilla River Summer Steelhead Program. In addition to meeting the other purposes and needs identified in Section 1.1 of the Final EA, funding these actions would also support conservation of ESA-listed species considered in the 2020 ESA consultations with both NMFS and USFWS on the O&M of the Columbia River System.

BPA would fund the CTWSR for continued operation and maintenance of Parkdale Fish Hatchery and a trap and weir at the Moving Falls Fish Facility; egg incubation and juvenile rearing of Hood River Spring Chinook Salmon Program fish at Pelton Dam; transportation of broodstock, eggs, and smolts between facilities; the direct release of smolts into Hood River; and monitoring and evaluation in support of production. Total Chinook production would increase up to 250,000 juveniles.

Under the Proposed Action, the EA analyzes BPA funding ODFW for the continued operation and maintenance of a weir on the East Fork Hood River, the production of 50,000 steelhead to be released into the Hood River, and associated monitoring and evaluation in support of production. Since the publication of the Draft EA, ODFW has discontinued the winter steelhead portion of the Hood River production programs.

BPA would fund the CTUIR for continued operation and maintenance of the Minthorn Adult Holding facility and Three Mile Falls Dam Collection Facility; transportation of broodstock, eggs, and smolts between facilities; and monitoring and evaluation in support of steelhead production. Total Umatilla steelhead production would be up to 150,000 juveniles.

OTHER ALTERNATIVES

The EA analyzed several additional production alternatives as described further below.

Alternative 1

BPA would provide funding for the production of 50,000 Hood River winter steelhead smolts, 150,000 Hood River Spring Chinook smolts, and 150,000 Umatilla River Summer Steelhead smolts (2018 production levels). As stated above, since the publication of the Draft EA, ODFW has discontinued the winter steelhead portion of the Hood River production programs.

Alternative 3

BPA would provide funding for the Hood River Spring Chinook Salmon Program and Umatilla River Summer Steelhead Program, but juvenile releases would be reduced by 50 percent (75,000 Hood River Spring Chinook smolts and 75,000 Umatilla River Summer Steelhead smolts).

Alternative 4 (No Action Alternative)

BPA would not provide funding for the Hood River Spring Chinook Salmon Program or the Umatilla River Summer Steelhead Program.

SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

To determine whether the Proposed Action has the potential to cause significant environmental effects, the EA analyzed the potential impacts of the proposal on human and natural resources and presented them in Chapter 4 of the EA. The potential impacts associated with the Proposed Action are summarized below. The Proposed Action would have no significant impacts. The following discussion provides a summary of the Proposed Action's potential impacts and the reasons these impacts would not be significant.

Water Quantity

Impacts to water quantity would not be significant.

- There would be slight change in the quantity of water used with the increase Hood River Spring Chinook Salmon Program Chinook production, but usage would be within the CTWS' allowable water right.
- The Umatilla Fish Hatchery would continue to draw water from reservoirs, having a relatively small effect on water sources before water is returned to rivers below the reservoirs.

Water Quality

Impacts to water quality would not be significant.

- The increase in Hood River Spring Chinook Salmon Program Chinook smolt production would result in a small temporary decrease in water quality, but hatchery discharges would continue to be managed under existing NPDES permits to protect the water quality of receiving waters.
- The Umatilla River Summer Steelhead Program would continue to operate facilities in accordance with existing NPDES permits.

Salmon and Steelhead

Impacts to salmon and steelhead would not be significant.

- There would be no change in effects on natural genetics as the Hood River Spring Chinook Salmon Program and Umatilla River Summer Steelhead Program produces Chinook salmon and steelhead that are genetically similar enough to the natural population to be listed within the same Evolutionary Significant Unit (ESU).
- The programs would be operated with the same disease management protocols as under current conditions, so no change in disease effects on other salmon and steelhead species would be expected.
- There would be an undetectable change in nutrient cycling.

- No change in effects on salmon and steelhead species from facility operations, including adult collection, surface water diversion, effluent discharge, and routine instream maintenance activities, would be expected. BPA, CTWS, ODFW, and CTUIR would review all facilities for compliance with the current anadromous salmonid passage facility design criteria and guidelines (NMFS 2011, or most current).
- Operations would continue to include BMPs that limit the type, timing, and magnitude of allowable instream activities. In general, the measures would limit effects to short-term, sublethal effects such as fish displacement, and/or startling of fish, and would not result in any deviation beyond normal fish behavioral responses to environmental disturbances.
- Monitoring and evaluation activities that are currently part of the hatchery programs would be operated the same as under current conditions, so no change in effects on salmon and steelhead would be expected. Spawning ground surveys and juvenile fish sampling would continue to be performed and screw traps would continue to be operated.
- Effects of juvenile fish sampling would be minimized because smolt traps would have a negligible effect on migration, angling would be performed following sport fishing equipment rules for selective fisheries, and methods of electrofishing would be performed to minimize fish injury.

Fisheries

Impacts to fisheries would not be significant.

- The hatchery programs play an important role in the implementation and management of fisheries; therefore, the programs would continue to provide a low-beneficial effect on recreational and tribal fisheries for summer Chinook salmon and steelhead.

Other Fish Species

Impacts to other fish species would not be significant.

- Although CTWS would increase broodstock collection numbers and juvenile releases from 150,000 to 250,000 under the Proposed Action, this increase is not likely to amount to a detectable change in localized effect competition, predation and disease effects would continue to be negligible-adverse.
- Other fish species would continue to indirectly benefit from nutrient cycling of carcasses and predation would be similar to current conditions.
- Facility operations would continue to have negligible-adverse effects because the program facilities minimize any impediment to fish movement. Effects of water diversions, intakes, effluent discharge, and maintenance activities would remain unchanged.
- Monitoring and evaluation activities would continue to have a negligible-adverse effect on fish species other than salmon and steelhead. Individuals would continue to be incidentally collected in traps and during surveys, and may suffer increased stress and minimal mortality, however guidelines to reduce impacts on salmon and steelhead would continue to reduce effects on other species.

Wildlife

Impacts to wildlife would not be significant.

- There would be no change in impacts to wildlife species, including prey enhancement, diseases present in hatchery-origin fish, nutrient enhancement from carcasses, predator deterrence, and temporary disturbances associated with human presence and noise at hatchery program facilities.

Cultural Resources

Impacts to cultural resources would not be significant.

- Survival and abundance of salmon and steelhead would not change. The tribes would continue to harvest hatchery-origin fish and would benefit through the long-term potential for salmon and steelhead populations to increase in size.

Socioeconomics

Impacts to socioeconomics would not be significant.

- There would be no change in recreational expenditures, employment opportunities, or the local procurement of goods and services related to hatchery operations.

Environmental Justice

Impacts to environmental justice would not be significant.

- There would be no change in socioeconomics, tribal cultural resources, or fish distribution affecting the environmental justice communities of concern.

Human Health

Impacts to human health would not be significant.

- Risks to hatchery facility and weir operators would not change. Continued use of best safety practices and use of personal protective equipment would minimize risk.

DETERMINATION

Based on the information in the EA, as summarized here, BPA determines that the Proposed Action is not a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment within the meaning of NEPA (42 USC 4321 *et seq.*). Therefore, an EIS will not be prepared and BPA is issuing this FONSI for the Proposed Action.

Issued in Portland, Oregon.

SCOTT G. ARMENTROUT
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