

DATE: February 20, 2002

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEC-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Watershed Management Program EIS (DOE/EIS-0265/SA-75)

Peter Lofy – KEWL-4
Fish and Wildlife Project Manager

Proposed Action: Gourlay Creek Fish Ladder Project

Project No: 2001-038-00

Wildlife Management Techniques or Actions Addressed Under This Supplement Analysis (See App. A of the Wildlife Mitigation Program EIS): 1.15 Fish Passage Enhancement – Fishways.

Location: Columbia County, Oregon

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) and the City of Scappoose

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA proposes to fund the construction of a fish passage facility at the Gourlay Creek Dam/water reservoir in Columbia County, Oregon. The City of Scappoose owns and manages close to half of the Gourlay Creek Watershed including high quality habitat above and below the Gourlay Creek Dam. Gourlay Creek Dam has been identified as a key limiting factor in the re-generation of salmon and trout in the Gourlay Creek Watershed. Currently it provides a complete barrier to fish passage for Endangered Species Act (ESA) listed salmonids, as well as to salmonids that are under status review for ESA listing. Historically, Gourlay Creek has provided important salmonid habitat within the Scappoose Bay Watershed. Salmonids still utilize the lower reaches of Gourlay Creek. The goal of the project is to provide unimpeded access for juvenile and adult salmonids to historic habitat upstream of the dam. The project would open up over two miles of habitat for coho and cutthroat trout and nearly four miles of habitat for steelhead.

Analysis: The compliance checklist for this project was completed by John Hanken Director of Community Development with the City of Scappoose and meets the standards and guidelines for the Watershed Management Program Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Record of Decision (ROD).

The ESA listed species located in the general vicinity of the project are Lower Columbia River steelhead, Lower Columbia River chinook salmon, Columbia River chum, SW WA/Columbia River Coho, SW WA/Columbia River cutthroat trout, bald eagle, Northern spotted owl, Nelson's checker-mallow, and Oregon spotted frog. A Biological Assessment (BA) for the Gourlay Creek project was submitted by BPA to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on September 28, 2001.

NMFS concurred with BPA's determination that the proposed project may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect, Lower Columbia River chinook salmon, Lower Columbia River steelhead and Columbia River chum, and the designated critical habitat for these species (December 10, 2001). NMFS also concurred that the project is not likely to significantly impact populations, individuals, or suitable habitat for federal candidate species SW WA/Columbia River coho. The project area is designated as Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) for various life stages of chinook and coho salmon. NMFS concluded that the effects of the proposed action are not likely to affect EFH in the short term, and in the long term there will be an improvement in aquatic habitat function when the restoration of a migration corridor within Gourlay Creek is complete.

The USFWS issued a Biological Opinion on January 23, 2002 for species under their jurisdiction that identifies terms and conditions necessary to comply with the Endangered Species Act. USFWS concurred with BPA's determination that the proposed project will have no effect on Northern spotted owl, Oregon spotted frog, and Nelson's checker-mallow and may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect, bald eagle. USFWS concluded that the proposed project is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of SW WA/Columbia River coastal cutthroat trout. The USFWS identified the following reasonable and prudent measures that the applicants are required to meet in order to minimize take of coastal cutthroat trout resulting from the proposed actions:

- Construct and monitor project activities and features to ensure short-term impacts to stream and riparian habitats of the coastal cutthroat trout are minimized.

In order to implement the reasonable and prudent measures described above, the applicants must comply with specific terms and conditions identified in the Biological Opinion (see USFWS Biological Opinion, January 23, 2002). Notable among the terms and conditions are the instream work period, limited to July 15 through August 31, 2002. In addition, the reservoir behind the dam shall be gradually de-watered over a period of at least two days to reduce impacts of high flows on downstream habitat. The diversion shall be screened at the upstream end. The handling of fish associated with removal shall be limited to the extent possible and reported to the USFWS. The clearing limits shall be flagged. Staging and re-fueling activities shall be located more than 400 feet from Gourlay Creek. The alteration of vegetation shall be minimized and disturbed soils shall be replanted with sterile wheat and native grass seed. Silt fences and sediment barriers shall be used during construction to prevent silt and potential cement spills from entering the stream. Periodic monitoring and inspection of the fish passage structure shall be conducted and reported to the USFWS.

David Evans and Associates, Inc. conducted a cultural resources survey of the Gourlay Creek fish ladder site. Their review found that there are no previously recorded cultural resources identified at or near the project site. In addition, no prehistoric sites, artifacts, or features were identified as a result of a reconnaissance survey conducted on the site. The only remains located in the vicinity of the site are the existing dam structure and the remnants of an old cedar shed, both of which were found to have no historical significance. BPA sent a letter to the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) that concluded there would be no effect on prehistoric or historic

artifacts associated with the Gourlay Creek fish passage project. The Oregon SHPO concurred with this finding on October 23, 2001.

Standard in-channel water quality protection procedures will be followed during the construction of the fish ladder. The City of Scappoose is in the process of obtaining the necessary Oregon Division of State Lands and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers permit approvals for this project. No construction will be authorized to begin until the applicant has obtained all required permits.

The Scappoose Bay Watershed Council (SBWC) completed A Comprehensive Assessment of Fish Passage Barriers in the Scappoose Bay Watershed (DEA 2001). The assessment project involved extensive public involvement and education on fish passage issues in the Scappoose Bay Watershed, including community meetings, field tours, and press releases. For the Gourlay Creek project, SBWC will provide updates on the project at its monthly public meetings and has established an advisory committee of interested SBWC members, City of Scappoose staff, and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife staff that will continue to be involved in 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.

/s/ Shannon C. Stewart 2-21-2002

Shannon C. Stewart
Environmental Specialist

CONCUR:

/s/ Thomas C. McKinney DATE: 2-21-2002

Thomas C. McKinney
NEPA Compliance Officer

Attachments:

NEPA Compliance Checklist
USFWS Biological Opinion, January 23, 2002
NMFS Concurrence Letter, December 10, 2001
Oregon SHPO Concurrence Letter, October 23, 2001

cc: (w/ attachments)

John Hanken – City of Scappoose
Maddy Sheehan – Scappoose Bay Watershed Council
Peter Bahls – Northwest Watershed Institute
Ethan Rosenthal – David Evans and Associates, Inc.