

United States Government

Department of Energy

Bonneville Power Administration

memorandum

DATE: October 29, 2001

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEC-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Watershed Management Program EIS (DOE/EIS-0265/SA-71)

TO: Alan Ruger
Fish and Wildlife Project Manager

Proposed Action: Duncan Creek Channel Rehabilitation Project

Project No: 2001-053-00

Wildlife Management Techniques or Actions Addressed Under This Supplement Analysis (See App. A of the Wildlife Mitigation Program EIS): 1.11 Remove Debris Functioning as Barrier to Passage, 1.16 Spawning Habitat Enhancements, 2.1 Maintain Healthy Riparian Plant Communities, 2.9 Mechanical Vegetation Control.

Location: Skamania County, Washington.

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), and the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA proposes to fund a project with the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife that will restore historic spawning areas for chum salmon in Duncan Creek. Duncan Creek, a Washington tributary of the Columbia River, was traditionally an important spawning area for chum salmon. The spring seeps areas that chum historically used for spawning are still present in Duncan Creek, however during the past 30 years they have been covered by sediment and debris and infested with reed canary grass. This project proposes to rehabilitate these spawning channels in order to provide chum salmon with a protected spawning and incubation environment.

The proposed habitat rehabilitation project will include removing existing gravel in the seeps of Duncan Creek that contain mud, sand, and organics and replacing them with gravels that will maximize egg-to-fry survival rates for chum salmon. A trackhoe or similar equipment will be used to excavate the spawning sites. Invasive vegetation will be removed. Spawning channels will then be reconstructed using sediment free spawning gravels and base rock. Upon completion of work, all disturbed spring channel banks will be protected from erosion with staked coir fabric and revegetated with native willows. Plantings will help to restore native plant communities, increase stream channel shading, and reduce re-infestation by reed canary grass.

Analysis: The compliance checklist for this project was completed by Joe Hymer and Steve Manlow with the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife and meets the standards and guidelines for the Watershed Management Program Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Record of Decision (ROD).

In accordance with the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, as amended, BPA submitted a Biological Evaluation to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on September 10, 2001, which assessed the impacts of the proposed project on ESA-listed species. The Biological Evaluation concluded that the proposed actions may affect, but are not likely to adversely affect, chinook salmon, Columbia River chum salmon, Lower Columbia River coho salmon, Snake River sockeye, steelhead trout, coastal cutthroat trout, bald eagle, and peregrine falcon. BPA also determined that the proposed actions would have no affect on bull trout since they are not known to occur in the Duncan Creek watershed or project vicinity. NMFS concurred with BPA's determinations on September 19, 2001 and also concluded that the proposed actions are not likely to adversely affect Essential Fish Habitat for chinook and coho salmon in the long-term. USFWS concurred with BPA's determinations on October 16, 2001. An extension in the project work window through November 15, 2001 was approved by both NMFS and USFWS in October.

A cultural resource survey of the 16-acre Duncan Creek site was completed by Applied Archaeological Research (AAR). AAR's study included background literature and cartographic research, pedestrian surveys, geoarchaeological assessments, and the excavation of subsurface probes. The background research indicated that an important prehistoric/ethnohistoric village site is located near the project area. No cultural or historic resources were discovered on the Duncan Creek site as a result of the field surveys though. Based on these findings, BPA determined that the proposed actions would have no affect on cultural or historic resources. The Washington State Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, as well as representatives from the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, concurred with BPA's determination. Staff from the cultural resources group with the Yakama Nation monitored AAR's archaeological survey of the Duncan Creek site and were provided the opportunity to review and comment on AAR's findings. In the unlikely event that archaeological material is encountered during construction of the site, an archaeologist will immediately be notified and work halted in the vicinity of the finds until they can be inspected and assessed.

All applicable approvals and permits will be obtained prior to the implementation of the Duncan Creek project. These include the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Section 404 permit, Washington Department of Ecology Section 401 certification, WDFW Hydraulic Project Approval, Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area permit, and the Washington State Environmental Policy Act approval. No construction will be authorized to begin until these approvals are obtained.

The Duncan Creek chum salmon habitat rehabilitation project has been developed in partnership with local landowners, represented by the Skamania Landing Owners Association. The project has been publicized through several news releases and articles in the local newspapers. The general public, resources agencies, and any other interested groups were also invited to offer comments on this project through the notification procedures prescribed by the Washington State Environmental Policy Act and the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area permitting process. In addition, the project proponents have consulted with NMFS, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Pacific Marine Fisheries Commission, WDFW, and Skamania County in the preparation and review of this project proposal.

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.

/s/ Shannon C. Stewart
Shannon C. Stewart
Environmental Specialist

CONCUR:

/s/ Thomas C. McKinney
Thomas C. McKinney
NEPA Compliance Officer

DATE: 11-01-2001

Attachments:
NEPA Compliance Checklist
NMFS Concurrence Letter
USFWS Concurrence Letter
WA OAHP Cultural Resource Letter
Columbia River National Scenic Area Cultural Resource Letter

cc: (w/o attachments)
Joe Hymer - Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife
Steve Manlow - Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife

bcc: (w/o attachments)
L. Croff - KEC-4
N. Weintraub - KEC-4
P. Key - LC-7

bcc: (w/ attachments)
Official File - KEC (EQ-14)

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