

memorandum

DATE: December 27, 2004

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEC-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Fish and Wildlife Implementation Plan EIS (DOE/EIS-0312/SA-01)

TO: Sarah McNary
Senior Policy Advisor

Proposed Action: Updated Proposed Action (UPA) for the FCRPS Biological Opinion Remand

Location: The action area of the UPA, including areas where the UPA directly or indirectly affects listed salmonids consists of the following areas:

- The mainstem Columbia River, including and downstream of Libby and Hungry Horse dams and reservoirs; the Snake River below the confluence with the Salmon River; and the Clearwater River below Dworshak reservoir and dam, down to and including the Columbia River estuary and plume.
- The estuary and plume, which includes the area immediately off the mouth of the Columbia River influenced by freshwater discharge, up to the limit of tidal influence at Bonneville Dam (approximately river mile 146).
- The 4th field HUC subbasins that are the focus of our proposed tributary habitat actions (Methow, Wenatchee, and Entiat subbasins).
- Areas directly and indirectly affected by Reclamation's conservation measures in the Upper Salmon, Little Salmon, Lemhi, Upper John Day, North Fork John Day, and Middle Fork John Day subbasins and BPA's conservation measures in the Okanogan subbasin.
- Redfish, Alturas, and Pettit lakes and the tributaries that connect them to the Snake River, due to the activities associated with the safety-net hatchery programs for Snake River Sockeye salmon.
- Lower South Fork Clearwater River and Lower Selway River downstream to the confluence with the North Fork Clearwater River, due to the activities associated with the Nez Perce Tribal Hatchery for Snake River Fall Chinook salmon.
- All areas directly or indirectly affected by the 19 Reclamation projects.

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (the Action Agencies).

Description of the Proposed Action: Over the years the Action Agencies have built a comprehensive program of diverse actions to help improve the survival of salmon and steelhead. Since implementing the actions described in the 2000 BiOp, the agencies have expanded and further refined the conservation program to focus on ESA-listed salmon and steelhead. The Action Agencies propose this UPA for the duration of the biological opinion issued on November 30, 2004, by NOAA Fisheries, "Revised Biological Opinion on the Operation of the Federal Columbia River Power System and 19 U.S. Bureau of Reclamation projects." The Action Agencies propose to continue on-going actions, and to develop and implement site- or program-specific actions in the categories described below.

- **Fish passage:** continue adult fish passage performance and improve juvenile fish passage; continue and enhance spill for juvenile fish passage.
- **Reservoir operations:** continue reservoir operations and river flows to benefit migrating fish.

- Transportation: modify fish transportation to improve juvenile survival.
- Predator control: expand efforts to reduce consumption of juvenile salmon by birds and by other fish.
- Improve tributary spawning and rearing habitat: remove passage barriers and perform other channel improvements to improve the access to and condition of spawning and rearing areas; screen diversions to prevent fish entrainment; secure instream flows to improve tributary migration and spawning and rearing flows, and to help maintain water quality; and protect and enhance the ecological functions of riparian areas to support stream bank and channel integrity, decrease water temperatures, and increase nutrient sources.
- Improve estuary habitat: continue to implement projects to protect and enhance habitat along and adjacent to the mainstem Columbia River below Bonneville Dam and tidal wetlands.
- Implement hatchery actions: continue to fund safety-net programs; improve the adult trap at Lower Granite Dam to benefit the Snake River Fall Chinook ESU; enhance sockeye smolt production in conjunction with the current safety-net program to benefit the Snake River Sockeye ESU; and continue to fund the Safety Net Artificial Propagation Program (SNAPP) planning process.
- Harvest: continue to pursue harvest improvement opportunities to reduce harvest impacts on listed species and assess and inventory additional terminal fishery locations above Bonneville.
- Research, Monitoring and Evaluation (RM&E): continue to support regional RM&E to better understand how various actions affect fish survival.

Analysis: The UPA has been reviewed to determine if the action for BPA is a substantial change from what was proposed in the Fish and Wildlife Implementation Plan Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) (DOE/EIS-0312, April 2003) and adopted in its corresponding Record of Decision (ROD) (October 2003). In addition, BPA must also determine whether there are significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns since the EIS was completed. The Fish and Wildlife Implementation Plan EIS is a cumulative effects analysis of the policy choices available to BPA for managing its fish and wildlife responsibilities in the Pacific Northwest region, including its fish and wildlife mitigation and recovery efforts. Under this EIS, the Administrator adopted a policy direction that protects weak stocks of fish and achieves performance standards and biological objectives—including those set forth in NOAA Fisheries’ biological opinions and the Integrated Program—while sustaining overall populations of fish and wildlife. The focus of this adopted policy direction is enhancing fish and wildlife habitat, modifying hydro operations and structures, and supporting hatchery reform to both increase populations of listed fish stocks and provide long-term harvest opportunities. The UPA described above is consistent with the Fish and Wildlife Implementation Plan EIS and ROD.

In the event that the UPA requires changes in hydro operations, those changes will be consistent with the System Operating Strategy alternative analyzed in the the System Operation Review Environmental Impact Statement (DOE/EIS-0170, November 1995) and adopted in its ROD (February 1997). In addition, as site- or program-specific actions are developed, BPA will review them to determine whether the environmental effects of the actions are adequately covered by its existing NEPA documents. These documents include the Fish and Wildlife Implementation Plan EIS, System Operation Review EIS, the Programmatic Wildlife Mitigation Program EIS (DOE/EIS-0246, March 1997), and the Programmatic Watershed Management Program EIS (DOE/EIS-0265, July 1997) and their corresponding RODs. To the extent that the UPA includes actions that are not covered by BPA’s existing NEPA analyses, BPA will conduct additional environmental analyses as appropriate.

Once site or program-specific actions are proposed, BPA will fulfill its obligations under all other applicable federal laws such as the Endangered Species Act, National Historic Preservation Act, and

Clean Water Act. In addition BPA will conduct public involvement and acquire any permits, as necessary.

Findings: The UPA is generally consistent with the Northwest Power Planning Council's Fish and Wildlife Program, as well as BPA's Fish and Wildlife Implementation Plan EIS and ROD. This Supplement Analysis finds that: 1) implementing the proposed action will not result in any substantial changes to the Fish and Wildlife Implementation Plan that are relevant to environmental concerns; and 2) there are no significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns and bearing on the Fish and Wildlife Implementation Plan or its impacts. Therefore, no further NEPA documentation is required.

/s/ Donald L. Rose for
Michael S. Mayer
Environmental Protection Specialist

CONCUR:

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

DATE: December 28, 2004

Attachment:
Final Updated Proposed Action for the FCRPS Biological Opinion Remand

cc: (w/o attachment)
S. McNary – A-7