



Department of Energy

Bonneville Power Administration
P.O. Box 3621
Portland, OR 97208-3621

ENVIRONMENT, FISH & WILDLIFE

August 27, 2024

In reply refer to: ECF-4

To: People Interested in the Kootenai River Nutrient Addition Project

The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks (MFWP), and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) are evaluating implementation of the Kootenai River Nutrient Addition Project. This letter explains the proposal, outlines the anticipated joint environmental review process and schedule, and invites the public to comment and participate in a public meeting.

Proposal: BPA proposes to provide funding to the MFWP to implement the project, which is a pilot study intended to enhance nutrient levels in the Kootenai River downstream of the Libby Dam Reservoir, Lake Koocanusa, in Lincoln County near Libby, Montana. The Reservoir acts as a phosphorous sink, limiting the amount of natural phosphorous in the river below Libby Dam. These low nutrient levels are responsible for the excessive growth of an algal diatom and low growth and survival rates of fish, including bull trout and rainbow trout, in the Kootenai River. MFWP is the project sponsor and proposes to implement the project. USACE operates Libby Dam and proposes to permit the use of the dam for the project. The project's activities would include the installation of nutrient holding tanks and a delivery system inside and outside of Libby Dam; adding phosphorus above existing levels to the river; and monitoring the response of algae, invertebrates, and fish. All actions would occur within an overall project area (see enclosed project map).

Environmental Review: To understand the potential environmental impacts of this proposal, BPA, MFWP, and USACE may prepare a joint environmental assessment (EA) following the procedures of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA). If BPA, MFWP, and USACE determine that an EA should be prepared, the EA would analyze the potential impacts from the proposed implementation of the project, as well as a no-action alternative in which BPA, MFWP, and USACE would not fund, implement, or permit the project. In addition, the EA would describe anticipated impacts to natural and human resources and identify mitigation measures to help avoid or minimize adverse impacts should they be identified. During this process, BPA, MFWP, and USACE would work with landowners, tribes, interest groups, and federal, state, and local agencies. The proposed schedule for the environmental review process is as follows:

Scoping comment period	August 27 to September 25, 2024
Public scoping meeting	September 10, 2024
EA determination (if warranted)	Spring 2025
Draft EA available for public comment (if warranted)	Spring 2025
Final EA (if warranted)	Fall 2025
Finding of No Significant Impact (if warranted)	Fall 2025
If approved, construction start	Winter 2025

Public Meeting: We have scheduled an informal open house meeting to answer questions and accept comments about the scope of the environmental review:

September 10, 2024
5 – 7 p.m.
Libby Dam Visitor Center
17877 Highway 37
Libby, MT 59923

How to Comment: Please send your comments by **September 25, 2024**, and reference the *Kootenai River Nutrient Addition Project*. All comments will be available on the project website at <https://www.bpa.gov/nepa/kr-nutrient-addition>. There are several ways to comment:

Mail: Bonneville Power Administration
Communications – DKE-7
P.O. Box 14428
Portland, OR 97291-4428

Toll-free: 800-622-4519
FAX: 503-230-4019
Online: www.bpa.gov/comment
Email: communications@bpa.gov

For More Information: If you have questions regarding the environmental review process, please contact me at 503-230-5928 or baguirre@bpa.gov. You can also reach me toll free at 1-800- 622-4519.

Thank you for your interest in our work.

Sincerely,


Brenda Aguirre
Environmental Protection Specialist

Enclosures:
Project Map
Comment Form
Return Envelope