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Construction Of Bruces Eddy Could Start Next Year, Beddow

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Construction workers will be ready to move in next summer if Congress gives the final signal now for building of Bruces Eddy dam on the North Fork of the Clearwater River.

That was the report last night from Col. James H. Beddow, chief of the Walla Walla district of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which for three years has been laying plans for the massive concrete structure.

Colonel Beddow told the Lewiston Morning Tribune by telephone from Walla Walla that the stage is set for construction if—as is expected—Congress today passes an initial \$2-million appropriation for building of the dam.

Approval by the House of Representatives last night virtually assured authorization of the dam, and the appropriation is expected to follow.

The dam has been receiving design and planning appropriations since 1959, with the result that pre-construction design work has been virtually completed. Normally this preliminary work delays construction for several years after authorization of a dam.

Build Roads, Tunnel

If the appropriation goes through, said Colonel Beddow, construction of access roads and a diversion tunnel would begin next summer. Preliminary plans call for construction of an access road along the west bank of the stream from its mouth to the dam site, about two miles upstream. Another road would be built to move traffic around the work area.

The diversion tunnel will channel the river flow through cliffs on the east shore, enabling workmen to build cofferdams across the river and pump out the pooled water so excavation can be undertaken for the foundations of the dam.

Some of the excavation may be begun next summer, said Colonel Beddow, but the wall of the dam probably won't begin to rise for about two years.

If congressional appropriations are made in orderly fashion, construction of the dam would take about seven years, Colonel Beddow said. The dam will rise some 673 feet from the river floor making it the fourth highest dam in the United States, exceeded only by Oroville dam (730 feet) now under construction on the Feather River in California; Hoover Dam (726 feet) on the Colorado River between Arizona and Nevada; and Glen Canyon Dam (710 feet) on the Colorado River in Arizona.

Bruces Eddy would have six hydroelectric power generators with a total capacity of 690,000 kilowatts. It would store 3,453,000 acre-feet of water in a reservoir extending 53 miles up the river.

Timber In Pool Area

George H. Rauch of Lewiston, vice president of Potlatch Forests, Inc., for lands and logging, estimated that the thickly forested, 16,970-acre valley to be inundated by the reservoir contains about 100-million board feet of timber, including virtually all species which are to be found in north central Idaho.

The timber would be harvested evenly over the six-or seven-year construction period, Rauch said, and the volume is not expected to have a noticeably adverse effect on the lumber market.

The reservoir land area is owned primarily by the state of Idaho and PFI, although the federal government has some holdings. A number of small private holdings exist in the area from the dam site to about 12 miles upstream.