

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

June 22, 1995

**DWORSHAK WILDLIFE MITIGATION PROJECT
FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND DECISION RECORD**

ACTION: Following public review of the draft environmental assessment (EA) on the Dworshak Wildlife Mitigation Project and consideration of comments received, the Administrator of the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) determined that preparation of an environmental impact statement is not required. A copy of the finding of no significant impact is enclosed for your information. Also enclosed is an errata sheet that details minor changes in the EA. Finally, we have enclosed a copy of the Administrator's Decision Record, explaining his reasons for deciding to proceed with the proposed action.

BACKGROUND: BPA published the draft EA on March 30, 1995. We received 18 comment letters. Many letters supported the proposed action, to fully implement the Wildlife Mitigation Agreement for Dworshak Dam. Some comments expressed concern about local economic and property tax impacts. (The enclosed Decision Record addresses these concerns). One comment also suggested that other alternatives in the draft EA should be selected instead of the proposed action, because they would be less expensive. (BPA disagrees, because implementing the Dworshak Wildlife Mitigation Agreement would fulfill BPA's obligation to compensate for wildlife habitat lost by the construction of Dworshak Dam and eliminate uncertainty about potential future costs of this Congressionally-mandated mitigation.) The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) requested cooperative management planning of wildlife mitigation lands intermingled with BLM lands. (We have revised section 2.1.2.1 to accommodate this request.) **Two comments requested allowing motorized vehicle access for disabled persons to all wildlife mitigation lands accessible by horse or foot.** (Off-road operation of motorized vehicles has a high potential for conflict with wildlife conservation and is therefore restricted. However, we have revised section 2.1.4 of the EA to specify that management plans to be prepared by the Nez Perce Tribe and Idaho Department of Fish and Game will address public access opportunities for disabled persons.) Other comments supported restrictions on motorized vehicle access.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: If you have any questions about this action, please contact me at (503) 230-4749. You may also contact our Public Involvement and Information Office in Portland, Oregon, at 503-230-3478, or toll-free 1-800-622-4519.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thomas C. McKinney".

Thomas C. McKinney
Project Environmental Lead

Enclosures
EA Errata
Finding of No Significant Impact
Decision Record

Dworshak Wildlife Mitigation Project Environmental Assessment

Errata Sheet to Draft Environmental Assessment

Cover

- Delete "Draft" from "Draft Environmental Assessment."
- Change "April" to "May" 1995.

Map following page 2

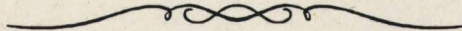
- State Area of Interest abuts and does not overlap Nez Perce Reservation boundary.

Section 2.1.2.1 Wildlife Habitat and Population Monitoring

- Insert at end of the paragraph, "IDFG would particularly consult with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) regarding cooperative, ecosystem management of Craig Mountain mitigation lands and intermingled BLM lands.

Section 2.1.4 Public Access

- Insert as new paragraph, "Site-specific management plans to be prepared by the Tribe and IDFG with benefit of public involvement would address public access opportunities, including opportunities for persons with disabilities.



6450-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Bonneville Power Administration

Finding of No Significant Impact and Floodplain Statement of Findings for
Dworshak Wildlife Mitigation Project

AGENCY: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), Department of Energy (DOE).

ACTION: Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and Floodplain Statement of Findings.

SUMMARY: This notice announces environmental findings on BPA's proposal to implement the Wildlife Mitigation Agreement for Dworshak Dam (Agreement) in order to mitigate for loss of wildlife habitat caused by the development of Columbia River Basin hydroelectric projects, particularly Dworshak Dam. The project involves wildlife conservation on 24 420 hectares (ha; 60,000 acres) of land in the Craig Mountain area of Idaho, and future acquisition of additional, unidentified lands in the lower Clearwater River drainage of Idaho for wildlife conservation purposes. BPA has prepared an environmental assessment (DOE/EA-1066) evaluating the proposed project. Based on the analysis in the EA, BPA has determined that the proposed action is not a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment, within the meaning of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969. Therefore, the preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS) is not required and BPA is issuing this FONSI.

A finding is included that there is no practicable alternative to locating the project within 100-year floodplains.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT: Thomas C. McKinney, Bonneville Power Administration, P.O. Box 3621 (ECN), Portland, Oregon, 97208-3621, phone number 503-230-4749, fax number 503-230-5699. For copies of the EA and this FONSI, please call BPA's toll-free document request line: 800-622-4520.

Public Availability: This FONSI will be distributed to all persons and agencies known to be interested in or affected by the proposed action or alternatives.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Implementation of the Agreement would transfer fee-title ownership of 24 420 ha (60,000 acres) to the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, and establish trust funds for the State of Idaho and the Nez Perce Tribe to use for protection and enhancement of wildlife and wildlife habitat in Idaho. Some of the trust fund assets would be used to acquire additional properties and/or conservation easements, and some would be used for management activities.

Alternatives to the proposed action include maintaining the status quo, site-specific wildlife mitigation, and no action.

Potential impacts of the proposed action are: (1) slow changes to vegetation patterns on wildlife mitigation lands; (2) avoidance of further loss or degradation of habitat on wildlife mitigation lands; (3) increased populations of target wildlife species; (4) improved surface water quality on wildlife mitigation lands; and (5) reduced grazing, timber production, and farming on wildlife mitigation lands. There are two main reasons why these impacts would not be significant. First, most of the impacts would gradually result from natural succession of vegetation patterns. Encouragement of desirable plant species (especially native species), discouragement of exotic species, and grazing control would eventually increase biological diversity on wildlife mitigation lands. Also, land use changes would not be significant because most would occur over a period of years, and because the amount of lands removed from economic uses would be minor in relation to other lands in the general area remaining available for similar uses. No impacts are expected on cultural resources, air quality, or unique environmental resources such as components of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System or the National Trails System.

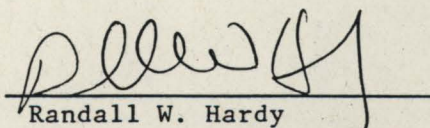
Floodplain Statement of Findings: This is a Floodplain Statement of Findings prepared in accordance with 10 CFR Part 1022. BPA published a Notice of Floodplain

and Wetland Involvement in the *Federal Register* on May 10, 1994, and incorporated a floodplain and wetland assessment into the EA. The proposed action may involve activities in the 100-year floodplains of the Clearwater, Salmon, and Snake Rivers and their tributaries because the floodplains and their related surface waters have high wildlife value. Any development (such as fencing) within the floodplains would be to protect or enhance wildlife values, and is therefore consistent with Executive Order 11988, *Floodplain Management*. The proposed action would preserve wetlands and is therefore consistent with Executive Order 11990, *Protection of Wetlands*.

BPA will endeavor to allow 15 days of public review after publication of this statement of findings before implementing the proposed action.

Determination: Based on the information in the EA, as summarized here, BPA determines that the proposed action is not a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment within the meaning of NEPA, 42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq. Therefore, an EIS will not be prepared and BPA is issuing this FONSI.

Issued in Portland, Oregon, on May 11, 1995.


Randall W. Hardy
Administrator and Chief
Executive Officer



Department of Energy
Bonneville Power Administration
P.O. Box 3621
Portland, Oregon 97208-3621

DECISION RECORD DWORSHAK WILDLIFE MITIGATION PROJECT

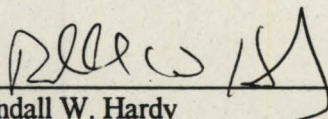
DECISION

The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) will exercise options to fully implement the Wildlife Mitigation Agreement (Agreement) for Dworshak Dam. Accordingly, BPA will immediately:

1. Deposit an additional \$6,600,000 into Nez Perce Dworshak Wildlife Mitigation Trust Fund;
2. Deposit \$3,019,000 into the Idaho Dworshak Wildlife Mitigation Trust Fund; and
3. Transfer fee-title ownership of certain BPA real property, *i.e.*, in Shoshone County, Idaho, Buck Creek Old Growth timber rights, and in Lewis and Nez Perce Counties, Idaho, about 24 420 hectares (60,000 acres) of land.

CONSIDERATIONS

- Dworshak Dam was constructed on the Clearwater River within the Columbia River Basin, the State of Idaho, and the Nez Perce Reservation.
- The Pacific Northwest Electric Power Planning and Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. 839) authorizes the Administrator of the BPA to use the BPA fund to protect, mitigate, and enhance fish and wildlife affected by the development of Federal hydroelectric facilities of the Columbia River Basin.
- The Northwest Power Planning Council has identified the need for wildlife protection, mitigation, and enhancement for development of Dworshak Dam.
- Exercising Agreement options fully satisfies BPA responsibilities for protecting, mitigating, and enhancing wildlife and wildlife habitat affected by the development of Dworshak Dam.
- Exercising Agreement options will have no significant impact on the quality of the human environment.
- Exercising Agreement options will have little effect on local economies. Although economic activity previously generated by farming, grazing, and logging may decline, this will probably be offset by increases in wildlife conservation management and recreation.
- Exercising Agreement options will have little effect on county tax bases. Although the Nez Perce Dworshak Wildlife Mitigation Trust Fund will be used to eventually acquire about 4 000 hectares (10,000 acres) of land, and when acquired that land will be removed from property tax rolls, acquisition will occur over 30 years, land acquired will probably be taxed at relatively low rates, and acquisition will probably be spread among several counties, lessening the impact to any one county. Because assessed values are generally increasing in the area, the impact will probably be a slightly lesser increase of tax revenue rather than a net loss. For the 24 420 hectares (60,000 acres) of land to be transferred to State ownership, the State will make payments in lieu of taxes.



Randall W. Hardy
Administrator and Chief Executive Officer

6/19/95

Date