



Department of Energy

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

ENVIRONMENT, FISH AND WILDLIFE

June 16, 2017

In reply refer to: EC-4

To: People Interested in the Kootenai River Lower Meander Project

The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) has finalized the environmental assessment (EA) for the Kootenai River Lower Meander Project. Based on the final EA, BPA is issuing a finding of no significant impact (FONSI) and has made a decision to proceed with the project. This letter describes BPA's decision, the construction schedule, and how to obtain additional information.

Background: BPA will fund the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho to restore portions of the Kootenai River to enhance islands and side channels and to restore streambanks. The work would include pool excavation, island construction, bank grading, revegetation, and large woody debris (LWD) installation along banks and in newly created channels. The project will improve Kootenai River habitat to benefit ESA-listed Kootenai White Sturgeon and other native fish, complement other restoration on the Kootenai River, and help mitigate for effects caused by Libby Dam located upstream in Montana.

BPA prepared an EA to help the agency determine if the project would cause significant impacts that would warrant preparing an environmental impact statement. BPA released the draft EA for public review and comment on March 23, 2017, and received one comment letter. The final EA includes minor revisions to the EA. Based on the EA analysis and mitigation measures to help lessen impacts, BPA has found that the project will not cause any significant impacts and therefore, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared.

Decision: BPA has decided to construct the Kootenai River Lower Meander Project. Project construction will occur in two phases: Phase 1 is expected to begin in August 2017 and continue through November 2017. Phase 2 is expected to begin August 2018 and continue through November 2018.

Copies Available: The final EA, FONSI, and mitigation action plan are enclosed if you previously requested them. If you did not receive a copy of any of these documents and would like copies, please call our toll-free document request line at 1-800-622-4520. Leave a request naming this project and giving your name and complete mailing address. The documents are also available on BPA's website at www.bpa.gov/goto/KootenaiMeander.

For More Information: If you have questions regarding the environmental process, please contact me at 360-619-6557, or by e-mail at cjhamel@bpa.gov or Ted Gresh, Contract Environmental Protection Specialist, CRGT, Inc., at 503-230-5756 or at esgresh@bpa.gov. You can also reach us toll free at 1-800-622-4519.

Thank you for your interest in our work.

Sincerely,

/s/ Chad Hamel

Chad Hamel
Supervisory Environmental Specialist

Enclosures (if requested):

Final EA

FONSI and Mitigation Action Plan

becc: (w/o enclosures)

J. Tyler – DKE-7

R. Guiao – LN-7

S. Biegel – ECP-4

M. Reller – DIR-MSGL

D. Marker – DIR-7

J. Warner – DIR-7

V. Watts – EWM-4

Official File – EC (EQ-13)

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