



Department of Energy

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

ENVIRONMENT, FISH AND WILDLIFE

June 2, 2014

In reply refer to: KEC-4

To People interested in the Walla Walla Basin Spring Chinook Hatchery Program

The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) has been preparing a draft environmental impact statement (EIS) for the proposed Walla Walla Basin Spring Chinook Hatchery Program. Public comment was sought on this proposal beginning in March 2013. Since that time, analysis has been progressing on the impacts of the proposed action. This letter provides an update on the status of the EIS effort and announces another opportunity for you to provide comments due to the addition of new information, including a new alternative.

Proposal: BPA is proposing to fund the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) to construct and operate a hatchery for spring Chinook salmon in the Walla Walla River Basin in northeast Oregon. The proposed Walla Walla Basin Spring Chinook Hatchery would be constructed at the CTUIR's existing Adult Holding and Spawning Facility on the South Fork Walla Walla River near Milton-Freewater in Umatilla County, Oregon. The new hatchery would be designed to incubate and rear up to 500,000 yearling spring Chinook smolts for release in tributaries to the Walla Walla River in northeast Oregon and southeast Washington. To learn more about the project, visit www.bpa.gov/goto/WallaWallaHatchery.

New Information: BPA and CTUIR have adjusted the hatchery design to replace concrete rectangular raceways with circular rearing tanks and are adding an alternative to the EIS that would include transferring some fish production from another facility to the Walla Walla Hatchery.

It was determined during design and environmental analysis that the use of traditional rectangular raceways to rear juvenile fish was not feasible due to potential water shortfalls during certain times of the year. BPA and CTUIR are now proposing to use circular tanks (which could also include a water recirculation and reuse system) to halve the amount of water needed for the hatchery and solve the water shortage problem. In addition, the use of circular tanks with water reuse would allow more fish to be reared at the Walla Walla Hatchery site.

With the ability to rear more fish, BPA, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), and CTUIR are proposing an alternative to transfer production of 850,000 spring Chinook smolts currently reared at the Umatilla Hatchery to the proposed Walla Walla Hatchery. The Umatilla Hatchery, near Irrigon, Oregon, is managed by the ODFW and has water shortage problems that limit its ability to produce healthy spring Chinook smolts.

The spring Chinook currently reared at Umatilla hatchery come from eggs produced at the Walla Walla Adult Spawning and Holding Facility. Transferring production of Umatilla spring Chinook to the proposed new Walla Walla Hatchery would help alleviate water constraints at Umatilla Hatchery and improve the health and survival of the Umatilla spring Chinook stock.

The transfer would not change other aspects of the Umatilla spring Chinook program such as acclimation and release sites, and the Umatilla Hatchery would stay in operation and continue to produce other fish. ODFW has agreed to participate in this EIS as a cooperating agency.

How to Comment: As we revise the EIS to reflect changes, we would like to hear your comments to help ensure we are considering all the issues. Please send comments by **July 1, 2014**. All comments will be available in their entirety via the project webpage www.bpa.gov/goto/WallaWallaHatchery. There are several ways to comment:

Mail:	Bonneville Power Administration Public Affairs – DKE-7 P.O. Box 14428 Portland, OR 97291-4428	Toll-free:	800-622-4519
		FAX:	503-230-4019
		Internet:	www.bpa.gov/comment

Schedule:

Draft EIS available for public comment	Fall 2014
Final EIS	Summer 2015
If decision to build, construction would begin	Summer 2015

For More Information: If you need more information or have any questions, please call me toll free at 1-800-622-4519, or call the environmental compliance lead for this project, Judy Woodward, at 503-325-8333, or e-mail jlwoodward@bpa.gov.

Thank you for your interest in our work.

Sincerely,

/s/ Donald L. Rose

Donald L. Rose
Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Enclosures:
Project Map
Comment Form
Return Envelope