

RECLAMATION

Managing Water in the West

Finding of No Significant Impact

Cold Creek Coho Salmon Passage and Screening Project

Siskiyou County, California
2018-FONSI-013

Prepared by: *Kirk Young FOR* Date: 10-16-2018
Yvonne Bernhal
Natural Resource Specialist
Reclamation Technical Service Center

Kirk Young Date: 10-16-2018
Kirk Young
Natural Resource Specialist
Klamath Basin Area Office

Concur: *Kristen C. Hiatt* Date: 10/16/18
Kristen Hiatt
Environmental Compliance Branch
Klamath Basin Area Office

Concur: *Jennie M. Land* Date: 10/16/18
Jennie M. Land
Chief, Resource Management Division
Klamath Basin Area Office

Approved by: *Jeff Nettleton* Date: 10/16/18
Jeff Nettleton
Area Manager
Klamath Basin Area Office

Acting for

Background

In accordance with Section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA; 42 United States Code (USC) §4321 et seq.) of 1969, the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA), 2018-EA-013, to evaluate the potential environmental effects as a result of implementing the Cold Creek Coho Salmon Passage and Screening Project (Project). The Project would be funded in the amount of \$116,054.77 by Reclamation and administered through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) to Trout Unlimited (TU) and would be performed as part of the 2016 Klamath River Coho Restoration Grant Program (Grant Program). The Grant Program was proposed by Reclamation as a conservation measure to address impacts from operation of Reclamation's Klamath Project as described in the National Marine Fisheries Service and United States Fish and Wildlife Service *Biological Opinions on the Effects of Proposed Klamath Project Operations from May 31, 2013 through March 31, 2023, on Five Federally Listed Threatened and Endangered Species* (2013 BiOp). Through its delegated authority under the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (16 USC 661 et seq.), Reclamation is authorized to provide funding assistance for the improvement of fish and wildlife habitat affected by Reclamation's water resource development.

The Project site is in the Klamath River watershed, roughly 22 miles east of the town of Yreka, in section 18 of township 47N, range 4W of the Mount Diablo Meridian in Siskiyou County, California. Cold Creek, Bogus Creek's largest tributary, enters Bogus Creek approximately 1.5 miles upstream from the Bogus Creek confluence with the Klamath River. Bogus Creek enters the main stem Klamath River approximately 2,100 feet downstream of Iron Gate Dam, and it is used by coho salmon, Chinook salmon, and steelhead trout.

Summertime baseflows in Cold Creek are fed by springs that provide cold water to Bogus Creek yielding approximately 0.75 miles of suitable rearing habitat. However, during irrigation season, water users install a hand stacked rock dam (push-up dam) at the diversion to raise and divert water for irrigation. This push-up dam blocks fish passage to and from the upper reaches of Cold Creek. The timing of the installation and operation of the push-up dam (March 1 to November 1) coincides with upstream spawning migrations as well as coho smolts emigrating to summer rearing habitat and impedes their passage. Both access to spawning habitat and juvenile rearing habitat are identified as limiting factors for coho salmon and other cold water dependent species.

The purpose of this Project is to eliminate the need for the push-up dam by installing a roughened channel at the diversion site. This channel would allow for irrigation deliveries while providing volitional streamwide passage for oversummering juveniles, outmigrating smolts and adults moving into the spawning grounds. The Project would also replace the existing, non-compliant fish screen at the diversion with a screen that meets current California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) standards and install a siphon to transport irrigation return flows under Cold Creek to an adjacent pasture and pipe the main diversion ditch. The Project is needed to improve passage and habitat for adult and juvenile coho salmon in Cold Creek in the Klamath River watershed and meets the priority goals of Reclamation's Grant Program.

Alternatives Including the Proposed Action

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, Reclamation would not provide Grant Program funding and NFWF would not administer \$116,054.77 to TU to implement the Project. Fish passage would remain impaired in the stream restricting access to 0.75 miles of spawning habitat and blocking access to summer rearing habitat for juvenile coho. Entrainment risks would remain elevated because the current fish screen would not be reconfigured to current CDFW and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration standards. Water quality in Cold Creek would continue to be impacted by irrigation return flows from nearby farming operations.

Proposed Action Alternative

Under the Proposed Action Alternative, Reclamation would provide \$116,054.77 to NFWF to administer to TU to implement the Project. TU would use this funding to eliminate the need for the push-up dam and allow year-round passage for juvenile and adult salmon. The Project would also include replacement of an existing non-compliant fish screen with one that meets updated criteria and installation of a siphon pipe under the streambed to rout warm tail water under the creek to an adjacent pasture. Engineered streambed material would be used to backfill the siphon pipe and would serve as a low water crossing upon completion. Further details of the Proposed Action may be found in the EA.

Findings

Based on the attached EA, Reclamation finds that the Proposed Action Alternative is not a major Federal action that will significantly affect the quality of the human environment, and preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is not required. The EA describes the existing environmental resources in the Proposed Action Alternative area and evaluates the effects of both the No Action and the Proposed Action Alternatives on the resources. The EA was prepared in accordance with the NEPA, the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for implementing the Procedural Provisions of the NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Parts 1500-1508), and the Department of the Interior Regulations for the Implementation of the NEPA (43 CFR Part 46). That analysis is provided in the EA, and a summation of the analysis is hereby incorporated by reference.

This Finding of No Significant Impact document is based on the following:

1. The Proposed Action would not significantly affect public health or safety (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(2)).
2. The Proposed Action would not significantly affect natural resources and unique

geographical characteristics such as proximity to historic or cultural resources; parks, recreation, and refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (Executive Order (EO) 11990); flood plains (EO 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(3) and 43 CFR 46.215(b)).

3. There is no potential for the effects of the Proposed Action to be considered highly controversial (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(4)).
4. The Proposed Action would not have possible effects on the human environment that are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(5)).
5. The Proposed Action would neither establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects nor represent a decision in principle about a future consideration (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(6)).
6. The Proposed Action would not have cumulatively significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(7)).
7. The Proposed Action would not significantly affect historic properties (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(8)).
8. The Proposed Action would not significantly affect listed or proposed threatened or endangered species, or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(9)).
9. The Proposed Action would not threaten a violation of Federal, State, tribal or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(10)).
10. The Proposed Action would not affect any Indian Trust Assets (512 Departmental Manual (DM) 2, Policy Memorandum dated December 15, 1993).
11. Implementation of the Proposed Action would not disproportionately affect minorities or low-income populations and communities (EO 12898 and 43 CFR 46.215(j)).
12. The Proposed Action would not limit access to, and ceremonial use of, Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (EO 13007, 43 CFR 46.215(k), and 512 DM 3).