

Columbia-Cascades Area Office
Yakima, Washington

Media Contact: John Redding (208) 378-5212
jredding@usbr.gov

David Kaumheimer (509) 575-5848 ext. 232
dkaumheimer@usbr.gov
Derek Sandison (509) 457-7120
Department of Ecology
dsan461@ecy.wa.gov
TTY/TDD: 711

For Release: January 26, 2010

Reclamation and Ecology Release Cle Elum Fish Passage Draft Environmental Impact Statement

The Bureau of Reclamation and the Washington State Department of Ecology have completed the Cle Elum Fish Passage Facilities and Fish Reintroduction Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). It is available for public review and will be formally filed with the US Environmental Protection Agency on January 29.

The purpose of the project is to construct fish passage facilities at Cle Elum Dam that will provide fish access to historic habitat and restore biodiversity and the natural production of anadromous salmonids in the upper Cle Elum subbasin.

Specific species expected to benefit include Coho, and spring Chinook salmon, and Pacific lamprey. The project will also contribute to the recovery of fish listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act such as the upper Middle Columbia River steelhead and ESA-listed bull trout.

Cle Elum Dam, located on the Cle Elum River about 8 miles northwest of Cle Elum, Washington, was built in 1933 without fish passage facilities.

The Draft EIS includes two preferred alternatives, one for construction of fish passage facilities, and one for fish reintroduction. Two no action alternatives are also included.

The preferred alternative for constructing downstream passage facilities would allow juvenile fish to pass through a multilevel gated intake structure located above the spillway and through a conduit on the right abutment of the dam. A trap-and-haul facility is also included in this alternative.

Concurrently, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife is collaborating with the Yakama Nation to evaluate implementing a proposed fish reintroduction project to restore populations above Cle Elum Dam. The fish reintroduction project is dependent on the construction of the upstream fish passage facilities, and it includes the potential for construction of a fish hatchery in the future.

“As this project moves ahead, Reclamation and Ecology are committed to hearing from the public, and looking forward to solving the fish passage issues in the Yakima basin,” said Bill Gray, manager of Reclamation’s Columbia-Cascades Area Office.

The public review and comment period is scheduled to run until March 22. Comments may be submitted orally, electronically, or by mail. Oral comments may be presented at the following public meeting:

February 18, 2010, 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.
City of Cle Elum Council Chamber Room
119 West 1st Street
Cle Elum, Washington

Please send written comments to Ms. Candace McKinley, Environmental Protection Specialist, at the Bureau of Reclamation, 1917 Marsh Road, Yakima WA 98901, or by email to sha-uca-fishpassage@usbr.gov. Questions about the report may be directed to Ms. McKinley at (509) 575-5848, ext. 612; or by fax to (509) 454-5650. TTY users may dial 711 to obtain a toll-free TTY relay.

Copies of the document have been mailed to parties who have requested one, as well as area Tribes and appropriate local, State, and Federal government agencies. In addition, Reclamation and Ecology offices and local libraries will have copies available for viewing. Copies of the report are available by phoning (509) 575-5848, ext. 612, or it can be viewed online at:

http://www.usbr.gov/pn/programs/ucao_misc/fishpassage/index.html.

The public meeting facilities are physically accessible. Persons needing accessibility accommodations, including sign language interpreters or other auxiliary aids, may contact Ms. McKinley as early as possible to allow sufficient time to arrange for accommodation.

###

Reclamation is the largest wholesale water supplier and the second largest producer of hydroelectric power in the United States, with operations and facilities in the 17 Western States. Its facilities also provide substantial flood control, recreation, and fish and wildlife benefits. Visit our website at www.usbr.gov.