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**DECISION NOTICE**  
and  
**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**  
for the

**Soda Springs Bypass Reach Habitat Enhancement and Gravel  
Augmentation Project**

Douglas County, Oregon  
USDA Forest Service  
Umpqua National Forest  
Diamond Lake Ranger District

## **DECISION**

I have decided to implement *Alternative 2* as described on pages 6-11 in chapter two of the Soda Springs Bypass Reach Habitat Enhancement and Gravel Augmentation Environmental Assessment (EA) with the following clarification. The monitoring table of page 11 of the EA has a statement concerning the threshold of variability for turbidity. Based on public comment, the statement should read, "PacifiCorp will comply with the ODEQ turbidity standards at the time they are prescribed in the ODSL and ACOE permits." It is our intent to be consistent with requirements set by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality.

My decision is based on the following:

1. Alternative 2 best meets the purpose and need for action as described on page 2 of the EA.
2. Implementation of this decision would not significantly affect the quality of the human environment (see FONSI).
3. The proposal is in compliance with applicable Federal and State laws and regulations.

## **DESCRIPTION OF SELECTED ALTERNATIVE**

Alternative 2 addresses two Settlement Agreement sections: 7.2 Gravel Augmentation, and 8.3 Habitat Creation.

### **7.2 Gravel Augmentation**

PacifiCorp would place a total of 4,000 tons of gravel, suitable for spawning use, in two locations in the North Umpqua River.

- 500 tons (about 370 cubic yards) would be placed in the Soda Springs Bypass Reach, above the new proposed structure, weir #3.
- 3,500 tons (about 2,600 cubic yards) would be placed about 400 feet downstream of Soda Springs powerhouse, on the right bank of the river adjacent to road 4775-011. The pile would be about 175' long and average 40' wide x 10' high. The pile would be rounded and

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shaped to facilitate downstream movement by the river channel, and to reduce the visual impact in the short-term.

### **8.3 Habitat Creation**

PacifiCorp would construct a new log and boulder weir at Site 1 in the Soda Springs Bypass Reach. This site runs from the pool below Soda Springs dam downstream about 500 feet to where the channel gradient steepens significantly. Two existing log weirs, constructed in 1992, would be modified and repaired to provide adequate water surface slope and additional gravel holding capacity. New logs and large boulders would be added below the lowest existing weir (identified as weir #1) and the upper pool weir. The new weir (identified as weir #3) will be constructed about 60 feet upstream of the existing weir #2. The weirs will be constructed with logs and boulders to approximate natural river structure. Up to 20 logs will be used for the structure, some with root wads attached. These logs would be from 40 to 65 feet long and range from 15" to 24" on the small end.

The weir #3 location will require moving the existing stream flow gauge about 150 feet further upstream in the same large pool. Controls and bubbler tube will be moved, and power will be extended along road 4775-011 to the new gauge site. This project is designed to provide the most usable habitat possible under various flow conditions. The total amount of habitat created is estimated to be between 9,000 and 12,000 square feet.

## **ISSUES and PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

The Soda Springs Bypass Reach Habitat Enhancement and Gravel Augmentation proposal was published in the Forest's October, 2003 quarterly Schedule of Proposed Actions and in the schedule every quarter since then. Copies of the proposed action were sent to members of the public who requested it. Tribal consultation was accomplished through specific notification highlighting projects in the SOPA on October 5, 2003.

The public has also been informed of this proposal through the open meetings of the North Umpqua Hydropower Resource Coordination Committee (RCC) established under the Settlement Agreement. The RCC chartered a Technical Working Group (TWG) to develop and evaluate the habitat potential and possible enhancement sites. The RCC voted to propose this project at its meeting of August 7, 2003.

Through scoping the following issues were determined to be important in reaching an informed decision:

1. Federally listed and sensitive species impacts.
2. Wild & Scenic river impacts.
3. Cultural resources impacts.
4. Other topics required by statute or regulation.

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## ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

In 2002, the RCC initiated a study of possible enhancement sites in the North Umpqua River in the entire reach from Soda Springs dam to the confluence with Steamboat creek. Stillwater Sciences, under the direction of the TWG, completed a Feasibility Report in 2003 that analyzed twenty sites. Using a priority ranking system, the TWG identified four sites as high priority. The sixteen lower priority sites that were identified during the feasibility study were not studied in detail in this analysis due to the rankings given by the TWG. These include factors such as potential for habitat creation, existing geomorphic conditions, access, distance from Soda Springs dam, recreation impacts, and Wild & Scenic river impacts.

A preliminary alternative was formed by the ID team with the goal of maximizing spawning habitat creation in the project reach. This alternative included all four high priority sites identified by the TWG (sites 1, 3, 9, 12b). Total potential habitat created was estimated to be between 10,900 and 14,700 square feet. Further scoping indicated that access to construct sites 3, 9, and 12b could have significant negative impacts to cultural resources and Wild and Scenic river values. In addition, the effectiveness of the treatments at these sites was in question in the Feasibility Report, especially for sites 9 and 12b. This alternative was dropped from further study.

The interdisciplinary team considered two alternatives: No Action (Alternative 1) and the Proposed Action (Alternative 2). The No Action alternative is required under Council of Environmental Quality regulations and serves as a baseline for environmental effects. A detailed description of the alternatives considered may be found on pages 5-11 in chapter two of the EA. Descriptions contain a map of the proposed action, and a narrative describing the proposed activities including best management practices, mitigating measures, management requirements, and monitoring provisions.

**Alternative 1 (No Action)** - No additional spawning habitat would be intentionally created, and no additional gravel would be added to the North Umpqua River system below Soda Springs dam under Settlement Agreement section 7.2. The river would continue to function as it does now, except for other changes prescribed in the new license such as minimum flows in the bypass reach and fish passage. This alternative serves as a benchmark, enabling the responsible official and IDT to compare the magnitude of effects of the action alternatives. This alternative addresses the general concern that any in-stream work might have unintended or negative impacts to the natural environment. It does not meet the need for action described in chapter one of the EA.

A detailed description of the environmental consequences of implementing the alternatives considered may be found on pages 13-19 in chapter three of the EA.

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## FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)

Based on the Soda Springs Bypass Reach Habitat Enhancement and Gravel Augmentation Environmental Assessment, I have determined the following with regard to this decision:

1. Based on the disclosure on page 18 of the EA, this decision will not affect any unique characteristics of the geographic area such as parklands, prime farmlands, wetlands, floodplains, or ecologically critical areas. It is consistent with the Aquatic Conservation Strategy objectives.
2. Review of the public's comments did not reveal a high level of controversy over the nature or extent of environmental effects.
3. I find that the effects on the human environment from Alternative 2 are reasonably certain and do not involve any unique and unknown risks.
4. This decision will not have a cumulatively significant, adverse impact on the environment, based on my review of the environmental consequences discussed in chapter three of the EA.
5. Based on surveys as disclosed on page 17 of the EA, this decision is unlikely to affect any sites, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.
6. Based on the analysis disclosed on page 16 of the EA, and the Wild & Scenic River Act section 7(a) determination, this decision will maintain the outstandingly remarkable values for which the North Umpqua River was designated as Wild & Scenic.
7. A biological evaluation (BE) for threatened and sensitive fish species conducted by Forest Service biologists determined that this project "May Affect Individuals Or Habitat But Will Not Likely Contribute To A Trend Towards Federal Listing Or Cause A Loss Of Viability To The Population Or Species." During the course of the environmental analysis, the status of OC Coho salmon was in fluctuation. Consultation with NOAA Fisheries for OC coho as a threatened species was completed in the Endangered Species Act Section 7 Consultation, Biological Opinion and Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act Consultation, North Umpqua Hydroelectric Project. National Marine Fisheries Service [NOAA Fisheries]-Northwest Region Hydro Program 2002. December 13, 2002
8. A biological evaluation (BE) for terrestrial species conducted by a Forest Service wildlife biologist determined that this project would have "no effect" on the northern spotted owl, Canada lynx, or northern bald eagle. Therefore, no consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was required.
9. Habitat does not exist in the project area for species listed in the 2001 ROD for Survey & Manage. The 2004 ROD eliminated the Survey & Manage program.

Based on the process used to develop the EA, compliance with the goals and objectives of the amended 1990 Umpqua National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, the required best management practices, management requirements, and mitigating measures described in chapter two of the EA, and the disclosure of the environmental consequences in chapter three of the EA, I find that this project does not threaten to violate any Federal, State, or local laws imposed for the protection of the environment.

Based on the preceding findings, I have determined that this is not a major Federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not required.

## **FINDINGS REQUIRED BY OTHER LAWS**

In accordance with the National Forest Management Act and other applicable laws, I find the following:

1. This decision is consistent with the goals and objectives of the 1990 Umpqua National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, as amended; therefore, meeting the minimum specific management requirements set forth in 36 CFR 219.
2. The environmental policies and procedures specified in Forest Service Handbook (FSH 1909.15) were used in developing the Soda Springs Bypass Reach Habitat Enhancement and Gravel Augmentation EA. Therefore, the process is in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR, Ch. V).

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

In accordance with 36 CFR 215.5, notice of the opportunity to comment on the EA was published in the Roseburg News Review on April 16, 2004. Copies of the EA were mailed to those who requested notice and to those who expressed interest during the scoping process. In accordance with 36 CFR 215.6(a), the Umpqua National Forest accepted oral and written comments until May 17, 2004. One supportive comment, including a clarification, was received during the 30-day comment period.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW OR APPEAL**

Based on the absence of substantive comments expressing concerns about the proposal, the Decision Notice for the Soda Springs Bypass Reach Habitat Enhancement and Gravel Augmentation project is not subject to appeal in accordance with 36 CFR 215.12(e)(1).

## **IMPLEMENTATION DATE**

Based on the fact that this decision is not subject to appeal, implementation may occur immediately following the publication of this document in accordance with 36 CFR 215.9(c)(1).

## **CONTACT PERSON**

For further information, contact Steve Nelson, Diamond Lake Ranger District, 2020 Toketee Ranger Station Rd., Idleyld Park, Oregon 97447, (541) 498-2531.

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John Ouimet  
District Ranger

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Date