

from 7:45 am to 10:00 pm, Monday through Thursday; 7:45 am to 5:00 pm on Friday; 8:30 am to 12:00 noon on Saturday; and 2:00 pm to 6:00 pm on Sunday, except for Federal holidays. Additionally, there is a Public Reading Room located at the Carson County Public Library, 401 Main Street, Panhandle, TX phone (806) 537-3742. Hours of operation are from 9:00 am to 7:00 pm on Monday; 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, Tuesday through Friday; and closed Saturday and Sunday as well as Federal Holidays. Minutes will also be available by writing or calling Tom Williams at the address or telephone number listed above.

Issued at Washington, DC on March 11, 1997.

Rachel M. Samuel,

Acting Deputy Advisory Committee Management Officer.

[FR Doc. 97-6468 Filed 3-13-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6450-01-P

Bonneville Power Administration

Billy Shaw Dam and Reservoir

AGENCY: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), Department of Energy (DOE).

ACTION: Finding of no significant impact (FONSI) and floodplain/wetland statement of findings.

SUMMARY: This notice announces BPA's decision to fund the construction, operation, and maintenance of the Billy Shaw Dam and Reservoir on the Duck Valley Reservation. This project is part of a continuing effort to address system-wide fish and wildlife losses caused by the development of the hydropower system in the Columbia River Basin. BPA has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) (DOE/EA-1167) evaluating the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project. Based on the analysis in the EA, BPA has determined that the Proposed Action is not a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment, within the meaning of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969. Therefore, the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required and BPA is issuing this FONSI.

A finding is included that there is no practicable alternative to locating the project within a 100-year floodplain.

ADDRESS: For copies of this FONSI, please call BPA's toll-free document request line: 800-622-4520.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT: Kathy Fisher—ECN, Bonneville Power Administration, P.O. Box 3621,

Portland, Oregon, 97208-3621, phone number 503-230-4375, fax number 503-230-5699.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Under provisions of the Pacific Northwest Electric Power Planning and Conservation Act of 1980 (Act), BPA protects, mitigates, and enhances fish and wildlife and their habitats affected by the construction and operation of the Federal hydroelectric system in the Columbia River Basin. This is accomplished through funding of measures that are consistent with the Northwest Power Planning Council's (Council) Fish and Wildlife Program and other purposes of the Act [16 U.S.C. 839b(h)(10)(A)]. The site-specific fish and wildlife mitigation projects that BPA funds are intended to help reach the Council's mitigation goals and are "in addition to, not in lieu of, other expenditures authorized or required from other entities under other agreements or provisions of law."

The Proposed Action is for BPA to fund the construction and operation of the Billy Shaw Dam and Reservoir (Project) on the Duck Valley Reservation (Reservation). It is consistent with the objectives of the Council's Program goals and satisfies the Council's recommendation to implement an additional lake fishery at Coyote Sink on the Duck Valley Reservation. Developing the Project would help BPA meet the need to provide off-site mitigation in the Duck Valley area for the loss of salmon and steelhead caused by the construction and operation of the Federal hydroelectric dams and reservoirs on the Columbia River. The No Action Alternative considered in the EA would not satisfy BPA's need to provide off-site mitigation in the Duck Valley Reservation area for salmon and steelhead.

The Project would include the construction of an earthen dam to create a reservoir in the Billy Shaw Slough on the Reservation. The water for the new reservoir would come from natural high spring flows that would be diverted from the Owyhee River at the China Diversion Dam and supplied through the Duck Valley Canal and the new Billy Shaw Feed Canal. The new reservoir would have a surface area of 174 hectares (430 acres) and volume of 3300 acre-feet. The reservoir would be stocked with trout from an existing fish hatchery.

Some environmental impacts would occur as a result of the Project, but the impacts would not be significant. Approximately 223 hectares (550 acres) of vegetation and wildlife habitat would be removed or disturbed by the Project.

Approximately 174 hectares (430 acres) of suitable foraging habitat for various animal species, including federally listed bald eagles, and suitable nesting habitat for burrowing owls and pygmy rabbits would be permanently replaced by a reservoir. An additional 49 hectares (120 acres) of habitat would be temporarily disturbed by construction activities. The vegetation and habitat disturbance and removal would not be significant because similar vegetation and habitat is plentiful in the area. The impact area represents less than 3% of the Billy Shaw Slough monotypical vegetation and habitat communities.

Another vegetation related impact would be the increase in plant diversity along the reservoir shoreline. This impact would not be significant because only native plants would be used for reseeding and revegetating disturbed areas. This would prevent non-native plants from being introduced into the local area by the Project.

Soil disturbance from construction and maintenance activities would increase the risk of erosion. However, the impact would not be significant because it would be limited to localized increases in erosion and runoff. Although foraging habitat for bald or golden eagles would be replaced by the new reservoir, the reservoir may contribute to increased site use by bald or golden eagles, especially at the reservoir or riparian fringe areas. No other threatened or endangered wildlife are known to occur within the area. Impacts to the bald eagle would not be significant because similar foraging opportunities are plentiful in the area. Increased site utilization by bald or golden eagles would not significantly impact any other wildlife resource.

The addition of the reservoir would increase the amount of fish habitat in the area. The Project design and location would prevent the reservoir fish from leaving the reservoir so there would be no impacts to other aquatic environments. Approximately 1.2 hectares (3 acres) of intermittent wetlands would be permanently replaced by the reservoir. The impacts would not be significant because the wetlands are not part of a complete and interrelated wetland area. New wetlands and riparian areas would naturally develop in shallow areas around the reservoir perimeter and would offset the loss of the existing intermittent wetlands.

The Project would be developed within an area prone to spring flooding from the Owyhee River. The Project would reduce seasonal flooding below the dam site and would alter normal runoff patterns. No impacts to lives or

property would occur because no facilities or habitation exist within the area.

Impacts from construction activities on visual resources, employment and economic opportunities, air quality, and public health and safety would be minor and of short duration. After project construction, the reservoir would attract additional wildlife and diversify the viewing opportunities in the valley.

The location of the Project borrow site was not identified in the EA because it is not known at this time. However, impacts to vegetation, wildlife, and cultural resources would not be significant because preconstruction surveys would be conducted if an undeveloped borrow site is selected for use. If the surveys determine the presence of sensitive resources such as endangered species or historic properties, then the borrow site would either be relocated or appropriate mitigation measures would be applied to ensure any impacts are at a level below significant.

As stated in Chapter IV—Permit Requirements and Contacts of the EA, the Project is subject to certain regulatory requirements. A permit to fill in wetlands under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act would be required. The Nevada Division of Environmental Protection may require a letter of water quality certification or a rolling stock water pollution control permit. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers would require an Impoundment Permit for the emplacement of the reservoir. In accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, a Class III cultural resources survey was conducted and found no significant resources. The Nevada State Historic Preservation Officer concurred in a letter dated June 17, 1996 that the Project site was not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. In accordance with the requirements of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) was consulted about this Project. The Project is consistent with the Endangered Species Act because the EA confirmed that no plant or animal species federally listed as threatened or endangered would be adversely affected by the Project.

Floodplain Statement of Findings

This is a Floodplain Statement of Findings prepared in accordance with 10 CFR Part 1022. A Notice of Floodplain and Wetlands Involvement was published in the Federal Register on May 17, 1996 and a floodplain and wetlands assessment was incorporated in the EA. BPA proposes to fund the

construction of an earth dam and reservoir in the Billy Shaw Slough of the Duck Valley Reservation near Owyhee, Nevada. The Proposed Action would be located in the floodplain because that area offers the topographical qualities needed to fill and maintain a permanent reservoir. The alternative to the Proposed Action, the No Action Alternative, would not satisfy BPA's need to provide off-site mitigation on the Duck Valley Reservation for the loss of salmon and steelhead. The Proposed Action conforms to applicable State or local floodplain protection standards.

Preliminary designs for the spillway and outlet works of the dam included the small dam criteria available from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS). The inflow design floods were computed based upon NRCS, Idaho Department of Water Resources, and Nevada Division of Water Resources criteria for structures of this size and hazard classification. Although studies indicated that a probable maximum flood event could be stored without the use of the spillway, an emergency spillway would be included in the plan. These design considerations would minimize any potential harm to the floodplain should a significant flood event occur. Also, the downstream hazard classification for the reservoir site is considered low because no permanent or temporary human habitation or permanent property development lies in the floodplain downstream from the proposed damsite.

BPA will endeavor to allow 15 days of public review after publication of this statement of findings before implementing the Proposed Action.

Determination

Based on the information in the EA, as summarized here, BPA determines that the Proposed Action is not a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment within the meaning of NEPA, 42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.* Therefore, an EIS will not be prepared and BPA is issuing this FONSI.

Issued in Portland, Oregon, on March 3, 1997.

Alexandra B. Smith,
Vice President, Environment, Fish, & Wildlife.
[FR Doc. 97-6464 Filed 3-13-97; 8:45 am]

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Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

[Docket No. CP94-161-006]

Avoca Natural Gas Storage; Notice of Site Visit

March 10, 1997.

On March 25 and 26, 1997, the Office of Pipeline Regulation (OPR) staff will inspect on the ground, along with Avoca Natural Gas Storage (Avoca) personnel, locations related to the facilities proposed by Avoca in New York for the Avoca Gas Storage Project Supplement.

All interested parties may attend. Those planning to attend the March 25 and 26, 1997, site inspection must provide their own transportation.

For further information, call Paul McKee, Office of External Affairs, at (202) 208-1088.

Lois D. Cashell,
Secretary.

[FR Doc. 97-6439 Filed 3-13-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6717-01-M

[Docket No. CP97-275-000]

Columbia Gas Transmission Corporation; Notice of Request Under Blanket Authorization

March 10, 1997.

Take notice that on March 4, 1997, Columbia Gas Transmission Corporation (Columbia Gas), 1700 MacCorkle Avenue S.E., Charleston, West Virginia 25314-1599, filed in Docket No. CP97-275-000 a request pursuant to Sections 157.205 and 157.211 of the Commission's Regulations under the Natural Gas Act (18 CFR 157.205 and 157.211) for authorization to construct and operate a new point of delivery in McKean County, Pennsylvania, so that interruptible volumes can be delivered to Minard Run Oil Company (MRO). Columbia Gas makes such request under its blanket certificate issued in Docket No. CP83-76-000 pursuant to Section 7 of the Natural Gas Act, all as more fully set forth in the request on file with the Commission and open to public inspection.

Specifically, Columbia Gas indicates its intent to render the interconnecting delivery facility operational by making use of an existing 4-inch tap, installing a 4-inch turbo meter setting and an 8-inch filter separator. It is averred that the delivery facility will be used to provide up to 950 Mcf of natural daily to MRO for industrial use, and up to 346,750 Mcf annually. Columbia Gas states that the interruptible transportation service will be provided to MRO pursuant to Columbia Gas'