
CHAPTER TWO

STUDY AREA

DESCRIPTION

***2. STUDY AREA DESCRIPTION**

2.1. ^{revised} Existing Project Description

The following information has been added to this section for the Final SEIS. The study area has been expanded through the ESA consultation and now includes the area from bank to bank and from Bonneville Dam to the Deep Water Site, as well as upland disposal, ecosystem restoration, and mitigation sites.

2.2. Historic Channel Development

No updating of the existing information in this section was necessary for the Final SEIS (see the Final IFR/EIS, August 1999).

2.3. ^{revised} Navigation Practices

The following information has been added to this section for the Final SEIS. New analysis of the LoadMax system, which helps maximize departure depths through use of detailed river flow information, indicates that it is unlikely any significant benefit can be obtained through further refinement of the system. In addition, the Technical Review Panel convened in August 2002 concluded that any benefits derived through the LoadMax system were already being utilized to the maximum extent practicable.

2.4. ^{revised} Channel Maintenance Practices

The following information has been added to this section for the Final SEIS. Since issuance of the 1999 Final IFR/EIS, continued maintenance dredging for both the MCR project and the Columbia River project have been approved. Approvals include a Biological Opinion (September 1999) and Section 401 water quality certifications (June 2000) for Columbia River operations and maintenance, as well as Section 401 certifications, dated April 2002, for 1 year from Washington and for 5 years from Oregon for the MCR project.

2.5. ^{revised} Summary of Environmental Conditions

For the Final SEIS, the following updated information has been added to this section. The ESA consultation process analyzed existing and new information regarding environmental conditions in the project area, including information on water and sediment quality (Section 2.5.1, 1999 Final IFR/EIS), aquatic resources (Section 2.5.2, 1999 Final IFR/EIS) and wildlife resources (Section 2.5.3, 1999 Final IFR/EIS). That analysis is reported in the Corps' 2001 BA (Exhibit H on the Corps' website) and in the NOAA Fisheries and USFWS 2002 Biological Opinions (Exhibit H on the Corps' website), which are incorporated herein by reference and discussed in more detail in Chapter 6. Additional information and analyses regarding essential fish habitat, sediment transport, white and green sturgeon, lamprey, smelt, juvenile salmon, fish stranding, Dungeness crab, wildlife and wetland mitigation, and floodplains has been revised from the Draft SEIS. This information is presented in Exhibits I, J and K-1 through K-9 to this Final SEIS, and is discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.