

CHAPTER 11 ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENTS

11.1 MITIGATION MEASURES FOR THE DESIRED CONDITION

In addition to the management actions described in Chapters 4-10, the following mitigation actions are also considered to be commitments being made by Reclamation. These commitments are denoted by a ■ symbol. Other specific mitigation measures were recommended by USFWS in the CAR, which was prepared in July 2000; they are depicted with a □ symbol.

Management Actions for Agency Coordination

- Both WDFW and SPRC will finalize and implement management plans for the areas under their jurisdiction for management actions.
- Before transferring lands from Reclamation to private entities, determine important habitat types and protect them with an easement or eliminate them from the transfer.
- When dealing with the construction of various projects, the responsible state agency will receive additional review and evaluation from the USFWS under the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act.

Management Actions for Air Quality

- Standard measures will be required of contractors to reduce dust from construction operations.
- Burning materials will be permitted only when atmospheric conditions are considered favorable by appropriate state or local air pollution or fire authorities.
- Where open burning is permitted, burn piles will be constructed to reduce smoke.

Management Actions for Soil and Water

- Several procedures will be used as necessary to prevent and minimize erosion and siltation during construction and during the period needed to reestablish permanent vegetative cover on disturbed sites. Clearing schedules will be arranged to minimize the exposure of soils. Final erosion control and site restoration measures will be initiated as soon as an area is no longer needed for construction, stockpiling, or access.
- Short-term effects such as increased land or shoreline erosion in or near recreation sites will be minimized by adhering to Best Management Practices (BMPs) during construction. These BMPs will help minimize erosion and prevent sediment-laden runoff from leaving the construction site. Strict adherence to BMPs will control and reduce adverse construction- and operation-related soil effects. Fill placement and sediment removal operations below the reservoir high water line will occur when the reservoir pool is at its lowest elevation.

- The two perennial streams, entering from the northwest, will be added to the wetland/riparian areas, which will be closed to grazing.
- Water quality will be protected by avoiding construction activities during wet periods of the year and through the use of proper construction techniques and procedures to keep silt out of Banks Lake and other drainages.
- Standard mitigation measures will be required of contractors during facility construction operations. Construction specifications will require construction activities to be performed by methods that prevent the entrance or accidental spillage of contaminants and other objectionable pollutants into surface waters. Excavated materials will not be stockpiled or deposited near or on shorelines, streambanks, wetlands, or other watercourse perimeters where they could be washed away by high water or storm runoff, or encroach upon any sensitive areas.
- Construction activities below the reservoir high water line (i.e., boat ramp construction or improvements) will be scheduled when the reservoir is at its lowest elevation (typically from November through January) to minimize turbidity caused by lake sediment disturbances. Construction specifications will also require riprap and other materials used for shoreline erosion control or jetties to be free of contaminants and not contribute to reservoir turbidity.
- The potential for petroleum product spills and water quality contamination due to the two boat fueling stations will be minimized by adhering to AST safety program requirements. Safety requirements for SPRC's AST program include: providing overfill and fuel level indicators; protection from auto impact and excessive solar insolation; adequate support structure with retainment to guard against bank slippage; providing mechanisms to guard against back-siphonage or spillage as a result of damage or dispenser switch malfunction; and locking mechanisms to all caps, openings and ports to prevent unauthorized use.
- Only EPA registered herbicides authorized for water application and with known low toxicities to fish and wildlife will be authorized for use. Herbicides that are highly toxic to people, fish or wildlife will be prohibited. This will apply to the Eurasian water milfoil control program proposed near boat ramps, courtesy docks, and public swimming areas as well as to noxious weed control program. Such a provision will be required in all new or renewed land use agreements issued by Reclamation, the SPRC or WDFW.

Management Actions for Vegetation

- Some mitigation actions for various adverse impacts (existing and potential future impacts) will include restoration of native vegetation in certain places in the management area (e.g. native bunchgrasses and forbs in shrub-steppe and riparian areas and along shorelines).
- Ensure a complement of mature cottonwoods are maintained along the Banks Lake shoreline and conditions are sufficient to provide for long-term

propagation and growth to ensure the presence of future mature cottonwoods.

- Conduct additional surveys for Ute ladies'-tresses on any potential construction sites located along the two perennial streams which enter Banks Lake from the northwest or any springs or seeps in the management area.
- Continue to update the GIS vegetation map to account for changes in the habitat types over time.
- The use of native species or non-invasive species will be used whenever possible for revegetation efforts to maximize the potential to restore revegetated areas to high quality habitat beneficial to wildlife.
- In conjunction with the 100-acre land disposal proposed near Coulee City, the wetland area near the substation and a sufficient buffer (a minimum 100-foot buffer around the wetland perimeter) will be retained under Reclamation jurisdiction. The centrally located 0.3-acre wetland will be protected and preserved under Washington State law, the Grant County Comprehensive Plan, and the Growth Management Act which require local jurisdictions to designate and adopt development regulations that protect wetlands.
- Construction specifications will require contractors to preserve the natural landscape and prevent any unnecessary destruction, scarring, or defacing of the natural surroundings in the work vicinity. All trees, shrubs and other vegetation will be preserved and protected from construction operations and equipment except where clearing operations are required for permanent structures, approved roads, or excavation operations. All maintenance yards, field offices, and staging areas will be arranged to preserve trees and vegetation to the maximum practicable extent, and all disturbed areas will be reclaimed.
- Critical environmental areas (i.e., stream corridors, wetlands, riparian areas, Ute ladies'-tresses orchid habitat, and steep slopes) will not be used for construction equipment or material storage or stockpiling; construction staging or maintenance; or temporary access roads. Damage to critical area vegetation will be strictly prohibited or limited only to areas required for construction activities when no other alternative exists.
- Upon the completion of construction, any land disturbed but not permanently occupied by new facilities will be graded to provide proper drainage and blend with the natural contours of the land, covered with topsoil stripped from construction areas, and revegetated with plants native to the area and beneficial to wildlife. Native plantings will be required outside the developed footprints established for the SRSP campground, Coulee City, and golf course expansion projects.
- The final recommended composition of plant species, seeding rates, and planting dates will be determined in consultation with the WDFW and FWS (where applicable or appropriate). The species to be used in site restoration and revegetation will be matched for soil drainage, climate, shading,

resistance to erosion (slope of site), and vegetation management goals. Disturbed wetlands and riparian areas will be revegetated with wetland and riparian species.

- Uplands will be revegetated to the native vegetative community appropriate for the site's soil type, topographic position, and elevation. Trees and shrubs appropriate for site conditions and surrounding vegetation types also will be included in the reclamation plant list for uplands.

Management Actions for Fisheries

- Where possible, restrict the use of personal water craft (PWC) during fish spawning seasons.
- Determine the impact of fishing tournaments on fish populations at Banks Lake and modify the event if necessary.
- During final project layout and design, site-specific erosion and sediment control measures will be identified and incorporated into the project's construction specifications, reducing sediment delivery to the lake. Construction sites will be revegetated and riparian areas near shorelines will be planted with trees and shrubs to provide shade and habitat for fish and near-shore wildlife. Projects built below the reservoir high water line will be constructed when the reservoir pool is at its lowest elevation to avoid damage to fish spawning and rearing habitat caused by the release of sediment into the lake or increases in turbidity.
- Short-term effects such as increased shoreline erosion in or near construction sites will be minimized by adhering to Best Management Practices (BMPs) during project construction. During final layout and site design, measures to minimize asphalt surface runoff and the potential for pollutants (e.g. oil) entering the lake will also be identified and incorporated into the design.
- Herbicides used for the control of Eurasian water milfoil and purple loosestrife will be selected for their low toxicity to aquatic wildlife and fish.
- Additional studies will be conducted to determine fishing tournament impacts at Banks Lake. Based on study findings, the tournament venue will be modified or curtailed as necessary.

Management Actions for Wildlife

- Initiate a study to determine the reproductive success of the western grebes in the management area to determine the level of management required to protect these birds.
- Survey for pygmy rabbits in the shrub-steppe communities and collect baseline data on population dynamics.
- Establish speed restrictions or seasonally close sensitive areas during the nesting and rearing season in the Devils Punch Bowl for migratory bird species.

- Ensure the Climbing Management Plan (CMP) provides protection for wildlife species (i.e. raptors) by guiding climbing activities away from important nesting areas during the spring and early summer.
- In conjunction with the 100-acre land disposal proposed near Coulee City, the wetland area near the substation and a sufficient buffer (a minimum of 100-feet will be required around the wetland perimeter) will be retained under Reclamation jurisdiction. The centrally located 0.3-acre wetland will be protected and preserved under Washington State law and the Grant County Comprehensive Plan which specifically requires the protection of wetlands and their ecological values.
- Standards will be developed for determining grazing management changes, monitoring protocols, and schedules.
- A wildfire management plan will be developed.
- Reclamation will require that WDFW and SPRC develop and implement specific wildlife management plans for the areas under their jurisdiction.
- Reclamation will coordinate closely with the SPRC and BLM to ensure potential impacts to Northrup Canyon resources from RMP implementation are either avoided or minimized.
- Actions, such as the construction of recreation facilities, will receive additional review and evaluation from the FWS.
- Any new construction will be scheduled to avoid impacts during critical wildlife periods (e.g. wintering, nesting and/or breeding, hibernation, or juvenile dispersal periods).
- Areas of native plant cover will not be used as staging areas for construction activities. All areas disturbed by construction activities will be reseeded using a native seed mixture beneficial to wildlife.

Management Actions for Recreation

- At Barker Flats, the western half of the unit (rather than the eastern half) will be closed to dispersed camping to protect sensitive species and habitats.
- Manage human activities closely to reduce the risk of fire in areas where fire is not part of the natural process.
- Give the higher value shrub-steppe habitats special designation and long-term protection by eliminating motorized travel in the 130-acre ORV area. This area will be reduced to 80-acres.

Management Actions for ITAs

- Reclamation will work with the affected Tribal governments if specific ITAs are identified.

Management Actions for Noise

- During project-specific construction activities, contractors will be required to comply with applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations

concerning the prevention and control of noise emissions. Contractors will be required to use reasonable available methods and devices to control, prevent, and reduce noise emissions including no construction restriction from dusk to dawn in consideration of the sensitivity of state park campground users and/or nearby residents.