

Appendix E

Environmental Commitments

Environmental Commitments

The following describes the environmental commitments that Reclamation will include in the Record of Decision if the Action Alternative is implemented. Environmental commitments include any mitigation measures identified for the resource components evaluated in chapter 4, as well as commitments made in response to the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act Report recommendations. However, the preferred alternative identified in this document is the No Action Alternative and these environmental commitments would not be necessary or implemented if the No Action Alternative is selected for implementation.

Recreation

Extending boat launches, modifying mooring docks, and dredging deeper channels would improve watercraft access at lower water levels. Funds would be provided to ensure that usable boat ramps, courtesy docks, and swimming areas still exist on both the north and south ends of Banks Lake so that public access will be maintained to the lake for recreational purposes.

Historic Resources

Historic resources that are eligible for the National Register must be managed, and they are eligible for the register until they are determined ineligible. Of concern, however, is that none of the identified properties have yet been formally evaluated for the National Register. This, in itself, is a large task, and it is reasonable to assume that a majority of the known historic resources would be determined ineligible. Nevertheless, an unknown number would be eligible, and management treatments for them present yet another large task. Some of these treatments may involve data recovery, some may safely be left alone, and others may require conservation measures to prevent damage from natural forces.

If the Action Alternative is selected, Reclamation will conduct archeological surveys of the lands exposed by the additional 5-foot drawdown and would complete test excavations to determine site eligibility. In consultation with SHPO and the tribes, Reclamation would define treatments to protect or mitigate impacts to the most significant historic properties.

Traditional Cultural Properties

Management of traditional cultural properties is a relatively new component of historic preservation and few protocols exist to protect them without a Federal action, as well as provide mitigation in the face of an agency action. In a landscape, such as Banks Lake, where the native cultures are strongly associated, non-material values, such as traditional cultural properties, are difficult to quantify and protect. Evaluation of three known TCP sites within the drawdown area elevation of 1570 to 1565 feet will occur.

Reclamation will consult with tribes to further define actions that might reduce or avoid impacts to National Register eligible TCPs. To the extent consistent with agency authority and multiple use project purposes, Reclamation will implement actions to avoid or reduce impacts.

Coordination Act Report Recommendations

In accordance with the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (48 Stat. 401, as amended, 16 USC 661 et seq.), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) provided a final Coordination Act Report documenting wildlife resources, habitat, and management concerns within the drawdown study area (Service, 2002) to assist in developing this document. The final Coordination Act Report is attached as appendix A.

If the Action Alternative is implemented, Reclamation will implement the following recommendations contained in the Coordination Act Report:

- Some mitigation actions for various adverse impacts (existing and potential future impacts) could include the establishment of native riparian vegetation in various areas of the drawdown zone, such as native bunchgrasses and forbs in shrub-steppe and riparian vegetation along the shorelines. The limited time frame of this drawdown may limit the logistical feasibility of this mitigation.
- If the 10-foot drawdown is implemented, Reclamation should ensure timely refill of Banks Lake up to 1565 feet by early September to ensure operation of net-pens.
- Reclamation shall work collaboratively with the WDFW and the Service to develop studies that would examine the effects or lack of effects of the proposed drawdown on rearing fish species in Banks Lake.
- The Service recommends Reclamation develop a short-term plan that would address potential modifications of current boat ramp and moorage facilities in order to facilitate summer use activities.
- Reclamation should ensure that a complement of riparian vegetation be maintained along the Banks Lake drawdown zone and that conditions should be sufficient to

provide for short-term input of nutrients into the water column as Banks Lake approaches its refill goal.

- A study to determine the reproductive success of western grebes in the study area should be initiated to help determine the level of management that should be applied to protect these birds in light of the proposed drawdown.
- Hatchery compensation via the WDFW is an option that Reclamation should pursue if lack of recruitment for certain fish populations is linked to the proposed drawdown.
- Protection of habitat, such as shrub-steppe, from fire is important, in this and region because it does not recover quickly from fire. Attempts should be made to ensure shoreline access to water resources in the event of uncontrolled wildfire in these designated shrub-steppe areas.
- Updating the GIS [geographic information system] work that was done at Banks Lake by Reclamation would be valuable. Aside from changes that will occur over time, this would allow some of the errors the Service identified in its 1998 Planning Aid Memorandum (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 1998) to be corrected and a more accurate vegetation map to be generated to determine potential wetland impacts linked to the drawdown and concurrent management actions.
- Reclamation should initiate studies to examine the potential effects of the drawdown on wildlife species.