

Banks Lake Drawdown

Final Environmental Impact Statement



**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation
Pacific Northwest Region
Boise, Idaho**

**Upper Columbia Area Office
Ephrata Field Office
Ephrata, Washington**

May 2004



MISSION STATEMENTS

The mission of the Department of the Interior is to protect and provide access to our Nation's natural and cultural heritage and honor our trust responsibilities to Indian tribes and our commitments to island communities.



The mission of the Bureau of Reclamation is to manage, develop, and protect water and related resources in an environmentally and economically sound manner in the interest of the American public.

Banks Lake Drawdown
Final Environmental Impact Statement
Columbia Basin Project, Washington

Comments and Responses

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Comments and Responses

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) was filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on January 6, 2003. A Notice of Availability and Public Hearings appeared in the *Federal Register* January 9, 2003. A news release announcing availability of the DEIS and dates, times, and locations of public hearings was sent to area media. Comments were scheduled to be received for 60 days until March 10, 2003.

Approximately 375 copies of the Draft EIS were distributed to Federal, State, and local agencies, native American tribes, irrigation districts, and interested members of organizations and the general public. The original 60-day comment period was extended 30 days from March 10 to April 11, 2003, at the request of the East Columbia Basin Irrigation District. Notice of the comment period extension was published in the *Federal Register* on March 17, 2003. A letter announcing the extension was mailed on March 4, 2003, to everyone who was sent a copy of the Draft EIS. A news release announcing the extension of the comment period was sent to area media. A total of 141 comment documents were received during the 90-day public review period January 6, 2003, to April 11, 2003. These documents and Reclamation's responses to the comments are included in this document (Comments and Responses).

A formal public hearing was conducted on February 11, 2003, in Coulee City, Washington, and on February 12, 2003, in Moses Lake, Washington. Eleven speakers gave formal oral testimony at the first public hearing, and three gave testimony at the second public hearing. Twenty-five entities and individuals provided written public hearing comments that are included in the hearing record. The public hearing testimony and written public hearing comments have been summarized and included in this document and in chapter 5, Consultation and Coordination. The public hearing record is available for public review at Reclamation's Upper Columbia Area Office in Yakima, Washington; in the Ephrata Field Office in Ephrata, Washington; and in the Pacific Northwest Regional Office in Boise, Idaho.

In addition, two private groups placed advertisements and comment forms in local newspapers, requesting comments be provided to Reclamation. Local private petitions were also distributed for signature stating opposition to the drawdown. About 275 signatures were affixed to the petitions.

The comment documents are presented in the order shown in the distribution list and in the table beginning on page 5. The responses follow the comment documents. The first page of each comment document and its response is identified in the table.

Many comments are repeated in several of the documents received. When a comment has already received a response, the reader is referred to the previous response. To aid the reader in finding these responses, the first page of the response is identified in the table. Responses begin on page 569.

Commenters are from the state of Washington unless otherwise indicated.

Public Hearing Comments

List of those providing public hearing testimony and written public hearing comments follow:

Herbert Adler, Moses Lake
Dale Anderson, Coulee City
Keith Bell, Ephrata
Glen C Bellah, Soap Lake
Douglas W. Brashear, Stratford
Cash Hardware, Daryl Parsons, Coulee City
Jennifer Clouter, Coulee City
Coulee City Chamber of Commerce, Paul Charlton, Coulee City
Coulee City Mayor, Otto Jensen, Coulee City
Coulee-Hartline School District Supt, Darrell Olson, Coulee City
Coulee Playland, Electric City, Hal Rauch, Grand Coulee
Clay Crook, Moses Lake
Karen Ann Crook, Moses Lake
John R. Dick, Othello
Dale Durbin, Moses Lake
East Columbia Basin Irrigation District, Dick Erickson, Othello
Sam Engelhardt, Moses Lake
Grant County Commissioner, District 1, Tim Snead, Ephrata
Grant County Commissioner, District 2, LeRoy Allison, Ephrata
Rick Heiberg, Coulee City
David D. Hopkins, Moses Lake
Craig Janett, Royal City
Jet Farms, Inc., Royal City
Dan Martell, Ephrata
Diana and Gerry McFaul, Moses Lake
Bert Moon, Wilber
Paul and Ann Nichols, Coulee City
Prior Farms, Arthur Prior, Warden
Quincy Columbia Basin Irrigation District, Keith Franklin, Quincy

Jim Randall, Coulee City
Clarence and Phyllis Rice, Coulee City
Murray Rushton, Coulee City
Alene Schwab, Stratford
Kelly Shinn, Moses Lake
Sun Banks Resort, George Hitzler, Electric City
Darrell Van Dyke, Quincy
Washington Farmers Union, Jim Davis, Coulee City,
also representing Douglas County PUD Comm.
Wes and Verna Whitlinger, Coulee City
Byrdeen Worley, Moses Lake

The public hearing testimony and written public hearing comments are summarized below:

Economic impact—Economic impact to the local community “is not negligible.” Impacts will occur not only to the individual businesses and indirect sales when tourists stay away, but also to the revenue for community services and the local school system. Tourism keeps the communities near Banks Lake alive in the summer.

Economic impact to hydropower—Net reductions in hydropower generation at Grand Coulee and at Coulee City as a result of the drawdown could be significant and could be as much as \$1.5 million annually.

Recreation—Recreation access would be devastated. All boat launches in Banks Lake would be useless except for two; swimming and fishing access would be cut off or very limited.

Flow augmentation—The National Marine Fisheries Service says the Banks Lake drawdown has uncertainty surrounding the success of flow augmentation for fish survival. Adequate justification that the drawdown would benefit the endangered species in the lower portion of the Columbia River has not been provided.

Salmon value—The alternative appears to be another example of sacrificing a rural community for the endangered species. The salmon runs over the past couple of years have been at record levels.

Irrigated agriculture—Farmers everywhere are concerned with some of the heavy-handed actions of NOAA Fisheries and irrigation curtailments in other areas. The reliability of our water supply is our primary concern.

Visual quality—The last drawdown caused fish to die in muddy ponds, exposed mud flats, muddy water halfway across the lake, and huge dust storms as mud

flats dried, as well as a 2,500 acre “bathtub ring” around the lake. We do not wish this to happen yearly.

Health and safety—A lake drawdown would create an odor problem as well as add to the mosquito population and become a breeding ground for mosquitoes that could harbor the West Nile Virus.

Health and safety, lake navigation—If you could actually get your boat into the water, navigation on the lake would be unsafe for both property and people because of exposed rocks and tree snags.

Vegetation—Any significant change in the lake elevation would adversely affect groundwater levels during the growing season. Lower groundwater levels, in turn, has a potential to adversely affect the vegetation communities, including marshy areas around the edge of the lake, which now exhibit an abundance of birds and other animals.

Social environment—The National Environmental Policy Act not only requires the Federal Government to consider the impact of the actions on the environment but also to preserve culture, heritage, and customs. This action would negatively affect the customs and culture in the community. The drawdown would cause the community to lose the use of the lake, which would affect the quality of life.

Environmental justice—Environmental justice addresses the fair treatment of people of all races and incomes; no group of people should bear a disproportionate share of negative impacts from an environmental action. However, Grant County has 15 percent of the people who live below the poverty level compared with 10 percent for the State as a whole.

Alternatives and mitigation—The No Action Alternative still means that some water (5 feet of drawdown) could contribute to the flow and help with the salmon migration at McNary Dam. We’re not saying no water for mitigation, because that would happen. However, some oppose both the No Action and Action Alternatives.

State responsibility—State of Washington Salmon Recovery Act of 1998 says the State should “retain primary responsibility for managing the natural resources of the State....”

Cooperating agency—A request for cooperating agency status by Grant County had not been granted.

Procedural flaws —the 5-foot drawdown really is not the No Action Alternative; the Banks Lake operations before 2000 should be considered no action.

Written Comments

The following table provides the list of those commenting in distribution list order, with the page number of the comment document and the first page of the response shown in the table.

Number		Page	
FA	Federal Agencies—Regional or Local Levels	Letter	Response
FA 01	Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries (formerly National Marine Fisheries Service), Portland, Oregon	9	575
FA 02	Department of Energy, Bonneville Power Administration, Portland, Oregon	14	576
FA 03	Department of the Interior, U.S. Geological Survey, Reston, Virginia	18	577
FA 04	Environmental Protection Agency, Seattle	19	577
IT	Indian Tribes		
IT 01	The Confederated Tribes of The Colville Reservation, History/Archaeology Department, Nespelem	21	579
IT 02	Spokane Tribe of Indians, Spokane Tribal Natural Resources, Wellpinit	24	580
CO	Congress and Washington Legislature		
CO 01	Representative Doc Hastings, Washington DC	27	581
CO 02	Washington State Legislature, State Senator Joyce Mulliken, State Representatives Janea Holmquist and Bill Hinkle, Olympia Also received by fax.	29	582
SL	State and Local Government Agencies		
SL 01	Department of Ecology, Spokane	31	583
SL 02	Department of Natural Resources, Natural Heritage Program Olympia	37	586
SL 03	Washington State Potato Commission, Moses Lake Also received by email with summary of comments	38	586
SL 04	Ferry County Natural Resource Board, Republic, Also received by email	160	592
SL 05	Franklin County Commissioners, Sue Miller, Neva J. Corkrum, Frank H. Brock, Pasco, Washington	163	592
SL 06	Douglas County Public Utility District No. 1, East Wenatchee	167	593
SL 07	Grant County Board of County Commissioners, Ephrata	168	593
SL 08	Grant County Board of Health, Ephrata	283	596
SL 09	Grant County Port District No. 4, Coulee City	284	596
SL 10	Grant County Public Utility District No. 2, Ephrata	285	596
SL 11	South Banks Lake Mosquito Control District #3, Coulee City	287	596
SL 12	Warden, City of, Warden	288	596
SL 13	Warden, Port of, Warden	289	597

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ID 03	South Columbia Basin Irrigation District, Pasco	390	602
ID 04	Quincy-Columbia Basin Irrigation District, Quincy	393	602
ID 05	Quincy-Columbia Basin Irrigation District, Quincy	397	603
IO		Interested Organizations	
IO 01	Big Bend Development Council, Moses Lake	405	605
IO 02	Big Bend Development Council, Moses Lake	406	605
IO 03	Coulee City Chamber of Commerce, Coulee City	407	605
IO 04	Columbia Basin Development League, Royal City	410	606
IO 05	Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, Portland, Oregon; Also received by e-mail	412	606
IO 06	Grand Coulee Dam Area Chamber of Commerce, Grand Coulee	416	607
IO 07	Grand Coulee Project Hydroelectric Authority, Ephrata	418	607
IO 08	Grant County Economic Development Council, Moses Lake	426	607
IO 09	Grant County Tourism Commission, Ephrata	428	607
IO 10	Moses Lake Area Chamber of Commerce, Moses Lake	429	608
IO 11	Moses Lake Area Chamber of Commerce, Moses Lake	430	608
IO 12	Moses Lake Chamber of Commerce, Moses Lake	431	608
IO 13	Pacific Northwest Waterways Association, Portland, Oregon	432	608
IO 14	Quincy Valley Chamber of Commerce, Quincy	433	608
IO 15	Saint Andrews Grange, Coulee City	434	608
IO 16	Washington State B.A.S.S. Federation, Banks Lake Enhancement Program, Wilbur	435	608
IE		Interested Entities and Individuals	
IE 01	Maurice Anding, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho	439	611
IE 02	Denise Arango, Othello	440	611
IE 03	Leon and Janice Bafus, Lind	441	611
IE 04	Banks Lake Net and Charter, Coulee City	442	611
IE 05	Basic American Foods, Moses Lake	443	611
IE 06	Vera Bauman, Wilson Creek	445	611
IE 07	Roy and Laverna Bechtol, Coulee City	446	611
IE 08	Ken Benoschek, Soap Lake	447	611
IE 09	Claude E. Bjorson, Grand Coulee	448	611
IE 10	Muriel Bott, Pomeroy	449	611
IE 11	Terry Brewer, Soap Lake	450	612
IE 12	Mary Pat Brown, Coulee City	452	612
IE 13	Pat Burdick, Ephrata	453	612
IE 14	Anne Carter, Ephrata	454	612
IE 15	Wilbur Carter, Soap Lake	455	612
IE 16	Donald L. Center, Freda Center, Coulee City	456	612
IE 17	Central Bean Co., Inc., Quincy	457	612
IE 18	Tammi Chamberlain and Ted Ayers, Ephrata	458	612
IE 19	Arlene Coates, Coulee City	459	612
IE 20	Phil and Chris Copenhaver, Moses Lake	460	613
IE 21	Lee and Margaret Davis, Moses Lake	461	613

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IE 24	Ruth Dormaier, Moses Lake	464	613
IE 25	Lourence C. Dormaier, Moses Lake	465	613
IE 26	Brian S. Evans, Moses Lake	466	613
IE 27	Harold Evans, Coulee City	467	613
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IE 29	Eugene Fields, Electric City	481	614
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IE 34	Ken Furman, Coulee City	488	614
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IE 37	Dorothy Graff, Coulee City	492	614
IE 38	Maynard Hagen, Soap Lake	493	614
IE 39	Terry Hastings, Mattawa	494	614
IE 97	Christopher Hesse, Moses Lake	560	621
IE 40	Hendrix Farms, Moses Lake	495	615
IE 41	Ken Holm, Ephrata	496	615
IE 42	Carole Hopkins, Moses Lake	497	615
IE 43	Fred "Fritz" Howard, Soap Lake	498	615
IE 44	Jack Jenkins, Soap Lake	499	615
IE 45	Karen Jones, Spokane	500	615
IE 46	V. Joyce Jones, Coulee City	501	615
IE 47	Greg Kardong, Moses Lake	503	615
IE 48	Dolores Knopp, Coulee City	504	615
IE 49	L&G Christensen Farms, Inc., Othello	505	615
IE 50	Susan Lake, Ronan, Montana	506	616
IE 51	Lamb Weston, Inc., Tri-Cities	507	616
IE 52	Larry's Auto & Marine Supply, Coulee City	509	616
IE 53	Mark Larsen, Richland	510	616
IE 54	Kathy and Mark Lewis, Wenatchee	511	616
IE 55	Paul Lindholdt, Cheney	512	616
IE 56	Gary and Sharon Lobe, Lind	513	616
IE 57	H.E. McDonald, Coulee City	514	616
IE 58	Esther McM	516	616
IE 59	Dale and Cheryl Marohl, Coulee City	517	616
IE 60	Faye Maslen, Moses Lake	518	616
IE 61	Jim Mathews	519	616
IE 98	Brian Meiners, Moses Lake	561	621
IE 62	Jeanne Michel, Everett Michel, Othello	520	617
IE 63	Hubert P. Mills, Cheney	521	617
IE 64	Robert N. and Gudu Mosher, Ephrata	522	617
IE 65	Sherry L. Murray, Moses Lake	523	617
IE 66	Jean Nicholson, Grand Coulee area	524	617
IE 67	Brian O'Shea, Quincy	525	617
IE 68	Mike Palko, Tenino	526	617
IE 69	Gregory E. Parker, Coulee City	527	617

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IE 73	Prather's Welding & Fabrication, Inc., Coulee City	531	618
IE 74	Gene and Ruth Reynoldson, Coulee City	532	618
IE 75	M.P. Riley, Cedarburg, Wisconsin	533	618
IE 76	Rimrock Meadows, Ephrata	534	618
IE 77	Wesley J. Roberts, Coulee City	535	618
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IE 86	Sunbanks LTD, Bellevue	546	619
IE 87	Arnold J. Theisen, Irrigon, Oregon	550	619
IE 88	Adam Throneberry, Moses Lake	551	619
IE 89	John and Ruth Umberger, Methow	552	620
IE 90	Jim Vordahl, Coulee City	553	620
IE 91	Voss Farms	554	620
IE 99	Judith R. Warner, Benton City	562	621
IE 92	Rod Webster, Coulee City	555	620
IE 93	June M. West, Anacortes; Also received by email	556	620
IE 94	Don White, Coulee City	557	620
IE 95	David Windish	558	620
IE 96	Wayne Wollard, Monroe	559	620
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