

Congress and Washington Legislature — CO

CO Congress and Washington State Legislature

CO 01 01

The analysis of effects to listed threatened and endangered anadromous species is now addressed in the EIS by incorporating by reference the Biological Opinion 2000.

CO 01 02

The economic effects of the drawdown have been reevaluated using the data supplied by Grant County and other sources. One major consideration in developing the final estimate of economic effect is that impacts to recreation, which is a major economic factor in the Banks Lake area, would not be as severe as local interests anticipated.

Water-based recreation is one of the most sought after types of recreation in the United States, based on numerous studies about desired recreation facilities. As the water level drops and the esthetics change, the types of recreational use may change. However, the reservoir is still a desirable facility and access would be maintained through mitigation. The National Park Service made a similar determination in their Final General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement for FDR Lake National Recreation Area in January 1999.

Mitigation has been proposed to address the recreation impact by extending boat ramps and ensuring that certain recreation facilities function during times of low water. The short duration mud flat and occasional rock that a boat can hit are short-term impacts at many reservoirs during normal operations.

Because of these mitigation actions, recreation would not be severely affected at Banks Lake. Banks Lake would still have more than 20,000 surface acres of water for public use and working facilities, which includes access to the water that would enable the public to use the recreational resources in and around the reservoir.

The local economy at the north end of Banks Lake is based as much on the utility sector, including employment at Grand Coulee Dam and Powerplants, as it is on recreation. The utility portion of the economy is strong, would not be affected by drawdown, and is a year round source of economic strength. The impacts on the economy of the North Grant County area are further demonstrated by the fact that Banks Lake related recreation is a seasonal business, with most of its employees being only temporary hires. The loss of these positions would be less disruptive than the loss of year-round jobs.

An examination of U.S. Census Bureau employment data for the year 2000 shows that the economy in the North Grant County area accounted for only 5.4 percent of the total employment in the county. In addition, the local North Grant County economy is more diversified than commonly thought (see table 3-6 in the report).

These employment data indicate that recreation related industries, including the categories of Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodations, and Food Services account for only about 12.4 percent of the employment. Retail trade employs about 11.2 percent—some of which may be recreation related. Other non-recreation sectors account for more than three-fourths of the jobs in North Grant County. Employment in recreational related industries in the North Grant County area is, on a percentage basis, somewhat more important in this area than it is for Grant County as a whole (12.4 percent verses 6.9 percent).

CO 02 01

The analysis included in the EIS indicates that neither alternative would affect water supply delivery on the Columbia Basin Project for agricultural users. Reclamation has retained flexibility in management. Refer to the section on Alternatives Considered in Detail.

CO 02 02

See response to CO 01 02.

CO 02 03

See response to CO 01 02.

CO 02 04

While Reclamation will attempt to comply with recommendations by Washington State and local governmental entities, ultimate responsibility for compliance with Federal Law, including the Endangered Species Act and contractual obligations related to the Columbia Basin Project, resides with Reclamation. Reclamation administers the CBP in compliance with state law but must also comply with the Endangered Species Act and the Biological Opinion issued by NOAA Fisheries. If the State of Washington does issue an opinion on flows that can be utilized by Reclamation in the Record of Decision for this EIS, that information will be considered.

State and Local Government Agencies — SL