

2-12-01

ISRP

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Responses to ISRP Comments on the HP Projects

Project Number: 23062

Title: Construct approved fish screening systems on unscreened irrigation diversions.

Sponsor: Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

ISRP Comments:

- Little biological justification.

Inventories, trap box records and spawning ground counts from the early 1950's clearly show the listed Snake River Chinook (1992) and Steelhead (1996) in large numbers in the Grand Ronde River Watershed. Dwindling numbers in this watershed has continued even with ESA listings. Recently the USFWS listed the Bull Trout (1998) as threatened as well. Approved fish screening devices constructed above and below these sites has revealed the above listed species in temporarily installed trap boxes as recently as November 2000. Bull Trout have not been identified in the Ladd Creek projects.

With the increased emphasis on supplementation and the extensive water conservation and habitat projects completed and in progress in the Bear Creek drainage these projects would add to the over all protection of the species and dove tail with the Bear Creek drainage projects. These projects have been funded and supported by federal, state and tribal entities.

The four Ladd Creek Projects are similar to the Bear Creek projects in that many habitat and water conservation projects have been completed. These sites support Steelhead spawning and rearing activities and Chinook rearing only. Past records indicate the timing of migration occurs simultaneously with early water withdrawal at these unscreened sites for these at risk species.

Inadequate description of locations of projects.

All projects are located in the Grand Ronde Watershed of Northeastern Oregon. The four Ladd Creek projects are located four miles southeast of LaGrande, Or. The two Bear Creek project are located two miles south of Wallowa, Or. There are numerous screens in operation located above and below each of these sites that are presently providing protection for these at risk stocks.

- What are the intended benefits?

The intended benefits for these projects is to **prevent and reduce mortality** of the Snake River Chinook, Steelhead and Bull Trout. The completed screen construction and installation will prevent all species of fish from being diverted into and down the diversions, allowing water and fish to be by-passed back to the mainstem by way of a smooth coated pipe. The diversion screens provides a first line of defense for these species as sac fry and continues to provide protection through their life cycle by allowing these species to continue migration unharmed.

- What are the status of the stocks?

The Snake River Chinook (spring/fall) summer run Steelhead and Bull Trout are listed as threatened.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond with additional information.