

Comment Submission 20



REPLY TO ATTENTION OF

Real Estate Division

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
WALLA WALLA DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
201 NORTH THIRD AVENUE
WALLA WALLA, WASHINGTON 99362-1876

April 9, 2002

RECEIVED

APR 12 2002

Allen Fiksdal, Manager
Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council
P.O. Box 43172
Olympia, Washington 98504-3172

ENERGY FACILITY SITE
EVALUATION COUNCIL

Dear Mr. Fiksdal:

The offices of the Walla Walla District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have completed review of the Wallula Power Project and Wallula – McNary Transmission Line Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement, DOE/EIS-0330. We have the following comments on the document:

a. There appears to be confusion as to the ownership of some of the involved property. An illustration is the reference on page 3.11-8 to the *Visual Assessment Area 2: McNary State Wildlife Recreation Area*. The area referenced on that page and illustrated in Figure 3.11-13 is property under the ownership of the Department of the Army, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), Walla Walla District. The Corps property in that location is designated as the Wallula Habitat Management Unit (Wallula HMU). The Wallula HMU is currently being managed, operated and maintained by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under a cooperative agreement with the Corps.

20-1

b. In preliminary discussions several months ago with the Bonneville Power Administration staff working the project, we expressed several concerns regarding the addition of a second power line adjacent to the existing one at the Walla Walla River crossing in the Wallula HMU:

1. The additional power line would effectively reduce the land area within the HMU that is available for public recreational hunting.

20-2

2. The area surrounding the power line corridor is home to large flocks of waterfowl. We believe that the additional power line will adversely disrupt the flight patterns of the waterfowl and the frequency of injurious bird strikes to all species will increase if the power line is located in the HMU. A note regarding "bird diverters" was mentioned on page 3.6-14 but the attending reference to Appendix A gave no information.

20-3

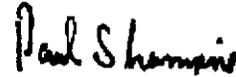
c. The need for mitigation for the losses in b.1. and b.2. was a topic in our preliminary discussions with BPA staff. However, we note that mitigation has not been addressed in the draft EIS.

20-4



The Walla Walla District suggests that the omissions in the EIS warrant additional discussion regarding the anticipated losses and mitigation needs. We would like to meet with the authors of the document to discuss these issues further. Our point of contact for wildlife issues is Mr. Al Sutlick who can be reached at 509-527-7136 or by email at Albert.F.Sutlick@usace.army.mil. Mr. Sutlick can also make arrangements for the additional meeting we desire. If you have other questions, please contact me at 509-527-7324 or by email at Paul.S.Shampine@usace.army.mil.

Sincerely,



Paul Shampine
Real Estate Specialist

**Responses to Comment Submission 20,
Letter from Paul Shampine, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Walla Walla District**

- 20-1. References to the “McNary State Wildlife Recreation Area” have been changed to the “Walla Walla Habitat Management Unit (HMU)” as described in Section 3.11, Chapter 3 of this Final EIS.
- 20-2. The additional transmission line would be located west of the existing transmission line. The area predominantly used for hunting is east of the existing transmission line. Hunters already must limit shooting in a westerly direction from that area, and the addition of the new line will not change the existing condition. The area west of the existing line is a sanctuary where hunting is not allowed. The new line would not displace any habitat that is used by the waterfowl or hunters.
- 20-3. Please see responses to comments 20-4 and 25-32.
- 20-4. Mitigation for bird losses has been addressed. Bird diverters would be installed on the ground wires of the new line where it crosses the Habitat Management Unit. The new line would be designed so that the conductors would parallel the existing line at a similar height, thus reducing the vertical width of the barrier to birds that would be crossing the area. Locating the new line next to an existing line is also a proven strategy for reduction of bird strikes (APLIC 1994).

In addition, Bonneville is negotiating with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on potential further mitigation for the cumulative impact of several generation and transmission line projects on bird and habitat losses.