WAC 197-11-960 Environmental checklist.

ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

Purpose of checklist:

The State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), chapter 43.21C RCW, requires all governmental agencies to consider the environmental impacts of a proposal before making decisions. An environmental impact statement (EIS) must be prepared for all proposals with probable significant adverse impacts on the quality of the environment. The purpose of this checklist is to provide information to help you and the agency identify impacts from your proposal (and to reduce or avoid impacts from the proposal, if it can be done) and to help the agency decide whether an EIS is required.

Instructions for applicants:

This environmental checklist asks you to describe some basic information about your proposal. Governmental agencies use this checklist to determine whether the environmental impacts of your proposal are significant, requiring preparation of an EIS. Answer the questions briefly, with the most precise information known, or give the best description you can.

You must answer each question accurately and carefully, to the best of your knowledge. In most cases, you should be able to answer the questions from your own observations or project plans without the need to hire experts. If you really do not know the answer, or if a question does not apply to your proposal, write "do not know" or "does not apply." Complete answers to the questions now may avoid unnecessary delays later.

Some questions ask about governmental regulations, such as zoning, shoreline, and landmark designations. Answer these questions if you can. If you have problems, the governmental agencies can assist you.

The checklist questions apply to all parts of your proposal, even if you plan to do them over a period of time or on different parcels of land. Attach any additional information that will help describe your proposal or its environmental effects. The agency to which you submit this checklist may ask you to explain your answers or provide additional information reasonably related to determining if there may be significant adverse impact.

Use of checklist for nonproject proposals:

Complete this checklist for nonproject proposals, even though questions may be answered "does not apply." IN ADDITION, complete the SUPPLEMENTAL SHEET FOR NONPROJECT ACTIONS (part D).

For nonproject actions, the references in the checklist to the words "project," "applicant," and "property or site" should be read as "proposal," "proposer," and "affected geographic area," respectively.

A. BACKGROUND

1. Name of proposed project, if applicable:

Reducing the Impact on At-risk Salmon and Steelhead by California Sea Lions in the Area Downstream of Bonneville Dam on the Columbia River, Oregon and Washington.

2. Name of applicant:

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)

3. Address and phone number of applicant and contact person:

Guy Norman, Regional Director, Region 5

WDFW

2018 Grand Boulevard

Vancouver, WA 98661

(360) 696-6211

4. Date checklist prepared:

March 18, 2008

5. Agency requesting checklist:

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

6. Proposed timing or schedule (including phasing, if applicable):

Starting in 2008, this is a multi-year effort that will include a tiered approach to project implementation efforts, beginning with trapping and relocation of sea lions, and moving to trapping and euthanizing or shooting as needed. We anticipate periodically evaluating the effectiveness of the effort, which will specify the timing of further implementation.

7. Do you have any plans for future additions, expansion, or further activity related to or connected with this proposal? If yes, explain.

Evaluating this project, as mentioned above, will affect future activity, expansion, or reduction of the proposed project. We will be adaptively managing based on the outcomes of the project as they occur with regard to expanding or reducing the amount of time and effort needed to implement the project.

8. List any environmental information you know about that has been prepared, or will be prepared, directly related to this proposal.

Under provisions of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), NOAA Fisheries Service received a formal request in late 2006 from Washington, Oregon, and Idaho for lethal take of California Sea Lions that are predating on at-risk federally protected salmon and steelhead according to Section 120 of the MMPA. As one important step in considering that request and as a requirement of the MMPA, an 18-member task force was appointed to consider the states' application and make recommendations. The task force, which held three public meetings in Portland in September and October, submitted recommendations to NOAA Fisheries Service on November 5, 2007. All except one of the task force members recommended that NOAA approve the states' request for authority to lethally remove individually identifiable predatory sea lions below Bonneville Dam. The task force considered non-lethal alternatives, as required by the law, but did not suggest any particular techniques be used as a prerequisite for lethal removal.

The Task Force completed final report can be viewed at: http://www.nwr.noaa.gov/Marine-Mammals/Seals-and-Sea-Lions/Sec-120-TF-Rpt.cfm

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Northwest Region prepared an environmental assessment in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) considering the environmental consequences of alternative actions to reduce seal and sea lion (pinniped) predation on salmon and steelhead (salmonids) listed as threatened and endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) below the Bonneville Dam. The analysis was undertaken to inform decisions concerning actions NMFS may take to reduce pinniped predation below Bonneville Dam, specifically approval or disapproval of a request by Washington, Oregon, and Idaho for lethal take of California Sea Lions by intentional means according to Section 120 of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA).

The final EA can be viewed at: http://www.nwr.noaa.gov/Marine-Mammals/Seals-and-Sea-Lions/Sec-120-Authority.cfm

NMFS issued their finding of no significant impact (FONSI) and partial approval of the states' application on March 18, 2008. The letters of authorization were issued to the states as well, specifying the authority to implement Alternative 3 as outlined in the final EA. WDFW is adopting the final EA as supporting documentation for the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) process

9. Do you know whether applications are pending for governmental approvals of other proposals directly affecting the property covered by your proposal? If yes, explain.

No.

10. List any government approvals or permits that will be needed for your proposal, if known.

Approval (March 18, 2008) from NMFS for implementation of authority to remove California sea lions under Section 120 of the MMPA. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) has granted permission to conduct activities related to this authority on ACOE property.

11. Give brief, complete description of your proposal, including the proposed uses and the size of the project and site. There are several questions later in this checklist that ask you to describe certain aspects of your proposal. You do not need to repeat those answers on this page. (Lead agencies may modify this form to include additional specific information on project description.)

There has been an increasing level of California sea lion predation on federally listed threatened and endangered salmon and steelhead species at the Bonneville Dam in the Columbia River Basin. This predation has a significant negative effect on salmon recovery as it is a new, growing, and unmanaged source of mortality, while other sources of on-river mortality are actively managed and are stable or decreasing (e.g., through harvest reductions, fish passage and habitat improvements, and hatchery reform,); and the hydro-modification of the river has altered the natural predator-prey relationship to artificially favor predatory California Sea Lions.

In an effort to reduce or minimize the effect of predation, non-lethal activities have been implemented from and below the Bonneville Dam over the past 3-5 years (e.g., hazing, sea lion exclusion devices, etc.). These efforts have not reduced the predation by California sea lions. Therefore, Oregon, Washington, and Idhao (states) applied for authority to remove sea lions under section 120 of the MMPA. A Task Force was convened to assess and provide recommendations to NOAA regarding the states' application. Following Task Force recommendations, NMFS wrote an Environmental Assessment to consider the environmental consequences of alternative actions to reduce seal and sea lion (pinniped) predation on salmon and steelhead (salmonids) listed as threatened and endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) below the Bonneville Dam. With this authority, the states would implement a removal plan as identified and described as Alternative 3 by NMFS in the Environmental Assessment: *Lethal Removal of Individually Identifiable Predatory California Sea Lions after Active Non-lethal Deterrence.* This alternative would be implemented while continuing to pursue other non-lethal technologies and techniques to address this impact. As described, plan implementation would be in conjunction with the continuation of non-lethal hazing activities pre-removal and during removal activities. The removal would abide by and meet the conditions as described in the authorizing letter from NOAA to the WDFW Director and as described in the NMFS EA Alternative 3. Implementation of these conditions would follow a tiered approach under supervision of an Animal Care Committee to ensure the humane handling of sea lions at all times:

a) Trap and relocate to NOAA approved zoos/aquariums for permanent captive display: The states will use traps that are currently used for research purposes to catch, mark, measure, and release sea lions. As a first approach, individually identifiable predatory sea lions will be captured and transferred to NOAA approved permanent captive facilities throughout the United States.

b) Trap and euthanize: Once all approved captive facility options have been filled, individually identifiable predatory sea lions will be captured and euthanized by lethal injection.

c) Free ranging removal: If individually identifiable predatory sea lions do not haul out on the traps, the last approach will be to lethally remove free ranging individually identifiable predatory sea lions by gunshot. All reasonable efforts would be made to retrieve carcasses that have been shot.

The number of animals removed would not exceed 1% of the potential biological removal or the number necessary to achieve an observed average percent predation rate of 1% of the adult salmonids tallied by fish counters over 3 years at Bonneville Dam, whichever is lower. Removal of animals will occur in the boat restricted zone of the Bonneville Dam hauled out below the dam, in the water adjacent to the shore or dam, or from floating traps. Sea lion carcasses will be

disposed of in accordance with state and local laws and ordinances or transferred for use in scientific research or educational purposes.

All safety and security elements will be implemented by WDFW Law Enforcement and Oregon State Police. This removal effort will continually be monitored to evaluate the impacts of predation, the effectiveness of non-lethal deterrence, and the effectiveness of permanent removal of individually identifiable predatory seas lions as a method to reduce adult salmonid mortality.

To view the NMFS final Environmental Assessment for further details on the states proposal, please refer to: http://www.nwr.noaa.gov/Marine-Mammals/Seals-and-Sea-Lions/Sec-120-Authority.cfm

12. Location of the proposal. Give sufficient information for a person to understand the precise location of your proposed project, including a street address, if any, and section, township, and range, if known. If a proposal would occur over a range of area, provide the range or boundaries of the site(s). Provide a legal description, site plan, vicinity map, and topographic map, if reasonably available. While you should submit any plans required by the agency, you are not required to duplicate maps or detailed plans submitted with any permit applications related to this checklist.

The site for this proposal is in the vicinity of the Bonneville Dam facilities located on the Columbia River at river mile 146, approximately 42 highway miles east of Portland, Oregon. According to WAC 173-18-340: Skamania Country the legal description for Bonneville Dam is: from an approximate point (NW1/4 of Sec. 16, T2N, R7E) downstream through Greenleaf Slough to mouth at Hamilton Creek (Sec. 20, same township). The Oregon-Washington state boundary lies along the main Columbia River Channel, dividing the project area between the two states. The Bonneville Lock and Dam facility includes two navigation locks, two powerhouses, a spillway, fish passage facilities, a fish hatchery, shore facilities, and two visitor complexes administered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The proposed action would occur in the section of the Columbia River starting at navigation marker 85 (approximately river mile 140) continuing upstream to the immediate vicinity of the tailrace and dam. See site map in Appendix A.

TO BE COMPLETED BY APPLICANT

EVALUATION FOR AGENCY USE ONLY

B. ENVIRONMENTAL ELEMENTS

1. Earth

a. **General description of the site (circle one):** Flat, rolling, hilly, steep slopes, mountainous, (other). .Man-made facility mainly of concrete structures in running river waters.

b. **What is the steepest slope on the site (approximate percent slope)?**

Does not apply.

c. **What general types of soils are found on the site (for example, clay, sand, gravel, peat, muck)? If you know the classification of agricultural soils, specify them and note any prime farmland.**

The project area is the water in the Columbia River, Bonneville Dam project of concrete structures, and riverbank near the Bonneville project, which consists of large stabilizing rock that was placed by ACOE as part of the Bonneville project development.

d. Are there surface indications or history of unstable soils in the immediate vicinity? If so, describe.

Does not apply.

e. Describe the purpose, type, and approximate quantities of any filling or grading proposed. Indicate source of fill.

Does not apply.

f. Could erosion occur as a result of clearing, construction, or use? If so, generally describe.

Does not apply.

g. About what percent of the site will be covered with impervious surfaces after project construction (for example, asphalt or buildings)?

Does not apply.

h. Proposed measures to reduce or control erosion, or other impacts to the earth, if any:

Does not apply.

2. Air

a. What types of emissions to the air would result from the proposal (i.e., dust, automobile, odors, industrial wood smoke) during construction and when the project is completed? If any, generally describe and give approximate quantities if known.

Staff will access the Bonneville Dam facilities to implement the sea lion removal effort using vehicles and motorized boats, which may have a minimal increase in emissions.

b. Are there any off-site sources of emissions or odor that may affect your proposal? If so, generally describe.

Does not apply.

c. Proposed measures to reduce or control emissions or other impacts to air, if any:

Does not apply.

3. Water

a. Surface:

1) Is there any surface water body on or in the immediate vicinity of the site (including year-round and seasonal streams, saltwater, lakes, ponds, wetlands)? If yes, describe type and provide names. If appropriate, state what stream or river it flows into.

The proposed project is occurring on the Columbia River, which is perennial.

2) Will the project require any work over, in, or adjacent to (within 200 feet) the described waters? If yes, please describe and attach available plans.

The project will occur on the Columbia River waters adjacent to and below the Bonneville Dam. Work will occur on the water and on the dam concrete structures.

3) Estimate the amount of fill and dredge material that would be placed in or removed from surface water or wetlands and indicate the area of the site that would be affected. Indicate the source of fill material.

Does not apply.

4) Will the proposal require surface water withdrawals or diversions? Give general description, purpose, and approximate quantities if known.

No.

5) Does the proposal lie within a 100-year floodplain? If so, note location on the site plan.

Yes, see Appendix A – Site Map.

6) Does the proposal involve any discharges of waste materials to surface waters? If so, describe the type of waste and anticipated volume of discharge.

On a rare occasion when in the third tier of our approach, a gunshot projectile, which will not contain lead, may go in the water.

b. Ground:

1) Will ground water be withdrawn, or will water be discharged to ground water? Give general description, purpose, and approximate quantities if known.

Does not apply.

2) Describe waste material that will be discharged into the ground from septic tanks or other sources, if any (for example: Domestic sewage; industrial, containing the following chemicals. . . ; agricultural; etc.). Describe the general size of the system, the number of such systems, the number of houses to be served (if applicable), or the number of animals or humans the system(s) are expected to serve.

Does not apply.

c. Water runoff (including stormwater):

1) Describe the source of runoff (including storm water) and method of collection and disposal, if any (include quantities, if known). Where will this water flow? Will this water flow into other waters? If so, describe.

Does not apply.

2) Could waste materials enter ground or surface waters? If so, generally describe.

Does not apply.

d. Proposed measures to reduce or control surface, ground, and runoff water impacts, if any:

Does not apply.

4. Plants

a. Check or circle types of vegetation found on the site:

_____ deciduous tree: alder, maple, aspen, other

_____ evergreen tree: fir, cedar, pine, other

__X__ shrubs – (on and around concrete dam structures)

__X__ grass– (on and around concrete dam structures)

_____ pasture

_____ crop or grain

_____ wet soil plants: cattail, buttercup, bullrush, skunk cabbage, other

_____ water plants: water lily, eelgrass, milfoil, other

_____ other types of vegetation

b. What kind and amount of vegetation will be removed or altered?

Does not apply.

c. List threatened or endangered species known to be on or near the site.

Does not apply.

d. Proposed landscaping, use of native plants, or other measures to preserve or enhance vegetation on the site, if any:

Does not apply.

5. Animals

a. Circle any birds and animals which have been observed on or near the site or are known to be on or near the site:

birds: hawk, heron, eagle, songbirds, other:
mammals: deer, bear, elk, beaver, other:
fish: bass, salmon, trout, herring, shellfish, other:

b. List any threatened or endangered species known to be on or near the site.

Upper Columbia River Spring-run Chinook

Snake River Spring/Summer-run Chinook

Snake River Basin Steelhead

Middle Columbia River Steelhead

Lower Columbia River Steelhead

Steller Sea Lions

c. Is the site part of a migration route? If so, explain.

Yes, salmon and steelhead spring runs migrate up the Columbia River.

d. Proposed measures to preserve or enhance wildlife, if any:

Does not apply.

6. Energy and natural resources

a. What kinds of energy (electric, natural gas, oil, wood stove, solar) will be used to meet the completed project's energy needs? Describe whether it will be used for heating, manufacturing, etc.

Vehicles and motorized boats used to conduct work are the only energy related uses. The trapping and handling of animals will mostly be done manually.

b. Would your project affect the potential use of solar energy by adjacent properties? If so, generally describe.

Does not apply.

c. What kinds of energy conservation features are included in the plans of this proposal? List other proposed measures to reduce or control energy impacts, if any:

Does not apply.

7. Environmental health

a. Are there any environmental health hazards, including exposure to toxic chemicals, risk of fire and explosion, spill, or hazardous waste, that could occur as a result of this proposal? If so, describe.

Under supervision of the Animal Care Committee, and in the second tier of our approach, lethal injections would be administered to euthanize individually identifiable predatory sea lions. In the third tier to our approach, gunshots would be used in a safe manner to lethally remove individually identifiable predatory sea lions.

1) Describe special emergency services that might be required.

A safety and security plan will be in place provided by WDFW Law Enforcement and Oregon Sate Police. Need for paramedic first aid or hospitalization if an accident occurred. ACOE has an on-site emergency response plan in place at Bonneville Dam as well.

2) Proposed measures to reduce or control environmental health hazards, if any:

Does not apply.

b. Noise

1) What types of noise exist in the area which may affect your project (for example: traffic, equipment, operation, other)?

Does not apply.

2) What types and levels of noise would be created by or associated with the project on a short-term or a long-term basis (for example: traffic, construction, operation, other)? Indicate what hours noise would come from the site.

A short-term basis of gunshot noise could be created during such time the third tier of our approach is used. Noise would be generated during daylight hours with the specific hours that this would occur fluctuating depending on the times at which individually identifiable predatory sea lions are visible.

3) Proposed measures to reduce or control noise impacts, if any:

Does not apply.

8. Land and shoreline use

a. What is the current use of the site and adjacent properties?

The project will occur within the site of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Bonneville Dam lock and dam facility on the Columbia River. The Oregon-Washington state boundary lies along the main Columbia River Channel, dividing the project area between the two states.

b. Has the site been used for agriculture? If so, describe.

No.

c. Describe any structures on the site.

The concrete structures of the Bonneville Lock and Dam facility, which includes two navigation locks, two powerhouses, a spillway, fish passage facilities, a fish hatchery, shore facilities, and two visitor complexes administered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

d. Will any structures be demolished? If so, what?

No.

e. What is the current zoning classification of the site?

The site is a federal government property hydro project.

f. What is the current comprehensive plan designation of the site?

Hydro project-power, flood control, and navigation

g. If applicable, what is the current shoreline master program designation of the site?

Does not apply.

h. Has any part of the site been classified as an "environmentally sensitive" area? If so, specify.

No.

i. Approximately how many people would reside or work in the completed project?

Does not apply.

j. Approximately how many people would the completed project displace?

Does not apply.

k. Proposed measures to avoid or reduce displacement impacts, if any:

Does not apply.

l. Proposed measures to ensure the proposal is compatible with existing and projected land uses and plans, if any:

Both Oregon and Washington State Fish and Wildlife agency staff have been in constant communication with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers with regard to the development and implementation of this proposed project and all activities have been deemed compatible with existing operations at the Bonneville Dam.

9. Housing

a. Approximately how many units would be provided, if any? Indicate whether high, middle, or low-income housing.

Does not apply.

b. Approximately how many units, if any, would be eliminated? Indicate whether high, middle, or low-income housing.

Does not apply.

c. Proposed measures to reduce or control housing impacts, if any:

Does not apply.

10. Aesthetics

a. What is the tallest height of any proposed structure(s), not including antennas; what is the principal exterior building material(s) proposed?

The traps are 16' X 16' floating platforms with approximately 8 feet tall meshed fencing material installed as a sea lion trap. These structures will be placed temporarily on the water by the concrete aprons of the dam facility.

b. What views in the immediate vicinity would be altered or obstructed?

The traps are temporarily in place and can be seen from the riverbank and SR14 that runs along the Columbia River adjacent to the Bonneville Dam.

c. Proposed measures to reduce or control aesthetic impacts, if any:

The traps will be placed temporarily and will have no long-term aesthetic impact.

11. Light and glare

a. What type of light or glare will the proposal produce? What time of day would it mainly occur?

None.

b. Could light or glare from the finished project be a safety hazard or interfere with views?

None.

c. What existing off-site sources of light or glare may affect your proposal?

None.

d. Proposed measures to reduce or control light and glare impacts, if any:

Does not apply.

12. Recreation

a. What designated and informal recreational opportunities are in the immediate vicinity?

Recreational land-based fishing occurs along the Washington side of the Columbia River bank below the Bonneville Dam within the Boat Restricted Zone. No boat access is allowed in the project area and no flying above the area is permitted. The dam facility has limited visitor vehicle access to designated visitor centers.

b. Would the proposed project displace any existing recreational uses? If so, describe.

No recreational displacement would occur during the first and second tiers of our approach. Potential limited, temporary closure of the riverbank and roads may occur during the third tier of our approach.

c. Proposed measures to reduce or control impacts on recreation, including recreation opportunities to be provided by the project or applicant, if any:

Both Oregon and Washington State Fish and Wildlife agency staff are working with fish managers to coordinate normal fishing season closures to coincide with project activities if needed or when appropriate.

13. Historic and cultural preservation

a. Are there any places or objects listed on, or proposed for, national, state, or local preservation registers known to be on or next to the site? If so, generally describe.

No.

b. Generally describe any landmarks or evidence of historic, archaeological, scientific, or cultural importance known to be on or next to the site.

Does not apply.

c. Proposed measures to reduce or control impacts, if any:

Does not apply.

14. Transportation

a. Identify public streets and highways serving the site, and describe proposed access to the existing street system. Show on site plans, if any.

Interstate 84 provides access from the Oregon side to the Bonneville Dam. SR 14 provides access from the Washington side to the Bonneville Dam. Regular vehicle access is possible. The Bonneville Dam project site has restricted access within the site by permission only.

b. Is site currently served by public transit? If not, what is the approximate distance to the nearest transit stop?

There is no public transit in the area.

c. How many parking spaces would the completed project have? How many would the project eliminate?

Does not apply.

d. Will the proposal require any new roads or streets, or improvements to existing roads or streets, not including driveways? If so, generally describe (indicate whether public or private).

No.

e. Will the project use (or occur in the immediate vicinity of) water, rail, or air transportation? If so, generally describe.

The project will use boats to haze sea lions and access traps. No air or rail transportation will be used. A railway system runs along the Columbia River in the vicinity of the Bonneville Dam.

f. How many vehicular trips per day would be generated by the completed project? If known, indicate when peak volumes would occur.

Once the project is completed, no additional vehicular trips will be generated.

g. Proposed measures to reduce or control transportation impacts, if any:

Does not apply.

15. Public services

a. Would the project result in an increased need for public services (for example: fire protection, police protection, health care, schools, other)? If so, generally describe.

Does not apply.

b. Proposed measures to reduce or control direct impacts on public services, if any.

Does not apply.

16. Utilities

a. Circle utilities currently available at the site: electricity, natural gas, water, refuse service, telephone, sanitary sewer, septic system, other.

b. Describe the utilities that are proposed for the project, the utility providing the service, and the general construction activities on the site or in the immediate vicinity which might be needed.

Electricity and water may be needed; if so, will be used at and provided by the Bonneville Dam facility. No construction activities are needed.

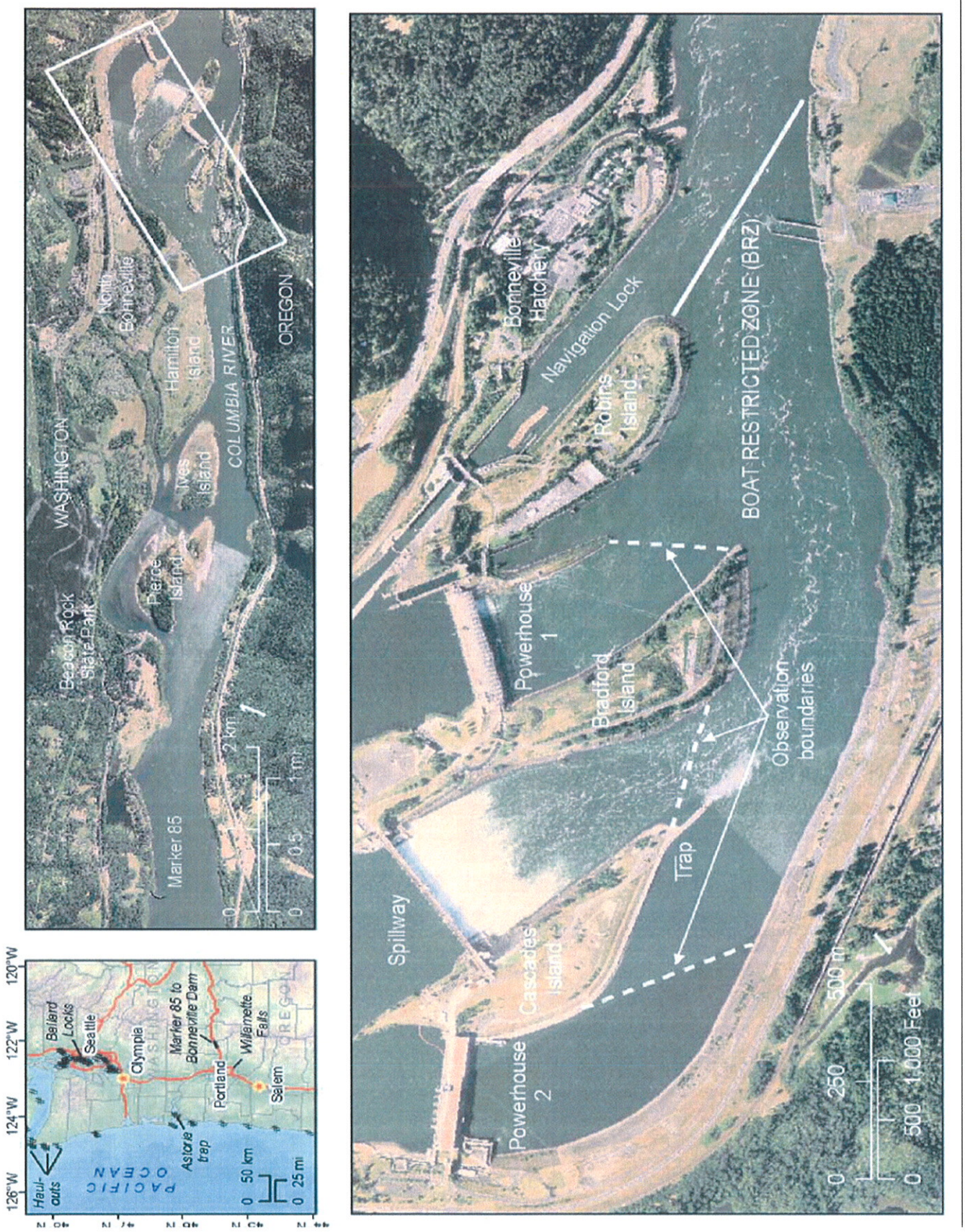
C. SIGNATURE

The above answers are true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that the lead agency is relying on them to make its decision.

Signature: Guy Norman, Regional Director, WDFW Region 5. .....

Date Submitted: March, 18, 2008 .....

Appendix A – Site Map



Site map from NMFS Environmental Assessment