

Lake Roosevelt Incremental Storage Releases Program Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement

Overview

On May 15, 2008, the Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) released a draft supplemental environmental impact statement (Draft SEIS) to the public for comment. The Draft SEIS addresses the time and manner in which additional water will be released from Lake Roosevelt to enhance stream flows and to provide water to municipalities, irrigators in the Odessa Subarea, and interruptible water right holders. The Draft SEIS looks at three alternative scenarios for releasing the water:

- **July and August Releases** – Under this alternative, water would be released during July and August, only, the months that, according to the National Academy of Science, stream flows are most critical for fish survival.
- **Demand Alternative** - Water would be released to match actual demand as closely as possible. Water for municipal/industrial uses and stream flow releases would be released between April and September. Releases for the Odessa Subarea would occur during the irrigation season – April to October.
- **Maximize Fish Flows** - Releases would be timed to maximize flows for fish. Various sub-alternatives would time water to specifically benefit juvenile or adult salmon and steelhead. Water would be released under a schedule developed by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife or to meet the requirements of the agreement made between the Colville Tribe and the State of Washington.

WHY IT MATTERS

New incremental storage releases from Lake Roosevelt will allow the Department of Ecology to increase stream flows in the Columbia River for fish, provide water for the Odessa Subarea, give interruptible water users relief during drought, and to issue new water rights on the Columbia River for the first time in many years. The Draft SEIS provides alternatives for allocating when and to whom this new water will be released.

Public Comment Period

May 15 – June 30, 2008

Open Houses

June 16 - Coulee Dam, WA

June 17 - Colville, WA

(see locations on page 3)

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Special accommodations:

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Policy Options for Water Allocations

Ecology must develop a policy for allocating water among the pending municipal/industrial water right applications and to holders of uninterruptible water rights. The Draft SEIS assesses a number of alternatives for allocating water are considered in the Draft SEIS.

Alternatives for Allocating water for Municipal and Industrial Supply

- **Allocate only to applicants who can physically capture the water** - Water would be provided for applications that propose to withdraw water from the Columbia River or groundwater in close proximity to the river.
- **Allocate water to both those who can physically capture the water and those whose water use would impact the Columbia River** - Water would be allocated to water users whose use would impact the Columbia River in addition to the water users described in the first alternative.
- **Allocate water based on priority need** - Priority needs include:
 - Assisting municipalities with moratoriums on development because of limited water supplies.
 - Meeting the obligations of the settlement agreement between the Center for Environmental Law and Policy (CELP,) the Cities of Kennewick, Pasco, Richland, and West Richland (Quad-Cities,) and Ecology which requires mitigation for the Quad-Cities permit when stream flow objectives are not met.
- **Allocate water to achieve regional equity.** Allocate some water to cities above Coulee Dam. Releases from Lake Roosevelt would be reduced by the same amount if water allocated to those water rights.

Alternatives for allocating water for interruptible water rights.

There are approximately 379 holders of interruptible water rights in the Columbia River Basin. Interruptible water right holders will receive up to 33,000 acre-feet of water in drought years to mitigate against interruptibility. The Draft SEIS addresses seven alternatives for allocating this water.

- **Even Distribution Allocation** – Water would be equally allocated to all interruptible users.
- **Allocation Based on Hierarchy of Beneficial Use** –Water would be allocated based on the type of crop being irrigated and the risk the user faces with the loss of water.
- **Market-Based Allocation** – Water would be allocated via an auction or established

rate structure.

- **Allocation by Lottery** – Ecology would establish a lottery for interruptible water right holders.
- **Allocation Based on Priority Date** – Water would be allocated to the interruptible water right holders with the oldest rights, first.
- **Regional Allocation** – Ecology would develop a system to allocate water evenly throughout the Columbia River Basin.
- **Voluntary Allocation** – Water would be allocated to those who ask for it. It is assumed from past experience that only a portion of interruptible water right holders will ask for water during a drought.

Commenting on the Draft SEIS

The public comment period is from May 15, 2008 to June 30, 2008. Comments on the Draft SEIS may be submitted in writing by June 30, 2008 to the following address:

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Comments can be e-mailed to dsan461@ecy.wa.gov. (Please use the following in the subject line: "Lake Roosevelt Draft SEIS Comments")

Additionally, comments may be given verbally or in writing at open house sessions being held at the following locations:

Monday, June 16th, 4-7 pm.
Coulee Dam Town Hall
300 Lincoln Ave.
Coulee Dam, WA

Tuesday, June 17th, 4-7 pm.
Colville Ag & Trade Center
317 West Astor
Colville, WA

Consultants and staff will be available at the open house sessions to answer questions.

The Draft SEIS may be viewed and downloaded online at:
http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/cwp/cr_lkroos.html.