

APPENDIX D

WILD AND SCENIC RIVER, SECTION 7 ANALYSIS AND DETERMINATION

INTRODUCTION

Federal protection of this section of the Trinity River in the Wild and Scenic System was completed in order to preserve the Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORV) identified on the date of designation (January 19, 1981). These ORV's include the free-flowing condition, anadromous and resident fisheries, outstanding geologic resource values, scenic values, recreational values, cultural and historic values, and the values associated with water quality. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has classified the Trinity River (mainstem) as a Recreational River from 100 yards below Lewiston Dam downstream to Cedar Flat.

This analysis and subsequent determination evaluates the effects of the proposed project (Canyon Creek Suite of Rehabilitation Sites: Trinity River Mile 73 to 78, which consist of four discreet sites – Conner Creek, Valdor Gulch, Elkhorn, and Pear Tree Gulch) on the Trinity River's free-flowing attributes and other ORV's, and ensures their protection as required under Section 7 of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Due to the level of detail provided in the EA/DEIR, this analysis is presented in a summary format and refers the reader to the specific sections of Chapter 2, 3 and 4 of the EA/DEIR for additional information on water quality, fisheries, wildlife, flora and fauna, recreational, and aesthetic values.

SECTION 7 ANALYSIS

This analysis and determination follows the Evaluation Procedure presented in Appendix C of the Technical Report of the Interagency Wild and Scenic Rivers Coordinating Council, Wild and Scenic Rivers Act: Section 7. Under interagency agreement between the National Park Service, the BLM and the U.S. Forest Service, the BLM generally has responsibility for conducting Section 7 determinations for this river segment.

1) Establish Need

- a. The specific purpose of the proposed project is to protect or enhance the values for which the river was designated as eligible; restore the natural characteristics of the river; and/or improves the water quality of the river. The proposed project would initiate channel rehabilitation activities as described in Chapter 2 of the EA/DEIR. The proposed project was included in the Record of Decision (ROD) issued by the Department of the Interior (DOI) in 2000, and is intended to restore the fish resources of the Trinity River. This project would be

implemented in conjunction with other programs and projects under the direction of the Trinity River Restoration Program (TRRP). The implementation of the proposed action will incorporate measures to assure that the project is consistent with the goals established under the BLM's Redding Resource Management Plan, specifically to support management actions that would enhance Trinity River fisheries. The proposed project would not diminish the scenic, recreational, or water quality values of the river.

- b. Project-related impacts to free-flowing characteristics of the river would be minimized to the extent practicable.
- c. The Proponent and manager of the project is a Federal government entity. The proposed project has been developed through a cooperative effort by the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), BLM and the Department of Water Resources (DWR) under the direction of the TRRP. The proposed action would actually improve the conveyance of flows by reestablishing alluvial attributes of the Trinity River, namely floodplains, and decreasing the potential for channel constriction by removing riparian berms.

The proposed project is consistent with management goals and objectives for the Trinity River and is designed to maintain and/or enhance the ORV's. It is also consistent with BLM objectives that support the TRRP.

2) Define a Proposed Activity

The project proponents, the project purpose and need for the project, and the geographic location of the project are described in Chapter 1 of the EA/DEIR. Specific information on the duration of the proposed project actions and the magnitude/extent of the proposed activities is provided in Chapter 2 of the DEA/EIR. Chapter 4 describes the relationship to past and future management activities with an emphasis on cumulative effects.

3) Describe How the Proposed Activities Would Directly Alter Within-Channel Conditions

Implementation of the proposed project would result in both short-term and long-term impacts. These impacts and relevant mitigation measures are described in Section 3.3 (Geology), Section 3.4 (Water Resources), Section 3.5 (Water Quality), and Section 3.6 (Fishery Resources) of the DEA/EIR.

The existing conditions at each of the four rehabilitation sites are the result of a variety of natural and management disturbance mechanisms that have occurred along the river corridor over the past 75 years. Channelization of the Trinity River is a result of historic dredge activities, and has been further exacerbated by the modified flows produced by the Trinity River Division of the Central Valley Project. At the date of designation, riparian berms had been developing for more than 20 years in each of the four rehabilitation sites and scientists recognized that the alluvial nature of the river had been modified extensively. Although recent changes in the flow regime provide some opportunity to modify the form and function of the Trinity River, the ROD

(Department of Interior 2000) recognized that mechanical channel rehabilitation would be needed to reconfigure sections of the river and provide opportunities for alluvial processes to occur.

Although there are short-term effects anticipated during project implementation, primarily with regards to water quality, juvenile salmonid rearing habitat and riparian vegetation, the long-term effects are expected to be positive and cumulatively beneficial over time.

4) Describe How the Proposed Activity Would Directly Alter Riparian and/or Floodplain Condition

The proposed project is anticipated to impact alluvial deposits adjacent to the Trinity River within the 5 mile reach containing the four rehabilitation sites. Although it's generally recognized that these alluvial deposits existed on the date of designation, the transitory nature of riverine environments precludes a quantification of these features. The extensive body of scientific evidence available for the Trinity River suggests that the riparian berms and floodplain features supported extensive, well established riparian communities at the time of designation. As a result of modified flow regimes, riparian berms came to be inhabited by a monoculture of riparian vegetation. The interaction between vegetation and fine sediment continued to expand this condition along the river corridor, although large floods such as that which occurred in 1997, modified this riparian community to some degree. Riparian berms tend to inhibited access to the floodplain.

Section 3.4 (Water Resources), Section 3.6 (Fishery Resources), and Section 3.7 (Vegetation, Wildlife and Wetlands) discuss the specific impacts and relevant mitigation measures associated with the proposed project relative to existing riparian and floodplain conditions. Although there are short-term effects anticipated during construction, the long-term effects are expected to be positive and cumulatively beneficial over time. As a component of the TRRP, the proposed project is expected to provide a positive benefit to the Trinity River's ORV's, including anadromous fish resources.

5) Describe How the Proposed Activity Would Directly Alter Upland Conditions

The proposed project would remove material (primarily fine textured sediments) from riparian berms and floodplains located within each of the four rehabilitation sites and place this material on nearby uplands, above the 100-year floodplain. Much of the material proposed for removal is tailing remnants deposited by bucket-line dredge activities that occurred in the Trinity River between 1930 and 1950. These deposits typically consist of long linear piles of sand, gravel, cobbles and boulders, devoid of vegetation, and are piled on floodplains and terrace features adjacent to the current river channel. Removal of tailing remnant material from riparian berms and floodplains would change the productivity potential of these areas, thus increasing the diversity potential for occupation by vegetative and wildlife species. An upland and riparian corridor revegetation program will be incorporated into the proposed project and will emphasize the re-establishment of native species and vegetative community types throughout the entire project area. Section 3.4 (Water Resources), Section 3.6 (Fishery Resources), Section 3.7

(Vegetation, Wildlife and Wetlands), Section 3.8 (Recreation), Section 3.11 (Cultural Resources) and Section 3.14 (Aesthetics) discuss the specific impacts and relevant mitigation measures relative to upland conditions as they relate to the ORV's for the Trinity River.

6) Evaluate and Describe How Changes in On-Site Conditions Can/Would Alter Existing Hydrologic or Biologic Processes

As discussed in previous sections, the EA/DEIR provides a detailed description of the existing condition and environmental impacts associated with the project at each of the four rehabilitation sites, including a substantial number of mitigation measures. A primary objective of the proposed project is to reestablish alluvial processes within each rehabilitation site, and provide the opportunity for the river to reoccupy the floodplain with greater frequency. A basic premise of the TRRP is to promote changes to the alluvial reaches of the river in a manner that restores the physical processes and biological resources that were recognized as ORV's at the time of designation.

7) Estimate the Magnitude and Spatial Extent of Potential Off-Site Changes

Chapter 4 of the EA/DEIR discusses the other impacts of the proposed project, including cumulative impacts that might be produced by proposed project actions at each subsequent rehabilitation site extending along the river corridor. With the exception of short-term water quality impacts (construction related turbidity), implementation of the proposed project would not adversely impact the Trinity River. In fact, the intent of the proposed project is to promote large-scale beneficial changes to the riverine environment and adjacent physical habitat. Such changes are expected to enhance efforts to restore the Trinity River's fishery resources.

8) Define the Time Scale over Which Steps 3-7 are Likely to Occur

Project implementation is anticipated to occur between Summer 2006 and Fall 2007. Specific limitations on project operations may be incorporated into the project as a result of applicable legal requirements.

9) Compare Project Analyses to Management Goals

Management goals relative to free-flow, water quality, riparian area, and floodplain conditions would not be affected by the proposed action. It is expected that one of the primary benefits of this project would be to increase the ORV (anadromous fishery) of the Trinity River. Impacts to the visual resources of the Trinity River would be minimal with the implementation of design criteria and mitigation measures. The proposed project would be consistent with any future actions taken by the TRRP.

10) Section 7 Determination

Implementation of the proposed action, as described in Chapter 2 of the EA/DEIR, would not affect the free-flowing condition of this segment of the Trinity River.