

June 25, 2001

Northwest Power Planning Council
Attention: Kendra Phillips
Response to ISRP
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Monitoring and Evaluation of Buck Hollow Hydrology Project # 25075

Although ISRP indicated no response was needed and that the project was fundable, their preliminary comments appeared to invite a response and some clarification.

ISRP Comment: The response should further describe the project's selection of monitoring approach (tier), for establishing the project's biologically measurable results, and the justification of this selection (see ISRP's general comments on monitoring).

Response: The monitoring approach proposed in this project fits the criteria for Tier 1 monitoring. A single site near the mouth is proposed for a gauging station to measure the hydrologic response of the watershed primarily to precipitation events, but also to gauge stream response to diurnal temperature variation.

The Buck Hollow Plan / Environmental Assessment (11/94) noted that the only gauged stream similar to Buck Hollow in the state of Oregon was Rock Creek in Gilliam County. Moderating the hydrology of this watershed by improving watershed health was one of the key objectives in this project.

A healthy watershed is defined as one that captures, stores, and safely releases water over an extended period of time. At project inception, Buck Hollow was prone to flash flooding, and recurrent damaging runoff events hampered any hope of riparian habitat improvement without first moderating the watershed's runoff characteristics. Extensive work has been accomplished since 1990 with improving trends noted in both upland and riparian conditions. Analysis of the hydrology of tributaries within Buck Hollow show a reduction in projected runoffs. Tier one monitoring of the watershed's hydrologic response should answer the question once and for all of the value of full scale watershed treatment in restoring watershed health. The only way to do that is to monitor the discharge of the watershed in response to changing environmental variables.

ISRP Comment: It is unclear if project 25015 also included a gauging station in Buck Hollow.

Response: Project 25015 did not include a gauging station, but did include a "staff gauge" basically a large measuring stick which would be installed to facilitate flow measurements for the short duration emergency flow supplementation during the current year. We will be working with USGS to develop a sampling design that will address our objectives.

Sincerely,

Ron Graves
District Manager