

## **Peer Review Plan**

# **Analysis of Deschutes Habitat Conservation Plan and Alternatives for Environmental Impact Statement using RiverWare, Deschutes River Basin, Oregon**

### **Date**

August 11, 2020

### **Originating office**

Bureau of Reclamation, Pacific Northwest Region, Regional Office, 1150 N Curtis Rd., Boise, ID, 83706

### **Reclamation roles**

Director or delegated manager: Lorri Gray, Regional Director, Pacific Northwest Region, Bureau of Reclamation

Peer Review Lead: Jennifer Johnson, Supervisory Civil Engineer (Hydrologic), Pacific Northwest Region, Bureau of Reclamation

### **Subject and Purpose**

The Deschutes River Basin Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) is a large-scale planning effort that will help the City of Prineville and the Irrigation District members of the Deschutes Basin Board of Control meet their current and future water needs while enhancing fish and wildlife habitat. A RiverWare model was used to evaluate the HCP along with three other alternatives (including the No Action) for the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The EIS is being led by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the RiverWare model is being run by Reclamation as cooperators for the EIS. The RiverWare model has been used by many recent studies including the Upper Deschutes Basin Study and 2014 litigation. It has been refined and reviewed throughout these studies, and stakeholders have a high degree of confidence in the output. This Peer Review Plan is intended document reviews that have already been conducted on the model assumptions and output that were used to analyze the potential effects of the operations in the alternatives that are being used to inform the EIS.

### **Impact of Dissemination**

The modeling output describing the effects to river flows and reservoir elevations are going to be used to determine the effects of alternative operations for the HCP and the EIS. The potential effects have been the subject of previous litigation and public controversy. Because of this, the modeling output is expected to meet the definition of highly influential scientific information requiring external peer review, as defined by the Office of Management and Budget Final Information Quality Bulletin for Peer Review (70 FR 2664-2677) and Reclamation Manual Peer Review of Scientific Information and Assessments Policy (CMP P14).

## **Peer Review Scope**

The modeling assumptions related to the alternative operations for the HCP and the EIS and the model output are the scientific information that are the basis for resource effects in the EIS. This is the information that is and has been the subject of peer review. Peer reviewers were asked to provide responses relative to the following questions:

1. Are the assumptions clearly explained in the documentation of the modeling analysis?
2. Does the documentation clearly show the effects of the assumptions on the river-reservoir system?
3. Does the document adequately characterize the uncertainty associated with the analysis?

The scope of this review does not include the selection of RiverWare as the appropriate tool for this analysis, the RiverWare software, or the Deschutes RiverWare model because these have all been previously reviewed.

## **Timing of Review**

Reviews have already occurred of the modeling for the draft EIS in the fall of 2019, and the final EIS assumptions and results are currently undergoing review. Review for the final EIS is anticipated to be complete by September 11, 2020.

## **Methodology of Review**

Reviews have been and will be conducted by individuals. The identities of the reviewers will be disclosed in the final Peer Review Summary. Review summaries will be attributed to the individual reviewers. The peer review process will not provide opportunities for public participation; however, documentation of the modeling analysis has been reviewed by the public during the Draft EIS public review.

Reviews have already been conducted by Oregon Department of Water Resources staff hydrologists with many years of experience in the Deschutes Basin and with interpreting model results. Reviews have also been conducted by US Forest Service, contractors for the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and contractors for the Irrigation Districts applying for the HCP. Given the varying degree of interests and the broad knowledge of the reviewers, it was determined that this group met the requirements for a highly influential external review. The modeling analysis for the final EIS will be reviewed by members of this same group.

## **Number of Peer Reviewers**

At least five reviewers have already been and will be used from the groups described above.

## **Reviewer Selection Process**

Reviewers were selected based on their knowledge and experience in the Basin and their understanding of hydrologic processes. All reviewers either have many years of experience in the basin or in hydrologic analysis.

## **Delivery of Findings**

Findings have been and will be delivered via Word document track changes and email comments. They have also been delivered during webinars where model results were reviewed and scrutinized.

For the modeling results for the final EIS, reviewers will either provide comments in Word Document track changes or via a comment tracker provided by Reclamation. They will also provide a summary paragraph with any major findings to be included in the review report.

### **Response to Peer Review**

A summary paragraph from each reviewer will be published on the Reclamation's peer review website (<http://www.usbr.gov/main/qoi/peeragenda.html>) along with a response if there were any major concerns.

### **Federal Register Notice**

Federal Register notices will not be provided announcing the formation of a peer review team and completion of the final report.

### **Applicability of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA)**

This peer review is not subject to the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) because the review does not involve open meetings or committee chartering and reviewers are being asked to provide individual reviews on the subject matter. Reclamation is not seeking consensus advice from the reviewers as a group.

### **Agency contact**

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