



— BUREAU OF —
RECLAMATION

Maintenance and Rehabilitation of Spillway and Dam Structures at American Falls Dam

Supplemental Information Report No. 2

Minidoka Project, Power County, Idaho

Columbia Pacific Northwest Region



Mission Statements

The U.S. Department of the Interior protects and manages the Nation's natural resources and cultural heritage; provides scientific and other information about those resources; and honors its trust responsibilities or special commitments to American Indians, Alaska Natives, and affiliated Island Communities.

The mission of the Bureau of Reclamation is to manage, develop, and protect water and related resources in an environmentally and economically sound manner in the interest of the American public.

Cover Photo: American Falls Dam, Power County, Idaho. Photo courtesy of James Beitz.

Supplemental Information Report

Proposed Project/Action Title:

Maintenance and Rehabilitation of Spillway and Dam Structures at American Falls Dam, Minidoka Project, Power County, Idaho

Existing Environmental Documents:

- Maintenance and Rehabilitation of Spillway and Dam Structures at American Falls Dam, Minidoka Project, Power County, Idaho – Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact. FONSI # PN-19-4 signed May 20, 2019.
- Maintenance and Rehabilitation of Spillway and Dam Structures at American Falls Dam – Supplemental Information Report. Signed May 29, 2020.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

Acronym or Abbreviation	Definition
EA	Environmental Assessment
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act

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Purpose of Supplemental Report

In accordance with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements, an Environmental Assessment (EA) was completed and a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was signed for this proposed project in May 2019 (Reclamation 2019). Since that time, more specific details of the project were developed, and changes made to the Proposed Action were analyzed for potential effects in a Supplemental Information Report completed in June 2020 (Reclamation 2020a).

This second Supplemental Information Report has been produced to document a change in the project duration and construction schedule due to unforeseen issues with construction tasks, and a necessary change in the contract awardee performing the construction work.

This document is intended to supplement the analysis already completed in the original EA-FONSI (2019) and the first Supplemental Information Report (2020a). It provides a description of the change to the Proposed Action's schedule and project duration, and summary of anticipated environmental effects anticipated as a result of this change. It is not a Findings document; rather, it is meant to aid the decision to supplement, revise, or reissue a separate Findings document for this project, or, in the event a decision is made, to proceed without changing the adopted EA-FONSI, to create a record of the supporting information.

Proposed Project/Action Location

American Falls Dam is located on river mile 714.7 of the Snake River near American Falls, Idaho. The dam is located in Power County, Idaho, but American Falls Reservoir stretches northeast into both Bingham County and Bannock County. The maintenance and construction activities of the project are planned to occur on the downstream dam face and gate operating decks and within the spillway and stilling basin structures at American Falls Dam.

The proposed project and the affected area were described in detail in the original associated EA-FONSI (Reclamation 2019). Changes to the proposed project are described in the following sections.

Description of Change to the Proposed Project/Action

The following section describes the change proposed to the project description that was analyzed for effects in the completed EA-FONSI (Reclamation 2019) and re-analyzed following modifications in the first Supplemental Information Report, completed in 2020 (Reclamation 2020a).

Construction Period – Third Year

What was originally identified: The original EA-FONSI identified a 2-year project period, with an in-waterway construction work window between August 1 and November 23 for both 2020 and 2021. The Supplemental Information Report completed in 2020 re-analyzed the project with regard to an expanded in-waterway work window that would provide Reclamation the option to allow in-waterway construction to begin on or after July 15, if favorable conditions (water year, water quality, and weather) allow, and continuing into December, depending on water-year conditions.

What has changed: To facilitate project completion, Reclamation proposes to add a third construction year (2022), to include a third in-waterway construction window beginning on August 1, 2022, and continuing until October 16, 2022. Reclamation retains the option identified and analyzed in the Supplemental Information Report completed in 2020 to allow in-waterway construction to begin on or after July 15, if favorable conditions (water year, water quality, and weather) allow.

Additional/background information: Some dam face repairs and demolition of the concrete on the spillway face were completed in 2020. Construction activities in 2021 will focus on completing the spillway and dam face repairs. Due to the remaining work to be completed on the project and to mitigate project risks, it is anticipated that a third year of construction in 2022 may be required.

To remain in compliance with environmental regulations, Reclamation has applied for and received extensions to the existing Clean Water Act Section 404 permit issued by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and to the existing Water Quality Exemption issued by the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality, which extend both through the proposed third year of construction activities for this project.

Environmental Evaluation

The 2019 EA-FONSI analyzed effects to the following resource areas. The affected environment for each resource was described in detail in the original EA-FONSI for the proposed project (Reclamation 2019), and these analyses are hereby incorporated by reference.

- Hydrology
- Water Quality
- Aquatic Resources (Fisheries)
- Threatened and Endangered Species
- Noise
- Recreation
- Transportation
- Indian Trust Assets
- Indian Sacred Sites
- Cultural Resources
- Socioeconomics
- Environmental Justice

The 2020 Supplemental Information Report (Reclamation 2020a) described and further re-analyzed the potential of certain changes to the proposed action to affect the following resources and those additional analyses are also hereby incorporated by reference:

- Hydrology
- Water quality
- Fisheries
- Transportation

Summary of Project Effects to Date

The first year of construction, completed in 2020, did not result in any significant or unforeseen environmental effects to any of the above resource areas. The potential environmental effects of an additional (third) construction year, during which the in-waterway construction window would be narrower than the date range already previously analyzed, are expected to be the same or lesser in magnitude than those already analyzed and disclosed.

An in-depth analysis of the potential effects of limited water release capabilities (seasonal spillway lockout) and an adjusted water storage/release strategy (i.e., holding additional water later in the season at American Falls Reservoir while drawing down Lake Walcott to create space for later recapture of power generation flows released after the end of irrigation flows) during the initially identified 2-year construction period was included in the original FONSI-EA, and expanded upon in the first Supplemental Information Report.

Management of water release configuration during the third construction year would follow protocols set forth and previously analyzed, and would be similarly subject to the same suite of mitigation measures identified in the Water Quality Restoration Plan (Reclamation 2020b) that was developed for this project and successfully implemented in 2020. No additional water storage adjustments would be necessary in 2022, due to the shorter duration of the in-waterway work window identified. No construction-related drawdown of Lake Walcott is planned for 2022. Therefore, the addition of a third construction year does not necessitate additional analysis to environmental resources.

The analyses of effects to these resources already included in the 2019 EA-FONSI and 2020 Supplemental Information Report remain adequate for NEPA compliance and decision-making purposes.

Recommendation

Based on the information contained in prior analyses and the description of the proposed change to the project provided in this supplemental report, the addition of a third construction year with a shorter in-waterway work window than those previously analyzed for does not represent a substantially different proposed project from that analyzed for environmental effects in the original EA and subsequent Supplemental Information Report. The anticipated environmental effects from these changes do not substantially vary in type or magnitude from the original effects identified, and no environmental effects are anticipated to rise to a level of significance that would necessitate the completion of a separate formal EA or FONSI. It is therefore my recommendation that this documentation of additional information be added to the record in support of the original project FONSI, dated May 20, 2019.

Recommended:

**AMY
GOODRICH** Digitally signed by
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Amy Goodrich
Natural Resources Specialist
Snake River Area Office, Boise, Idaho

Approved:

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Melanie J. Paquin
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References

- Reclamation 2019 Bureau of Reclamation. 2019. Final EA-FONSI: Maintenance and Rehabilitation of Spillway and Dam Structures at American Falls Dam, Minidoka Project, Power County, Idaho. Bureau of Reclamation, Pacific Northwest Region, Snake River Area Office, Boise, Idaho. May 2019.
- Reclamation 2020a Bureau of Reclamation. 2020. Maintenance and Rehabilitation of Spillway and Dam Structures at American Falls Dam – Supplemental Information Report. Bureau of Reclamation, Pacific Northwest Region, Snake River Area Office, Boise, Idaho. May 2020.
- Reclamation 2020b Water Quality Restoration Plan for Maintenance and Rehabilitation of Spillway and Dam Structures at American Falls Dam Project. Bureau of Reclamation, Columbia-Pacific Northwest Region, Snake River Area Office, Boise, Idaho. February 2020.