

# **FINAL FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)**

## **Levee Rehabilitation Program Assistance Public Law 84-99**

### **Carmen Levee Salmon River Lemhi County, Idaho**

**November 2018**

#### **I. Project Description and Background Information**

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Walla Walla District (Corps) repaired approximately 1,100 feet of a segment of the Carmen levee on the right bank of the Salmon River, upstream (south) from Carmen, Idaho. The levee was damaged by sustained high flows during the 2017 and 2018 flood seasons. An Emergency declaration (Appendix A) to repair the levee prior to the onset of winter and potential flooding was made on 24 August 2018. The action was considered an emergency due to the imminent risk of embankment failure separating the Salmon River from the city of Carmen. Construction occurred on 8-9 September. Additional work to finish a short section that was not completed was conducted in one day in October.

The repair site incurred damage in which riprap on the slope and toe eroded away making the remaining slope steep and unstable and exposing the levee material underneath. Some riprap remained, but no longer provided an adequate level of flood protection.

The repairs included restoring the damaged levee segment to the as-was condition to reestablish a 2H:1V riverside slope. There was disturbance both above and below the Ordinary High Water Mark to repair the levee toe and place fill material and riprap. There are several areas where the riprap was in good condition and was reused.

Ten small rock barbs were installed approximately 100 feet apart along the toe of the repaired levee. These barbs minimize impacts to ESA-listed fish by replacing fish resting habitat along the levee.

#### **II. Authority**

On July 31, 2017, Lemhi County Commissioners requested assistance from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Walla Walla District, to repair the damage to the levees under Public Law (PL) 84-99, Flood and Coastal Storm Emergencies. Under this law, the Chief of Engineers, acting for the Secretary of the Army, is authorized to undertake

activities including disaster preparedness, Advance Measures, emergency operations (Flood Response and Post Flood Response), rehabilitation of flood control works threatened or destroyed by flood, protection or repair of Federally authorized shore protective works threatened or damaged by coastal storm, and provisions of emergency water due to drought or contaminated source. In response to the county's request, the Walla Walla District prepared a "Rehabilitation Project Information Report for Carmen Levee Project" which was determined acceptable by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Northwestern Division, on January 26, 2018. As required by PL 84-99, a Cooperation Agreement for Rehabilitation of a Federal Flood Control Work was executed between the Corps and Lemhi County on May 23, 2018.

### **III. Purpose and Need**

The Corps repaired a section of the Carmen Levee along the Salmon River in Lemhi County, Idaho. The purpose of the action is to provide flood risk management to affected areas of Lemhi County. Rehabilitation included repairing the levees to the "as-was condition" in a manner that would not visibly or appreciably change the character, scope, or size of the original fill design. The action was needed because the levees protect nearby homes, agricultural land, and municipal facilities that were at increased risk from flood damages.

### **IV. Project Alternatives**

Two alternatives are evaluated in the Environmental Assessment (EA); the No Action Alternative and the Action Alternative. The statutory objectives/scheme supporting an action can serve as a guide to determine the reasonableness of objectives outlined in the EA – in this case assistance under PL 84-99. Additionally, an agency's obligation to consider alternatives under an EA is a lesser one than under an Environmental Impact Statement. Consequently, only the No Action and Action Alternative were analyzed further. The No Action Alternative does not satisfy the project's purpose and need, but the National Environmental Policy Act requires analysis of the No Action Alternative to set the baseline from which to compare other alternatives. No Action does not mean there would be no environmental impacts from this alternative.

### **V. Environmental Effects**

The Action Alternative and the No Action Alternative were analyzed for potential effects to the following resources: water quality, aquatic resources, wildlife, vegetation, threatened and endangered species, cultural resources, socioeconomics, recreation, and effects of climate change. The analysis is detailed in Section 3 of the EA. The analysis concluded there were no significant adverse effects to any of the resources from implementation of the Action Alternative.

The Corps also considered the cumulative effects of the Action Alternative along with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions in the proposed action

area. The Corps concluded that repair of the levees did not cause a significant cumulative effect to any resource.

## VI. Consultation and Compliance with other Laws and Regulations

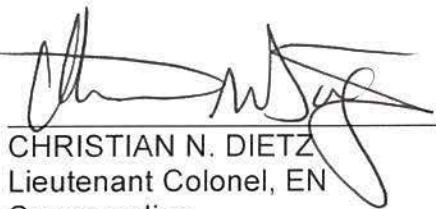
Potential effects to threatened and endangered species were analyzed in the "*Carmen Levee Rehabilitation Project Biological Assessment*" (BA) prepared by the Corps in May 2018. The Corps determined that the action, as proposed, "may affect, and is likely to adversely affect" Snake River sockeye, spring/summer Chinook, and steelhead, but "is not likely to adversely affect" their critical habitat. The Corps requested formal consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service on May 8, 2018 and received a Biological Opinion on September 10, 2018 (Appendix D). The Corps determined that this action, as proposed, "may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect" bull trout or its critical habitat. The Corps also determined the action would have "no effect" on all other listed, or proposed species or their designated or proposed critical habitats. The Corps requested informal consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on May 8, 2018 and received a Letter of Concurrence on June 1, 2018 (Appendix C).

The Corps determined that this action, as proposed, would result in no adverse effect to historic properties. The Idaho State Historic Preservation Office concurred with the Corps finding in a letter dated June 22, 2018 (Appendix E). The Corps did not identify any historic properties of potential religious or cultural significance to Native American tribes so no tribes were consulted.

See Section 4 of the EA for a discussion of how the action complies with other laws, regulations, and Executive Orders.

## VII. Findings and Decision

Having reviewed the Carmen Levee Rehabilitation Project EA, emergency declaration and supporting appendices, I find that the documents provide sufficient discussions on the purpose of and need for the action, alternatives, the environmental effects of the action and the alternatives, and a listing of agencies consulted. These documents provide sufficient evidence and analysis to meet the Corps requirements pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. Based on this information, I find that implementation of the action did not result in significant impacts on the quality of the human environment and that an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

  
CHRISTIAN N. DIETZ  
Lieutenant Colonel, EN  
Commanding

11/19/2018  
Date