

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)

MOSQUITO CONTROL ACTIVITIES LICENSES FOR BENTON COUNTY, FRANKLIN COUNTY, COLUMBIA AND WEST UMATILLA MOSQUITO CONTROL DISTRICTS

I. Introduction/Proposed Action

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE), Walla Walla District (Corps), is proposing to issue 5-year licenses to the Benton County, Franklin County, Columbia and West Umatilla Mosquito Control Districts for conducting mosquito control activities on Corps managed lands.

II. Background Information

In the mid-1990s, the COE discontinued implementing routine mosquito control activities on its lands based on revised funding policies – i.e. mosquito control activities were not part of authorized routine purposes. Subsequent to this decision, local MCDs continued to undertake mosquito control activities including on Corps land as needed, but at their own expense. In 2011, the Corps updated and revised its pest management program. In the course of this action, the Corps learned it was not in full compliance regarding the use of chemicals for pest management control. By extension, the Corps recognized the need to ensure that MCD mosquito control activities on Corps managed federal lands were also in compliance with current chemical requirements and guidelines.

III. Statement of Purpose and Need

The Corps proposes to issue licenses to the Benton County, Franklin County, Columbia and West Umatilla MCDs to conduct mosquito control activities on Corps managed federal lands. Issuance of the licenses ensures that necessary authorization is provided for the MCDs to operate on Corps managed lands, ensures mosquito control activities comply with appropriate statutory and environmental requirements, and ensures activities are compatible with the Corps overall pest management program and objectives.

IV. Project Alternatives

The following alternatives were identified and considered for this project.

Alternative 1 (No Action (No Change) Alternative): Under the no action alternative, there would be no mosquito control activities of any type occurring on

Corps land and the Corps would not issue licenses to the MCDs. No effort would be made to limit the development or spread of mosquitoes on Corps managed lands. While the “no action” alternative does not meet the project purpose and need requirement, under Council on Environmental Quality guidelines, it serves as the project baseline for environmental conditions and therefore is carried forward for analysis.

Alternative 2 (Proposed and Preferred Alternative): Under Alternative 2, the Corps would allow MCDs to conduct mosquito control activities on identified parcels of Corps managed lands. Mosquito control activities would focus on four main areas: 1) monitoring and surveillance; 2) trail/access maintenance; 3) biological control; and 4) chemical application. These activities would be used to varying degrees by each county. Alternative 2 was selected as the preferred alternative as it met the identified project purpose and need.

V. Environmental Effects: The following environmental resources were identified as being relevant to the project – biological, water quality, cultural resources, vegetation, recreation, wetlands, environmental justice, noise, climate change, and air quality. Environmental analysis and effects of the preferred and “no action” alternatives are detailed in the project Environmental Assessment (EA). The EA analysis concluded there would be no significant impacts to the environment resulting from implementation of the preferred alternative.

The Corps determined that the proposed action may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect Snake River fall Chinook, Snake River spring/summer Chinook, Snake River sockeye, Snake River steelhead, Upper Columbia River spring Chinook, Upper Columbia River steelhead, Middle Columbia River steelhead, and bull trout. The project would have no effect on pygmy rabbit, Canada lynx, gray wolf, Ute ladies'-tresses, Northern wormwood, greater sage grouse, yellow-billed cuckoo, Washington ground squirrel, Umtanum desert buckwheat, and White bluffs bladderpod. The Corps determined the proposed action would not likely adversely affect salmon, steelhead, or bull trout critical habitat and would have no effect on lynx or gray wolf critical habitat. The Corps has started consultation with NMFS and USFWS under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The results of ESA consultation would be described in the final, signed FONSI, should it be determined an Environmental Impact Statement is not required for this project.

The method of applying mosquito control products is considered a point source discharge under Section 402 of the Clean Water Act. The MCDs' application methods in Washington and Oregon are covered by state issued permits.

The District determined the proposed project would have a “No Adverse Affect” on historic properties and has started Section 106 consultation under the National Historic Preservation Act with the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (i.e. State Historic Preservation Officer

(SHPO)), Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR), Nez Perce Tribe, Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation and the Wanapum Band regarding the proposed activities associated with the MCD licenses. The results of Section 106 consultation would be described in the final signed FONSI should it be determined an Environmental Impact Statement is not required for this project.

VI. Coordination

The project has been coordinated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, Environmental Protection Agency, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Benton County, Franklin County, Columbia and West Umatilla MCDs, Washington and Oregon SHPOs, CTUIR, Wanapum Band, Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, Nez Perce Tribe, city of Pasco, city of Kennewick, city of Richland, Benton County, Franklin County, and Walla Walla County.

The project EA was released for a 30-day public comment period. Notice of the proposed project along with the draft FONSI and EA was made available on the Corps' website for viewing and was published in the Tri-Cities Herald newspaper.

VII. Conclusion/Finding

I have taken into consideration the technical aspects of the project, best scientific information available, public comments, and the information contained in the EA. Based on this information, I have determined that the preferred alternative would not significantly affect the quality of the human environment, and an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

Timothy R. Vail
Lieutenant Colonel, Corps of Engineers
District Commander

Date