



Riffe Lake/Kosmos Flats Responsiveness Summary

Comment Period: May 25 to June 23, 2020

Cleanup Site ID: 9890
Facility ID: 61559576
Address: Morton, WA
County: Lewis

Document for review and comment

Agreed Order No. DE 16955

Background

The town of Kosmos was flooded with water in 1968 to create Riffe Lake. In April 2019, the Department of Ecology (Ecology) was notified about seeps of Bunker C oil found on the eastern bank of Rainey Creek near Champion Haul Road southeast of Morton, Washington. The seeps are located at the site of a former Kosmos lumber mill near Riffe Lake.

Ecology held a comment period from May 25 to June 23, 2020 for a legal agreement called an Agreed Order. The Agreed Order requires Tacoma Power to prepare a remedial investigation, feasibility study, and a preliminary cleanup action plan. A Public Participation Plan was also available for comment.

Ecology received one comment during the comment period.

Prepared by

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Comment from Squaxin Island Tribe, Cultural Resources Department

How does the Department of Ecology/Tacoma Power plan to address or mitigate the known cultural resources located on Kosmos Flats, in particular the historic town site? This seems like it would be impacted by this cleanup efforts.

Response from Ecology

Protecting and honoring cultural resources is a top priority of the Department of Ecology and Tacoma Power. Tacoma Power has applied best practices and followed its Cultural Resource Management Plan and Inadvertent Discovery Plan during Phase I of the Riffe Lake/Kosmos Flats site cleanup process.

The Kosmos Town and Mill Site (#45LE529) is not part of the nearby Kosmos Archeological District, and is "Not Eligible" for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). During the Phase 1 survey and monitoring work, two new historic features associated with the Kosmos Town and Mill Site were found: a railroad grade and wooden trestle piling. These new discoveries had the potential to change the original eligibility designation. Tacoma Power's archaeological consultants observed both features on site and recorded them in an updated site inventory form. They determined that since both the railroad grade and wooden trestle lacked structural integrity, and historic photographic documentation of them had been found, that the NRHP eligibility status would not change. Ultimately, the railroad grade was removed in the cleanup process.

All future cleanup actions are expected to be conducted outside of the Kosmos Archeological District. Areas of Potential Effect within the Cowlitz Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) boundary will be surveyed before further ground-disturbing actions. Archaeological monitoring was conducted in sensitive areas during the Phase I cleanup efforts.

The archaeological survey report concludes that potentially significant cultural resources are not expected to be impacted from future cleanup work. On July 15, the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation agreed with Tacoma Power's survey report finding and issued a determination of "No Historic Properties Affected." Based on this finding, Tacoma Power will not need to develop a mitigation plan. Currently, Tacoma Power has received no comments from the Tribal consulting parties for the Cowlitz Hydroelectric Project. In addition, the Squaxin Island Tribe and the Quinault Indian Nation were sent the final survey and monitoring report, as requested through the Army Corps of Engineers permitting and coordination process.