

TABLE OF CONTENTS

7.4 RIVER-RELATED RECREATION SURVEYS (REC 4).....	REC 4-1
7.4.1 Study Objectives.....	REC 4-1
7.4.2 Study Area.....	REC 4-1
7.4.3 Methods.....	REC 4-1
7.4.4 Key Questions.....	REC 4-3
7.4.5 Results.....	REC 4-4
7.4.6 Schedule.....	REC 4-4
7.4.7 References.....	REC 4-4

LIST OF TABLES

NONE

LIST OF FIGURES

NONE

This page intentionally blank.

7.4 RIVER-RELATED RECREATION SURVEYS (REC 4)

7.4.1 Study Objectives

The River-Related Recreation Surveys address river-oriented (i.e., non-flatwater) recreation resources that may be affected by the projects including: (1) recreation use and opportunities in surrounding river areas above and below the reservoirs, and (2) whitewater paddling on Canyon Creek. Portions of this study began in 1998.

The objectives of the River-Related Recreation Surveys are to determine: (1) the recreational values in the study area and their relationship to the projects, if any; (2) user relationships to flow volumes, if any; and (3) the impressions that users at these areas have of project recreational facilities. Results will be used to analyze the potential effects of hydropower development and operations on recreation resources and to develop protection, mitigation, and enhancement measures, if needed.

7.4.2 Study Area

The study area consists of 3 reaches: (1) the Lewis River corridor just above Swift Reservoir to Curly Falls; (2) the whitewater section of the Canyon Creek tributary below Yale Dam; and (3) a 5-mile (8 km) reach of river containing 5 boat launch/fishing access sites below Merwin Dam (Merwin Hatchery, Lewis River Hatchery, Cedar Creek, Island, and Haapa).

7.4.3 Methods

7.4.3.1 Study Area

The River-Related Recreation Surveys include: (1) the Lewis River corridor just above Swift Reservoir; (2) the whitewater section of Canyon Creek below Yale Dam; and (3) a 5-mile reach of the lower river containing 5 boat launch/fishing access sites below Merwin Dam (Merwin Hatchery, Lewis River Hatchery, Cedar Creek, Island, and Haapa).

7.4.3.2 Study Design

The purpose of this analysis is to document potential river flow-related effects below Merwin Dam at boat launches and to assess other project influences at non-motorized boating reaches (Canyon Creek and the Upper Lewis River) contiguous to Swift Reservoir and Lake Merwin. Reservoir pool level conditions are addressed in the other recreation studies.

7.4.3.3 Field Techniques, Analytical Methods, and Reporting

The approach and background for the River-Related Recreation Survey involves an analysis of other surrounding river areas that may be affected by river flow levels or other influences of the projects.

The analysis was initiated in 1998, as described below. Overall, the analyses includes 3 steps: (1) an assessment of river recreation sites below Merwin Dam, (2) an assessment of whitewater boating on Canyon Creek below Yale Dam, and (3) an assessment of river recreation above Swift Reservoir.

Assess River Recreation Below Merwin Dam

This task was initiated in 1998 and the data were presented in the 1998 Recreation Survey Results (PacifiCorp and Cowlitz PUD 1999). Additional survey effort is needed in 1999 because of the low number of surveys conducted by WDFW (there were few visitors to survey). The survey was conducted during the peak season (Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day weekend). This task assesses recreation use at 5 sites and the degree to which water releases below Merwin Dam potentially affect the boating and fishing experience along a 5-mile reach of the river. As part of this assessment, visitor attitudes and preferences were surveyed. Questions were asked about visitor use of facilities, the condition of those facilities, and the ability to access the shoreline for bank fishing. Visitors in this area were also asked for their impressions of facilities associated with area recreation sites. The nature of these visitors' use of the 3 reservoir sites was also assessed.

The next steps are to: (1) collect additional survey data in 1999 below Merwin Dam and further analyze the results of the 1998 and 1999 survey data, and (2) compare visitor responses with flow data during the 1998-1999 survey period to determine if there is any significant correlation between visitor responses and river flow elevation. The flow data will be provided by PacifiCorp based on historical records.

Perform a Qualitative Assessment of Whitewater Boating on Canyon Creek

This task was conducted in 1998 and involved telephone interviews with local guides, event organizers, and expert kayakers to gain anecdotal information about the use of Canyon Creek for whitewater kayaking. The data were presented in the 1998 Recreation Survey Results (PacifiCorp and Cowlitz PUD 1999). Canyon Creek flows into Lake Merwin below Yale Dam. Non-motorized whitewater boating is the sole focus of this task. The 4- to 5-mile, expert-level whitewater section is adjacent to Forest Road 54 and is popular among area kayakers. In this subtask, boaters were asked for their impressions of facilities associated with recreation in the Lewis River area, the timing and frequency of their boating use of the area, and the location of their take-out on Lake Merwin. Additional work is not proposed for Canyon Creek in 1999.

Perform an Assessment of River Recreation above Swift Reservoir to the Curly Falls Area Along the Upper Lewis River that Empties into Swift Reservoir

This task was initiated in 1998; the data were presented in the 1998 Recreation Survey Results (PacifiCorp and Cowlitz PUD 1999). The survey was conducted during the peak season (Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day weekend) and the non-peak or shoulder season (May and September). This river section is adjacent to Forest Road 90. This task involved on site interviews and counts to gain detailed information about recreation use

along this reach of the river. Visitors were asked for their impressions of facilities associated with recreation in the Lewis River area, the timing and frequency of their use of the area, and (if boating) the location of their put-ins and take-outs near Swift Reservoir. Additional work is not proposed for this upper river reach in 1999.

7.4.3.4 Response To Comments

WDFW had suggested consideration of an additional qualitative survey of private angler guides who frequent the lower river reach. The goal of this additional survey was to get the opinion of expert guides, not just the general public. At the time (April 1998), PacifiCorp felt that the current recreation survey efforts below Merwin Dam by WDFW and PacifiCorp/Cowlitz PUD were adequate. Furthermore, PacifiCorp has little control of river flow levels below Merwin Dam that may be controlled to potentially benefit angler or boater use below the dam. No further discussions have occurred since that time. Additional survey interviews with the general public will be conducted by WDFW in 1999 below Merwin dam at the 5 access sites. Further analyses have not been requested, scoped or costed in 1999.

Based on a flow release in the Swift bypass reach in June 1999, it was determined that the bypass reach was too hazardous to conduct a boatability study. As a result, this study component was discussed at the July 27, 1999 RRG and subsequently deleted from the study plan. This original study request by Washington DOE and its deletion from the study plan were coordinated through PacifiCorp.

7.4.4 Key Questions

The River-Related Recreation Surveys, combined with the other Recreation Surveys presented in a separate study (see REC 3), are designed to address the following key watershed questions:

- What is the demand for river-related recreation activities near the projects, and how does demand differ among types of river recreation?

Most participants in the River-Related Recreation Surveys stated that their visit to the Lewis River was entirely focused on fishing. Demand for fishing on the Lewis River above and below the project is high. Only 2 percent of participants indicated that their primary activity while on the river was rafting.

- Do visitors perceive any conflicts related to river recreation activities?

Visitors voiced some concern about conflicts related to river recreation activities. The largest concern noted (20 percent) was the need for personal watercraft users (jetskiers) to be better controlled. This was an interesting response since this activity is a reservoir activity and not river-related. No other significant river-related activity conflicts were identified through the survey.

- Do river flow levels below the projects affect any river recreation activities and access?

Nearly half of the visitors felt that river flow levels had no effect on activities and access. Almost a quarter of visitors indicated that they preferred lower river volumes because fishing was better at lower flows (see REC 2 Appendix 1).

- What is the demand for river-related recreational developments, such as access points?

Currently, the supply of river-related recreational facilities appears adequate to meet overall demand for river-related recreation developments. However, during some weekends of the shoulder seasons during fish runs, the demand for river-related recreational facilities is at or exceeds the parking capacity of the 6 existing shoreline facilities. Some surrounding roads are used for overflow parking, or to access the shoreline at other nearby accessible but undeveloped locations. Additionally, 12 percent of visitors feel public shoreline access along the river should be improved.

7.4.5 Results

Like the Recreation Surveys (REC 3), results of the River-Related Recreation Surveys have been incorporated into the overall Recreation Demand Analysis (REC 2). Results of that study are summarized in Section 7.2 of this report, with full study results presented in REC 2 Appendix 1.

7.4.6 Schedule

This study is complete.

7.4.7 References

PacifiCorp and Cowlitz PUD. 1999. 1998 Lewis River Recreation Survey Results. Lewis River Hydroelectric Projects, FERC Nos. 935, 2071, 2111, and 2213. Portland, Oregon and Longview, Washington.