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Summary written by:

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Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) proposes construction of 5.37 miles of new second mainline track to parallel their existing mainline track near Mosier, Oregon. Activities involved with creating the second mainline would include expanding the existing railroad grade (i.e. fill prism), realigning the existing track, creating new and/or temporary access roads and staging areas, constructing new bridges over Mosier Creek and Rock Creek, and constructing new signaling facilities. Impacts to waters of the U.S. from these activities would include fill and/or excavation within seven freshwater wetlands and five ponds along the Columbia River. The total project combined would result in a loss of 0.96 acres of wetlands and 0.67 acres of open-water habitat. At least three of the ponds are backwaters of and are connected to the Columbia River (Bonneville Pool) through submerged or partially submerged culverts. As such, they are likely used by ESA listed salmon species. The applicant has provided a conceptual mitigation statement in which they propose installing two large culverts between Thompsons Lake and the Columbia River to improve fish passage and water circulation. To offset the loss of 0.96 acres of wetlands, the applicant proposes the offsite enhancement of 2.85 acres of wetland habitat (a 3:1 mitigation-to-impact ratio); however, the location of this enhancement has yet to be determined and a mitigation plan has not been provided.

Our timeline for review and public notice is still up in the air somewhat at the moment, due to an internal delay. However, I expect some clarity on that in the next few days.