



Department of Energy
Bonneville Power Administration
P.O. Box 3621
Portland, Oregon 97208-3621

Official File

ENVIRONMENT, FISH AND WILDLIFE

November 16, 2011

In reply refer to: KEC-4

To: People Interested in the Proposed Legacy Springs Land Acquisition under the Federal Columbia River Power System (FCRPS) Mitigation Program

The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) is proposing to fund the purchase of 660 acres near the town of Springfield in Bingham County, Idaho, as mitigation for the construction and operation of the Palisades hydroelectric facility on the Snake River. When the transaction is complete, the property will be owned and managed for wildlife habitat conservation purposes by the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes. BPA will receive a conservation easement to ensure that the habitat values are protected in perpetuity. BPA is sending this letter to inform nearby residents and other interested parties of this proposed land purchase.

Funding these acquisitions fulfills commitments made in the historic 2008 Columbia Basin Fish Accords agreement with the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes. The funding for this purchase also comes under BPA's wildlife program and represents an ongoing effort to pursue habitat protection and restoration activities for deer, elk moose, pheasants, and waterfowl including swans, ducks, and Canada geese. In September 2011, BPA and the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes partnered on a similar project, protecting approximately 575 acres of important wildlife habitat, also in Bingham County, Idaho.

The enclosed map details the proposed land transaction. BPA has prepared a memo and environmental checklist documenting that funding the purchase of this property is categorically excluded under the National Environmental Policy Act, and that further environmental review of this funding action is not required. This categorical exclusion was approved on October 21, 2011, and has been posted on BPA's website at: http://www.efw.bpa.gov/environmental_services/categorical_exclusions.aspx

The property is currently privately owned. The Tribes have agreed to continue paying applicable property-taxes, and will coordinate jurisdiction and enforcement issues with the proper authorities. They will manage the property to maintain habitat for fish and wildlife and will provide for Tribal and public access and use where these do not interfere with wildlife protection. The Tribes will develop a management plan for the property and will give the public the opportunity to review and comment on the plan prior to implementing new actions on the property. Short-term planned management activities on the property include maintenance of current habitat, including all trout ponds, and fencing to eliminate trespass grazing. Existing water rights will be retained with the property after the acquisition. Before funding additional management activities on the property, BPA will conduct further environmental review.

If you have any questions regarding this land purchase, please contact David Byrnes, BPA Project Manager, at 503-230-3171 or dmyrnes@bpa.gov. You can also call toll free at 1-800-622-4519.

Sincerely,

/s/ Hannah Dondy-Kaplan, November 16, 2011
Hannah Dondy-Kaplan
Environmental Protection Specialist – KEC-4

Enclosure: Map