

factsheet

July 2009

Witte Place conservation easement improves riparian habitat

The Bonneville Power Administration is proposing to fund the Methow Conservancy in the acquisition of a 32.2-acre riparian conservation easement in Okanogan County in north-central Washington. The property is located along the Methow River approximately 42 river miles from its confluence with the Columbia River. The parcel consists of extensive riparian forest and floodplain, wetlands and an overflow side channel.

The easement would directly protect the Methow River, associated wetlands and the adjacent mature cottonwood gallery forest. Species that will benefit from the riparian and creek protection include anadromous salmonid fish, bull trout, songbird species, mule deer, cougar, black bear, river otter and other wildlife species.

The Bonneville Power Administration, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and local entities such as the Methow Conservancy have worked together to secure riparian conservation easements in the Entiat, Methow, Okanogan, and Wenatchee subbasins in a cooperative agreement known as the Columbia Basin Riparian Conservation Easement Program. The program's goal is to secure permanent riparian easements and increase riparian protection to benefit endangered, threatened and other fish species. These efforts are consistent with the NOAA Fisheries Biological Opinion on the Operation of the Federal Columbia River Power System and the Northwest Power Planning and Conservation Council's Fish and Wildlife Program. The easement would also provide BPA with credits for partial mitigation of anadromous and resident fish habitat losses due to construction and operation of the federal Columbia River hydroelectric system.



Conservation easement and management

The easement is expected to be finalized in summer 2009, protecting this valuable habitat in perpetuity. The Methow Conservancy would hold the easement on this property and would work with the landowner to develop a long-term management plan to protect and enhance the habitat. This plan would be updated regularly to account for changes on the property and the latest scientific information. Once approved, the easement would prohibit additional residential development, road building, clearing of riparian vegetation and grazing activities that could damage fish and wildlife habitat.

For more information

If you have any questions about this proposal or would like more information, please contact Chris Furey, BPA, at (503) 230-3371, toll free at (800) 282-3713 or email chfurey@bpa.gov. You may also contact John Sunderland, at the Methow Conservancy, at (509) 996-2870 or e-mail at john@methowconservancy.org.



Witte Place Riparian Conservation Easement

Okanogon County, Washington

