

# factsheet

August 2009

## Yakima River land acquisition restores wetlands

The Bonneville Power Administration is working with the Yakama Nation to acquire a Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Company property for fish and wildlife habitat mitigation. The property totals approximately 32 acres and is located along the Yakima River just outside Cle Elum in Kittitas County, Wash.

The property is a former railroad alignment along a now defunct railway line. A portion of the alignment is located within an active floodplain that contains a levee used to form the railroad banks. Over the years, the property was used primarily as a railway corridor and had no livestock grazing or development on the property. The acquisition of this property and subsequent restoration will benefit threatened summer steelhead, as well as summer chinook, coho and sockeye salmon. In addition, restoration will benefit resident bull trout and a myriad of terrestrial species.

The property was also chosen because of its proximity to other Yakama Nation and BPA-protected habitat parcels, which provides the potential to create a nearly continuous protected area for anadromous fish. In addition, the property has high restoration potential due to the expected removal of the railway levee, which would provide enhanced floodplain and wetland features.

Acquiring these properties would provide BPA and the Yakama Nation with important fish and wildlife habitat as part of BPA's environmental stewardship and mitigation responsibilities for fish affected by the Federal Columbia River Power System. The property is adjacent to the Yakima River and provides

important riparian/riverine habitat in addition to floodplain, wetland and upland habitat that affords the opportunity to provide habitat protection and restoration. In addition, the property is adjacent to an existing BPA-owned hatchery. Protection of this property will reduce the threat of any future residential development and contribute to the protection and security of hatchery operations.

### Land to have management plan

If the property is acquired, which is expected in fall 2009, the Yakama Nation will develop a management plan to provide long-term stewardship for the land through protection and enhancement of habitat resources on the property. The land will be managed for the benefit of fish and wildlife species through removal of the levee and restorative techniques such as revegetation. A conservation easement will be placed on the property to protect the habitat resources in perpetuity.

Pending approval of the management plan, any activities that could damage the existing habitat values (such as harvesting of wood products, grazing of livestock or construction of buildings) would be prohibited. The public will have a chance to comment on the management plan at that time.

### For more information

If you have questions about this proposal or would like additional information, please contact Patty Smith, BPA, at (503) 230-7349, toll-free at (800) 282-3713 or e-mail at [prsmith@bpa.gov](mailto:prsmith@bpa.gov). You may also contact Scott Nicolai, Yakama Nation, at (509) 962-6142 or e-mail at [ykfphabitat@fairpoint.net](mailto:ykfphabitat@fairpoint.net).



# Burlington Northern Santa Fe Land Acquisition

