



Department of Energy

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

ENVIRONMENT, FISH AND WILDLIFE

November 5, 2012

In reply refer to: KEC-4

To: Parties Interested in the Proposed Chahalpam Land Acquisition under the 2010 Willamette Wildlife Habitat Agreement

The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) is proposing to provide funds to purchase the 338-acre Chahalpam Property near Stayton in Marion County, Oregon for the purposes of fish habitat conservation. Earlier this year, Western Rivers Conservancy (WRC) acquired the Property as an intermediary, and will transfer its interest to the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde (CTGR) at closing. BPA will receive a conservation easement on the property to ensure that the habitat values are protected forever. This letter is being sent to inform nearby residents and other interested parties of this proposed land acquisition.

By funding this acquisition BPA partially fulfills commitments made in the 2010 "Willamette River Basin Memorandum of Agreement Regarding Wildlife Habitat Protection and Enhancement between the State of Oregon and the Bonneville Power Administration". This is part of ongoing efforts to mitigate for the impacts to fish and wildlife of the construction and operation of federal flood control facilities in the Willamette River Basin. Protecting this property for conservations purposes will provide long-lasting wildlife benefits. When the transaction is complete, this property will become one of a growing network of conservation lands in the Willamette Valley providing important fish and wildlife habitat and preventing its conversion to other land uses. This acquisition will also help BPA partially fulfill its habitat restoration/protection responsibilities under the Willamette Project Biological Opinions (NMFS 2008, USFWS 2008).

The Chahalpam (which means Place of the Halpam People) Property has more than two miles of mainstem and off-channel frontage along the North Santiam River, including seven side channels and sloughs as well as portions of Dieckman Creek. Willows line the river frontage, which is then bounded by a 130-acre mature stand of black cottonwoods, big-leaf maples and red alders. Over twenty acres of wetlands are located on the property, including a slough that is designated critical habitat for Oregon chub and ESA listed Threatened species. The riparian forest and wetlands are contiguous with riparian forests and wetlands of similar composition and structure on the adjacent Bureau of Land Management (BLM) parcel that straddles the North Santiam River. Their combined areas make this site the largest stand of riparian forest along a nine-mile stretch of the North Santiam River, from an Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) managed refuge downstream to an extensive forested area on private lands upstream of Stayton. Within this context, the Chahalpam-BLM forests represents an ecologically significant patch of natural habitat within a landscape that encompasses almost 50 square miles.

A number of at-risk or listed wildlife species have been documented at Chahalpam, including four listed Species of Concern: pileated woodpecker, hooded merganser, western pond turtle, and red-legged frog.

There is also potential or suitable habitat for Pacific lamprey, Lewis' woodpecker, olive-sided flycatcher, little willow flycatcher, western bluebird, and vesper sparrow. In addition, the property provides habitat for Upper Willamette River Chinook salmon, Upper Willamette River winter steelhead, and Oregon chub - all listed as Threatened under the Endangered Species Act. Native Santiam cutthroat and rainbow trout also benefit from the habitat within the property.

Successful acquisition of the Chahalpam Property will protect key habitat for native fish and wildlife, listed species, as well as allow the restoration of the property and provide long-term stewardship of the land according to the actions defined in the management plan. These actions help ensure the North Santiam River continues to function as a major producer of fish and important haven for native wildlife in the Willamette Basin.

When the transaction is complete, WRC will transfer its interest to the CTGR. The CTGR will then own the property and will develop a management plan in coordination with BPA and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW). The CTGR intends to manage this land to provide habitat for fish and wildlife and will give the public an opportunity to review and comment on the plan. BPA and ODFW must review and approve the plan before it can be implemented. It is anticipated that the CTGR will restore and enhance habitat on the property and provide long-term stewardship of the land according to the actions defined in the management plan. BPA will conduct further environmental review before funding additional land management activities outside of the purchase of the conservation easement.

Enclosed you will find a map that describes the location of this purchase. The BPA has prepared an environmental clearance memo and environmental checklist documenting that funding the conservation easement on this property is categorically excluded under the National Environmental Policy Act and that further environmental review of this funding action is therefore not required. This categorical exclusion was approved on September 12, 2012 and has been posted on BPA's website at:

http://www.efw.bpa.gov/environmental_services/categorical_exclusions.aspx

If you have any questions regarding purchase of this conservation easement please feel free to contact Dorie Welch with BPA at (503) 230-5479 or dwwelch@bpa.gov. You can also call BPA's toll free number (800) 622-4519; be sure to reference the "Chahalpam Conservation Easement" in your message.

Sincerely,



Israel Duran
Environmental Protection Specialist – KEC-4

Enclosure:
Map

e-cc (w/ enclosures):

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BECC (W/O ENCLOSURE)

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C. BALL – DKR-7

A. SENTERS – LC-7

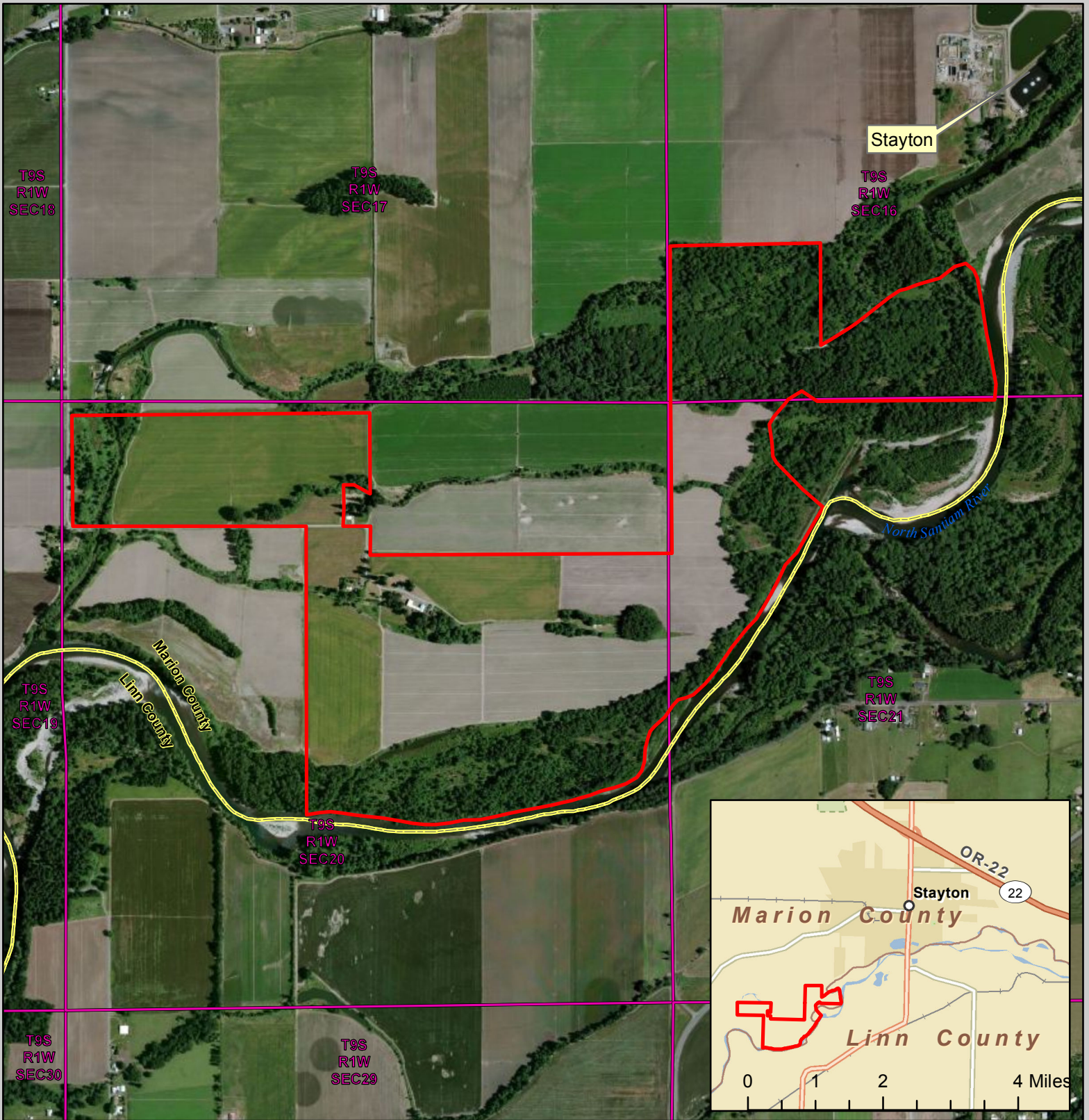
D. ROSE – KEC-4

I. DURAN – KEC-4

OFFICIAL FILE – KEC (EQ-15)




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[HTTP://INTERNAL.BPA.GOV/EFW/KEC/FANDW/FWPROJ/CHAHALPAM_PUBLIC_LETTER_FINAL.DO](http://INTERNAL.BPA.GOV/EFW/KEC/FANDW/FWPROJ/CHAHALPAM_PUBLIC_LETTER_FINAL.DO)
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Chahalpam Land Acquisition Map

Stayton Quadrangle
(338 Acres)

-  Subject Property
-  TRS Boundary
-  County Boundary

0 500 1,000 2,000 Feet



10/16/2012

