



Department of Energy

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

ENVIRONMENT, FISH AND WILDLIFE

June 12, 2012

In reply refer to: KEW-4

To: People interested in the proposed Old Highway Bridge land acquisition under the Federal Columbia River Power System Mitigation Program

Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) is proposing to fund the purchase of 7.5 acres in Okanogan County, Washington to protect fish habitat and wildlife habitat. The property includes 1,337 feet of the Twisp River, a tributary of the Methow River. BPA would also fund rebuilding 50 feet of an existing barbed-wire fence and one gate along Twisp River Road. The Methow Salmon Recovery Foundation (MSRF) would purchase the property with funds provided to the Yakama Nation through the Fish Accords. The Columbia Basin Fish Accords established partnership between federal agencies, tribes and states to supplement protective actions for fish. BPA will receive a conservation easement on the property to ensure the habitat is protected in perpetuity. The Yakama Nation proposes to restore fish habitat in and along the Twisp River after the purchase is complete. MSRF will work with BPA and the Yakama Nation to develop a management plan that will be completed as part of the conservation easement process and will allow for restoration activities consistent with the riparian habitat goals of the conservation easement. BPA and MSRF agree that the property can be sold in the future as long as the fish habitat is protected as described in BPA's conservation easement.

BPA would provide funding as part of ongoing efforts to protect, restore, and enhance habitat for Upper Columbia steelhead and spring Chinook that are listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act. Purchasing this land would partially mitigate for the construction and operation of the dams on the Columbia and Snake River, and would satisfy some of BPA's requirements for the Columbia River basin identified in the National Marine Fisheries Service 2008 Biological Opinion that guides the protection of salmon and steelhead listed under the federal Endangered Species Act.

The enclosed map shows the location of the proposed land purchase. 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 no further environmental review is required. This categorical exclusion was approved on June 12, 2012, and is posted online at: www.efw.bpa.gov/environmental_services/categorical_exclusions.aspx

MSRF and the Yakama Nation will complete a restoration plan that identifies restoration activities and future productive uses allowed to occur on the property. MSRF will provide an opportunity for public review and comment on the plan once it is drafted. BPA will review and must approve the plan before it is implemented.

If you have any questions regarding this acquisition, please contact Jay Marcotte, BPA project manager, at 503-230-3943 or jgmarcotte@bpa.gov. You can also call toll free 800-622-4519—please refer to the “Old Highway Bridge land purchase.”

Sincerely,

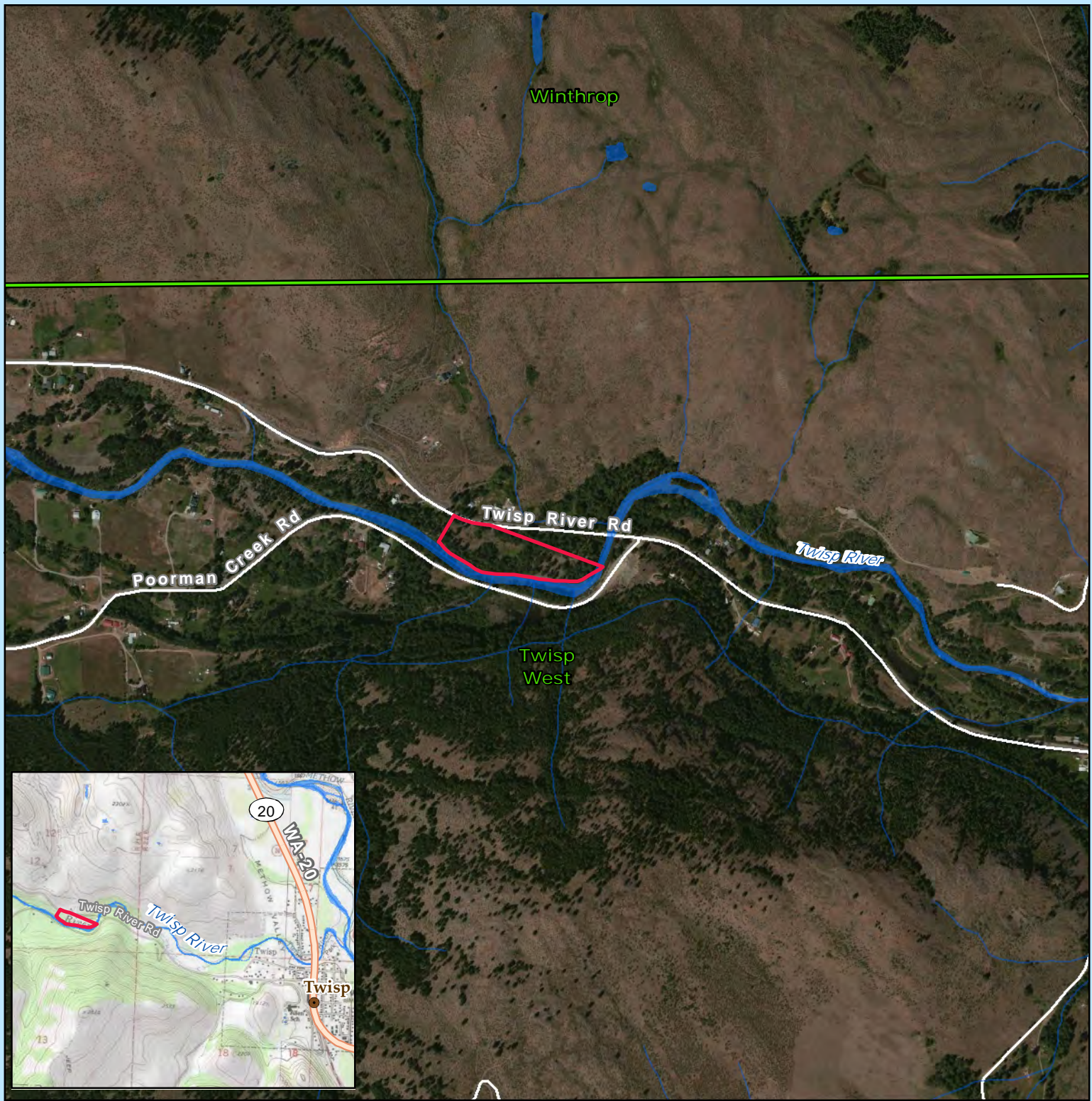
/s/ Ted Gresh, June 12, 2012

Ted Gresh

Environmental Protection Specialist – KEC-4

Enclosure:

Map



Old Highway Bridge Property Acquisition
 Okanogan County, WA
 (7.5 Acres)

- Subject Property
- USGS 24K Quad Perimeters

1 inch = 0.2 miles

