



Fact Sheet

February 2010

Habitat acquisition in Methow watershed would help many species of fish

The Methow River's watershed in north-central Washington still contains pristine areas that provide riparian habitat for many species of fish. Protecting this habitat from development would benefit endangered species as well as other fish.

The Bonneville Power Administration is currently working with the Yakama Nation to fund the Methow Conservancy's proposed acquisition of three parcels of land in the upper Methow Basin. These parcels, 2.88 acres in all, were selected for protection and restoration because of the risk of losing the remaining high quality riparian habitat.

The Methow River, a tributary to the Columbia River, and its watershed are in Okanogan County.

What would be protected?

Such a purchase would enable the Methow Conservancy to permanently protect the land in its natural or restored condition, and would allow for protection and restoration of riparian fish habitat. This would benefit a number of species including two that are listed as endangered – upper Columbia spring chinook and steelhead – and one listed as threatened – Columbia River bull trout.

The upper Methow River has the potential to provide spawning habitat for spring chinook and steelhead trout, as well as rearing habitat for

steelhead, spring chinook, bull trout and cutthroat trout. The area also is crucial for holding adult fish of all species.

How would it be funded?

The purchase would be funded as part of the Columbia Basin Fish Accords. The Accords, an agreement among federal agencies, Indian tribes and states, established 10-year funding commitments to habitat and hatchery actions. The Accords focus on measurable on-the-ground projects to benefit endangered species and to keep other species from becoming endangered. Each project is vetted by the Northwest Power and Conservation Council's science advisory group.

Projects funded under the Accords are expected to provide greater clarity about biological benefits of specific actions. Most importantly, the Accords' projects build on NOAA Fisheries' biological opinions for listed salmon and steelhead and the Northwest Power and Conservation Council's fish and wildlife program.

Does the proposal fit with local efforts?

These particular parcels were selected for protection to ensure the ongoing success of a





Pristine habitat remains in the Methow watershed

riparian protection project in the area of Cedarosa. Cedarosa, a 60-acre development near the town of Mazama, has been subdivided into smaller lots or parcels. The Methow Conservancy has placed conservation easements on 20 of the lots. The proposed purchases would protect an additional three parcels and contribute to the significant conservation momentum in the area.

What does protection involve?

The goal is to keep the habitat as natural and undisturbed as possible. If these proposed purchases are successful, the Methow Conservancy plans to place a conservation easement on each property to ensure that the fisheries values and habitat are protected in perpetuity. Any activities that could damage habitat, such as clearing vegetation, diking and infilling, would be prohibited.

If the conservation easement is completed, the Methow Conservancy would write a baseline assessment and stewardship plan for the parcel. The stewardship plan would be updated periodically to account for changes on the property, and to consider the best available science and basinwide opportunities for restoration.

As part of protecting riparian habitat for fish, lot clearing, filling and diking would be prohibited, and native vegetation would be protected to keep the land as undisturbed and in relatively natural condition as possible.

How is this proceeding?

A decision on the proposed acquisition is expected this year. BPA has sent letters to neighboring landowners and other interested parties informing them of the proposal.

The parcels would provide BPA with credits for partial mitigation of anadromous and resident fish habitat losses due to Columbia River dams. Other partners involved with this project include the Yakama Nation.

Where can I get more information?

If you have questions about this proposal or would like additional information, please contact Jay Marcotte, BPA, at 503-230-3943, or toll-free at 800-282-3713 or via e-mail at jgmarcotte@bpa.gov. You may also contact Jeanne White, the Methow Conservancy, at 509-996-2870 or via e-mail at jeanne@methowconservancy.org.

Cederosa Riparian Protection Project Phase 1

Okanogan County, Washington



