



# Fact Sheet

HABITAT CONSERVATION – PUBLIC NOTICE September 2010

## BPA funds habitat acquisition along Willamette River

**Location:** Eugene/Springfield, Lane County, Oregon (SEE MAP).

**Acres:** 1,270

**Purpose:** The Bonneville Power Administration is proposing to fund the protection of a large tract of wildlife habitat in the Willamette Basin. The funding is contingent on approval of an agreement with the state of Oregon outlining how much habitat must be protected in coming years. This acquisition will partially mitigate the impacts caused by the construction and inundation of hydroelectric and flood control dams in the Willamette Basin. BPA will receive wildlife habitat credit under BPA's Fish and Wildlife Program and credit for advancing the goals of the Willamette Project Biological Opinions issued

by NOAA Fisheries and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 2008 for substantially funding this land acquisition. The purchase would go forward in October 2010, pending approval of the agreement between BPA and Oregon.

BPA would provide funding to The Nature Conservancy, which would purchase and protect an ecologically important piece of property to benefit fish and wildlife in perpetuity. The land is located at the confluence of the middle and coast forks of the Willamette River and includes more than six miles of river frontage. The purchase also will protect floodplains, adjacent wetlands, upland oak woodlands, native prairie and hardwood-conifer forest. This habitat supports many fish and wildlife species including beaver, bald eagle, red-legged frog, Western gray squirrel, Western meadowlark, Western pond turtle, wood duck and yellow warbler. These sections of the river also provide habitat for



*Middle Fork of the Willamette River (Photo credit: Chris Orsinger, Friends of Buford Park & Mt. Pisgah)*





Coast Fork of the Willamette River (Photo credit: Chris Orsinger, Friends of Buford Park & Mt. Pisgah)

the Willamette winter steelhead and Oregon chub, both listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act.

This property is one of the few remaining large pieces of mostly intact habitat in the Willamette Valley. Adding to its value from an ecological perspective is its strategic location among other lands that have important conservation value as identified in the Willamette Subbasin Plan and the Oregon Conservation Strategy. Large contiguous blocks of land provide corridors essential to many of the fish and wildlife populations that use these habitats. This purchase would increase the amount of land in the immediate vicinity that is being managed for conservation to more than 4,700 acres, preserving some of the Willamette Valley's dwindling and rare habitat types forever.

**Type of action:** The Nature Conservancy is purchasing the land. The Bonneville Power Administration is providing the majority of the funding for the purchase. Also contributing are the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board and Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. In exchange for its financial contribution BPA will receive a conservation easement that will prevent habitat conversion and secure rights to restore and maintain wildlife habitat. The Nature Conservancy will own and manage the property for 10 to 15 years before transferring it to public ownership.

**Land management:** The Nature Conservancy would manage the property and oversee extensive restoration activities to revive healthy ecosystems. Projects may include reconnecting the river with its floodplain; restoring river, stream bank, wetland and forest habitats; removing invasive species and restoring controlled burns in prairie and oak woodlands. Large blocks of land managed for conservation purposes can provide greater ecological value than many small parcels that are not connected. Fish, wildlife and plant communities that rely on a variety of habitat receive greater protection and better access to habitat when they inhabit larger blocks



Willamette confluence project with adjoining Oregon Department of Parks and Recreation lands. (Photo credit: Chris Orsinger, Friends of Buford Park & Mt. Pisgah)

of healthy land. Under these circumstances, fish and wildlife avoid the threats posed by human interactions. The restoration activities on this property will take an estimated 10 years to complete.

**Partners:** The Nature Conservancy, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, Lane County Government, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Friends of Buford Park & Mt. Pisgah, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, Oregon Department of State Lands, Oregon Water Resources Department, Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries, Willamalane Parks District, City of Springfield and the Eugene Parks Foundation.

**For more information, contact:**

**BONNEVILLE POWER ADMINISTRATION:**

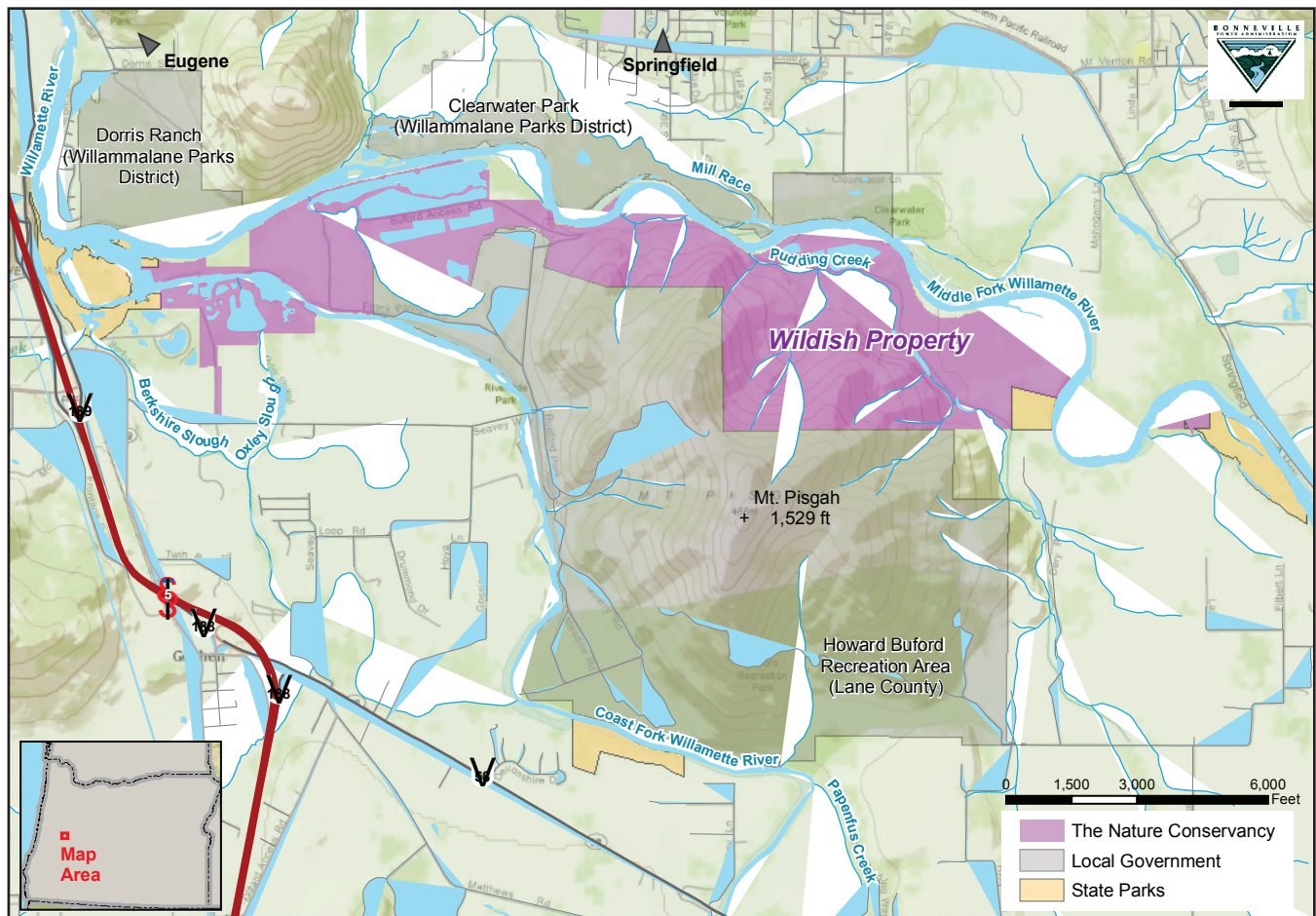
Joe DeHerrera, Wildlife Biologist 800-622-4519 or 503-230-3442, [jldeherrera@bpa.gov](mailto:jldeherrera@bpa.gov), or

**THE NATURE CONSERVANCY:**

Stephen Anderson, Director of Communications 503-802-8100, [standerson@tnc.org](mailto:standerson@tnc.org)

**BPA Fish and Wildlife Program:**

BPA's fish and wildlife program protects and preserves valuable fish and wildlife habitat throughout the Northwest. Since its inception in 1980, the program has set aside more than 300,000 acres of land benefiting hundreds of species. The program protects habitat from development either through outright purchase of land or by purchasing conservation easements on privately owned property. BPA works in partnership with conservation groups, local tribes and state fish and wildlife management agencies.



# Coast and Middle Fork Willamette River Confluence

## Lane County, Oregon

