

factsheet

June 2009

Okanogan River conservation easement protects salmon habitat

The Bonneville Power Administration is proposing to fund a 37.31 acre habitat acquisition in Washington's Okanogan River Watershed for fish habitat mitigation (see map). The Okanogan River Watershed was selected as a focus for restoration and preservation efforts because development in the area would increase the risk that more habitat resources will be damaged in the future.

This property is located along the Okanogan River in northeastern Washington's Okanogan County. The Okanogan is a tributary to the Columbia River. The property contains six-tenths of a mile of Okanogan River frontage. The Okanogan River watershed supports populations of summer/fall chinook and sockeye as well as Upper Columbia steelhead, which are listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act. This property is also located within the North Half, traditional ceded lands of the Colville Confederated Tribes Indian Reservation.

Funding for the proposed acquisition and conservation easement is among the commitments made in the historic 2008 Columbia Basin Fish Accords Memorandum of Agreement. The Accords were signed by the Colville Confederated Tribes and the Federal Columbia River Power System action agencies (BPA, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation) to establish firm, 10-year funding commitments to habitat and hatchery actions. The Accords also provide greater clarity about biological benefits by building on NOAA Fisheries' biological opinions for listed salmon and steelhead and the Northwest Power and Conservation Council's fish and wildlife program.

Acquisition of this property would protect the riverbank, limiting residential development and protecting and enhancing a spring-fed channel that can contribute to

cold and high water refugia for summer/fall chinook and Upper Columbia steelhead. Over the years, various land-use disturbances have degraded stream channel conditions, elevated temperatures and increased sediment levels in the river.

The property proposed for easement contains fish habitat that would provide BPA with credits for partial mitigation of anadromous fish habitat losses due to Columbia River hydropower dams.

Land to get management plan

If this proposed property is acquired, which is expected in summer 2009, a conservation easement would be placed on the property to ensure that the fisheries values and habitat are protected in perpetuity. The Colville Confederated Tribes would provide long-term oversight for the land and develop a management plan that would guide the protection and enhancement of habitat resources on the property.

Pending BPA's approval of the management plan, any activities that could damage habitat (such as development and construction of buildings) would be prohibited from occurring on this land.

For more information

If you have any questions about this proposal or would like additional information, please contact Dave Roberts with the Bonneville Power Administration, toll-free at (800) 282-3713 or (503) 230-4511 or daroberts@bpa.gov. You may also contact Keith Kistler of the Colville Confederated Tribes at (509) 422-7429 or keith.kistler@colvilletribes.com.



Okanogan River Watershed Conservation Easement

Okanogan County, Washington

