



Department of Energy

Bonneville Power Administration
P.O. Box 3621
Portland, OR 97208-3621
ENVIRONMENT, FISH & WILDLIFE

**Wallowa-Whitman
National Forest**
La Grande Range District
3502 Hwy 30
La Grande, OR 97850



February 16, 2016

In reply refer to: ECF-4

To: People interested in the Bird Track Springs Fish Habitat Enhancement Project.

Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) and the United States Forest Service, Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, (Forest Service) are jointly preparing an environmental assessment (EA) for a river restoration project that has been proposed by the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation along the Grand Ronde River in Union County, Oregon. The project is partially located in the La Grande Ranger District managed by the Forest Service. This letter briefly explains what is being proposed, outlines our environmental review process and schedule, and invites you to comment on the proposal.

Proposal: BPA and the Forest Service are considering a proposal to restore aquatic habitat on a 1.9 mile stretch of the Grande Ronde River to benefit Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed spring Chinook salmon, summer steelhead, and Bull Trout. Approximately 1.2 miles of the project would be implemented on National Forest System Lands, 0.1 miles on state lands, and the remaining 0.6 miles on private lands. This reach of the Grande Ronde River was disconnected from its floodplain when the Grande Ronde River Road (Highway 244) and the railroad grade were constructed. BPA is considering whether to fund the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation to implement this proposal and the Forest Service is deciding whether to issue a special use permit. Under Forest Service requirements, as a project or activity implementing the land management plan not authorized under the Healthy Forest Act, this project is subject to subparts A and B of the project level pre-decisional administrative review process as described in 36 Code of Federal Regulations 218.

Proposed actions include:

1. Excavation of new channel meander bends to improve aquatic and riparian habitat diversity and complexity, and increase channel-floodplain interactions.
2. Creation of secondary channels to increase the available area of juvenile salmon rearing habitat.
3. Placement of wood structures to increase habitat complexity.
4. Vegetation planting and seeding to improve streambank stability and provide protective cover for juvenile salmonids.

For more detailed information including maps, please visit: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=47283>

Environmental Review: To understand the potential environmental impacts of this proposal, BPA and the Forest Service will jointly prepare an EA under the National Environmental Policy Act.

The EA will describe anticipated impacts to natural and human resources and include mitigation measures that would help avoid or minimize impacts. If the analysis in the EA supports a conclusion that there is no potential for significant impacts, then BPA and USFS would each prepare a Finding of No Significant Impact, and the Forest Service would issue a Decision Notice.

During this process, BPA and the Forest Service will work with landowners, federal, state and local agencies, interest groups, and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. The proposed schedule for the EA process is as follows:

Comment scoping period	February 16 thru March 15, 2016
Draft EA available for public comment	February 2017
Final EA and USFS Draft Decision	April 2017
Finding of No Significant Impact (if warranted)	May 2017
If decision to build, construction start	Summer 2017

Please indicate on the enclosed postcard whether/how you would like to receive the EA.

How to Comment: Please send your comments by **March 15, 2016** so they may be considered in the scope of the EA. When commenting, refer to the Bird Track Springs Project. After the comment period, comments will be available on BPA's project website at www.bpa.gov/goto/BirdTrackSprings.

There are several ways to comment:

Mail:	Bill Gamble, District Ranger La Grande Ranger District 3502 Highway 30 La Grande, OR 97850	Phone:	541-962-8582
		Fax:	541-962-8580
		Email:	bgamble@fs.fed.us or comments-pacificnorthwest-wallowa-whitman-lagrande@fs.fed.us

For More Information: If you have questions for BPA, please contact Dan Gambetta at 503-230-3493, toll free at 1-800-622-4519, or by e-mail at dagambetta@bpa.gov. If you have questions for the Forest Service, please contact Bill Gamble at the contact information provided above.

Thank you for your interest in this project.

Sincerely,

/s/ Dan Gambetta

Dan Gambetta
Environmental Protection Specialist
Bonneville Power Administration

/s/ Bill Gamble

Bill Gamble
La Grande District Ranger
Wallowa-Whitman National Forest

Enclosures:
Project Map
Reply card