



Department of Energy

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

ENVIRONMENT, FISH AND WILDLIFE

April 10, 2023

In reply refer to: EC-4

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT DETERMINATION

Proposed Action: Uma-Birch Floodplain Reconnection Project

Environmental Project Manager: Jeff Maslow, EC-4, 503-230-3928, jjmaslow@bpa.gov

Location: Rieth, Umatilla County, Oregon

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) and Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR)

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to provide funding to the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation to enhance fish and wildlife habitat on about a 241-acre area along a one-mile stretch of the Umatilla River (between river miles 48.7 and 49.7) and along Birch Creek (river mile 0.0 to 0.3) at its confluence with the Umatilla River, near the town of Rieth, in Umatilla County, Oregon.

Project activities would remove most of the US Army Corps of Engineers' (Corps) certified Pendleton 2a levee as well as artificial berms to restore natural hydrology and reconnect the historic floodplain. The project would maintain the current level of flood protection provided by the existing levee through construction of a new set-back levee along Birch Creek Road.

Fish and wildlife habitat enhancement activities would include realigning Birch Creek's main channel to its historic meander, realigning the Umatilla River into the floodplain areas previously restricted by the levee, and constructing wetland and side channel habitat along both Birch Creek and the Umatilla River to improve side channel and floodplain interactions to benefit fish and wildlife. In addition, the project would remove existing buildings and decommission a Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation feedlot and associated effluent collection pond.

Class of Action to be Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): C8 Protection of Cultural Resources and Fish and Wildlife Habitat

We have determined that the proposed action is within the class of actions normally requiring an environmental assessment (EA), but not necessarily requiring an environmental impact statement (EIS) as listed in C8 Subpart D of 10 C.F.R. Part 1021. Therefore, we have determined that an EA will be prepared to assess the impacts of the proposed action. On the basis of the analysis in the EA, BPA will prepare a finding of no significant impact and proceed with the action, or will prepare an EIS if the draft EA reveals the potential for significant environmental impacts.

Katey C. Grange
NEPA Compliance Officer