



Department of Energy

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

ENVIRONMENT, FISH & WILDLIFE

August 23, 2018

In reply refer to: EC-4

To: People interested in the Columbian White-tailed Deer Translocation Project

The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) is proposing to help fund the US Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) to translocate up to 50 Columbia white-tailed deer (CWTD) from an Island in the Columbia River to conservation lands in Columbia County, Oregon. This letter explains what is being proposed, outlines our environmental review process and schedule, and requests your comments.

Proposal: The Service plans to translocate up to 50 deer from Tenasillahe Island to a 920-acre parcel (called the Columbia Stock Ranch or CSR) that is being managed by Columbia Land Trust for habitat and wildlife conservation. The CSR is located on the Oregon side of the Columbia River approximately 32 miles north of Portland, Oregon. (See enclosed project map.) The translocations would help improve fawn survival, help establish a new subpopulation of the Endangered Species Act-listed Columbian white-tailed deer, and help BPA meet its commitments under the Northwest Power Act.

The translocations are proposed over a two year period—about 30 deer would be moved in 2018, and about 20 deer in 2019 depending on the success of the 2018 effort. Translocations would occur from December 1, 2018 to March 31, 2019 and December 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020, after CWTD breeding seasons each year.

Capture and translocation would occur three to five times per week. Approximately 25-to-33 percent of the deer relocated would be males and 66-to-75 percent females (reflecting the sex ratio of this population). Capture techniques would include corral traps, drop netting, darting, and drive netting. Deer would be transported in specially-made crates by vehicle and boat. The Service would not separate fawns from their maternal parents in these translocations.

Monitoring of translocated deer would continue through 2021—monitoring would occur at least once per week for the first 6 months, then 2-to-4 times per month for 6-to-12 months after release, and then once per month for 1-to-5 years after release. Predator control would be implemented at the CSR prior to translocations, during the fawning period, and then only as needed.

Environmental Review: To understand the potential environmental impacts of this proposal, BPA, with the Service as a Cooperating Agency, will prepare an environmental assessment (EA). The EA will describe anticipated impacts to natural and human resources and include mitigation measures that would help avoid or minimize impacts. We are asking for your comments to help determine the issues that should be addressed in the EA. During this process, BPA will work with federal, state and local agencies, Tribes, potentially affected landowners, and other interest groups. The proposed schedule for the EA process is as follows:

Scoping comment period	August 23 thru September 24, 2018
Draft EA available for public comment	September 2018
Final EA	November 2018
Finding of No Significant Impact (if warranted)	November 2018
If decision to proceed, translocations would start	December 2019

Please indicate on the enclosed postcard whether or how you would like to receive the EA when it is available.

How to Comment: Please send your comments by **September 24** and reference the *CWTD Translocation Project*. All comments will be available on the project website at www.bpa.gov/goto/CWTDtranslocation. There are several ways to comment:

Mail: Bonneville Power Administration Public Affairs – DKE-7 P.O. Box 14428 Portland, OR 97291-4428	Toll-free: 800-622-4519 FAX: 503-230-4019 Online: www.bpa.gov/comment
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For More Information:

If you have questions regarding the environmental process, please contact me at 503-230-3018, or by e-mail at cjhamel@bpa.gov, or Rob Shull, Contract Environmental Protection Specialist, First Tek Professional Staffing, at 503-230-3962, or by e-mail at rwshull@bpa.gov.

Thank you for your interest in our work.

Sincerely,

/s/ Chad Hamel

Chad J. Hamel
Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Enclosures:
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