



Department of Energy

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

ENVIRONMENT, FISH & WILDLIFE

April 18, 2024

In reply refer to: ECF-4

To: People interested in the Kootenai National Wildlife Refuge Floodplain Reconnection Project

Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) is proposing to fund the Kootenai National Wildlife Refuge (KNWR) Floodplain Reconnection Project. This letter explains the proposal, outlines our anticipated environmental review process and schedule, requests your comments, and invites you to a public meeting.

Proposal: BPA proposes to provide funding to the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho (KTOI) to restore floodplain connectivity to the Kootenai River historic floodplains within the KNWR in Boundary County, Idaho near Bonners Ferry, Idaho. The KNWR is managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The USFWS and the KTOI are the project sponsors. The project's reconnection activities would include breaching levees, raising roads, replacing water control structures, enhancing wetlands, and re-establishing wetland connections. All of these actions would occur within an overall project area (see enclosed project map).

Environmental Review: To understand the potential environmental impacts of this proposal, BPA may prepare an environmental assessment (EA) following the procedures of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). If BPA determines that an EA should be prepared, the EA would analyze BPA's proposed funding for the KNWR Floodplain Reconnection Project, as well as a no-action alternative in which BPA would not fund the project and it would not be implemented. The EA would also describe anticipated impacts to natural and human resources and would identify mitigation measures to help avoid or minimize impacts. The USFWS would cooperate in the preparation of the EA to support its NEPA decision for proposed modifications to refuge management. During this process, BPA will work with landowners, tribes, federal, state and local agencies, and interest groups. The proposed schedule for the environmental review process is as follows:

Scoping comment period	April 18, 2024 to May 18, 2024
Public scoping meetings	April 30, 2024
EA determination	Summer 2024
Draft EA available for public comment (if warranted)	Summer 2024
Final EA (if warranted)	Fall 2024
Finding of No Significant Impact (if warranted)	Fall 2024
If decision to build, construction start	Summer 2025

Public Meeting: We have scheduled an informal, open-house scoping meeting to answer questions and accept comments about the scope of the environmental review:

April 30, 2024
6 – 8 p.m.
County Annex/Parole Building
6566 Main Street
Bonners Ferry, ID 83805

How to Comment: Please send your comments by **May 18, 2024** and reference the *KNWR Floodplain Reconnection Project*. All comments will be available on the project website at <http://www.bpa.gov/nepa/kootenai-natl-wildlife-refuge>. There are several ways to comment:

Mail: Bonneville Power Administration
Communications – DKE-7
P.O. Box 14428
Portland, OR 97291-4428

Toll-free: 800-622-4519
FAX: 503-230-4019
Online: www.bpa.gov/comment
Email: communication@bpa.gov

For More Information: If you have questions regarding the environmental review process, please contact me at 503-230-5756, or by e-mail at esgresh@bpa.gov. You can also reach us toll free at 1-800-622-4519.

Thank you for your interest in our work.

Sincerely,



TED GRESH
Senior Environmental Protection Specialist

Enclosures:
Project Map
Comment Form
Return Envelope