

# WELCOME

## **Columbian White-tailed Deer Translocation Project**

# Open House

**to discuss**

## **Public comment on the Draft Environmental Assessment**

**Thursday, March 21, 2019**

**5 – 7 p.m.**

# Project Description

- Move up to 50 Columbian white-tailed deer (CWTD) from Tenasillahe Island to lands managed for conservation purposes on Columbia Stock Ranch in Columbia County, OR.
- Translocations would begin winter 2019 and be complete by summer 2021.
- Corral traps, drop netting, darting and drive netting would be used.
- Deer would be transported in crates by truck and boat.
- Approximately 12-17 males and 34-38 females (sex ratio of normal population) would be moved.
- Coyote control before translocation.
- Monitoring continue through 2022.

# Project Purpose

- Establish a new subpopulation of the federally-listed (threatened) Columbian White-tailed Deer (CWTD).
- Increase the future likelihood of removing the deer from the list of endangered and threatened species.
- Implement recovery actions described in the Columbian White-tailed Deer Recovery Plan.
- Meet management objectives for the Julia Butler Hanson Refuge for the Columbian White-tailed deer as described in its Comprehensive Conservation Plan.
- Help meet BPA's commitments under the Northwest Power Act.

# Partners

## ***U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS):***

- Responsible for recovery planning and identifying lands for protection and restoration of Columbian White-tailed deer.
- Responsible for management of the Julia Butler Hansen Refuge for the Columbian White-tailed Deer (includes Tenasillahe Island – the population of deer for translocation).

## ***Bonneville Power Administration (BPA):***

- Committed to protect, mitigate and enhance fish and wildlife affected by the development and operation of the Federal Columbia River Power System.
- Funds fish and wildlife protection, mitigation and enhancement actions.

## ***Columbia Land Trust (CSR):***

- Owns and manages the Columbia Stock Ranch (destination of deer translocation).

# Environmental Review Schedule

## Scoping comment period

- August 23, 2018 – September 24, 2018

## Draft EA available for public comment

- October 23, 2018 – November 23, 2018

## **Public meeting on the comments received on the draft EA**

- **March 21, 2019**

## Final EA

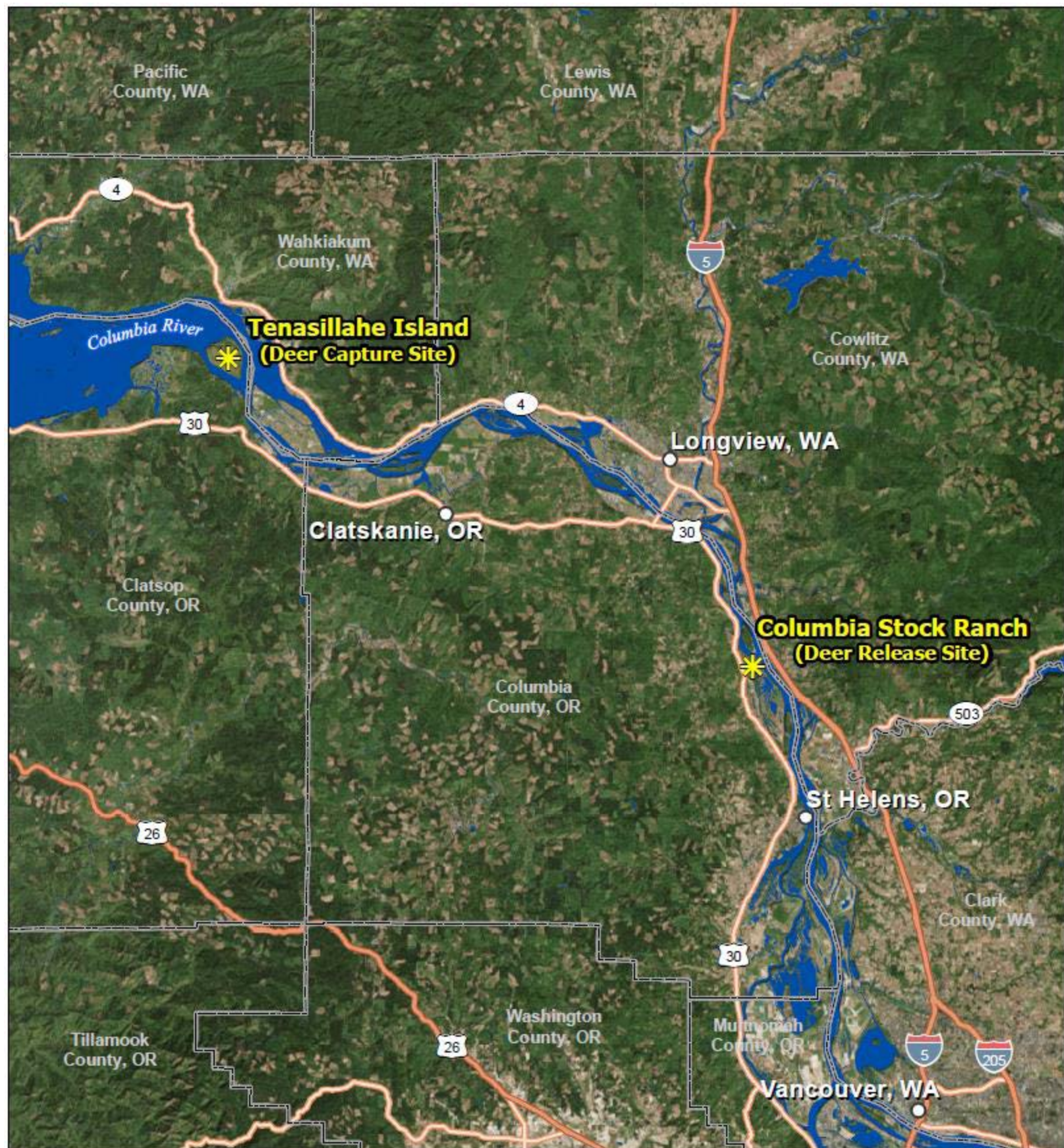
- Spring/Summer 2019

## If decision to fund, translocation begins

- Winter 2019/2020



# Project Area





# Columbia Stock Ranch



# Public Comment Themes

- CWTD are not confined to CSR (boundary not “secure”) and they will disperse onto adjacent private lands.
- Restrictions and changes to private land uses, practices and future development will be required when CWTD are present.
- Development for other private land uses will be prohibited.
- Private property rights will be “adversely impacted”.
- Cost of “required” management changes (such as grazing or pumping) will be born by private land owners.
- CSR is not adequate to support translocated deer: too small, too wet; elk will outcompete them; black-tailed deer will compete and hybridize with CWTD; coyotes and other predators will prey on them; cars will hit them.
- Proposed connectivity with other subpopulations is not likely.
- CWTD on CSR would preclude habitat improvements for salmon there and on adjacent lands.
- Proposed translocation will harm historic features and structures.



# What is Secure and Viabile?

- “For delisting the Columbia River DPS, the CWTD Recovery Plan recommended maintaining three viable subpopulations, all located on secure habitat” (EA at section 1.3.3).
- **Viable** is defined as a subpopulation of at least 50 CWTD.
- **Secure** habitat is defined as “free from adverse human activities in the foreseeable future and relatively safe from natural phenomena that would destroy the habitat’s value to CWTD” (USFWS 1983).
- Secure habitat does not require, nor imply a “secured boundary” such as a fence, barrier or wall that would effectively confine deer. “Secure” means protection from land uses that would harm CWTD and is relatively safe from natural phenomena harmful to CWTD habitat.

# Private Land Use & CWTD

## Public Comments:

- Restrictions and changes to current land uses/pumping practices will be required.
- Development for other private land uses will be prohibited.
- “Private property rights and management practices will likely be severely and adversely impacted”.
- EA provides no protections for current land uses or “rights of development”.

## Agency Response to Comments:

- The Endangered Species Act (Act) does not require private land owners to change their land use practices if a listed species takes up occupancy on their land.
- Section 9 of the Act does make it unlawful to take listed species without a permit.
- Land uses surrounding CSR are essentially the same as those surrounding other CWTD translocation sites and have not created land use conflicts.
- Additional procedural and permitting steps for listed species might be required, but they do not amount to prohibitions of otherwise lawful land uses, including those allowable under state and local planning and zoning regulations.
- The EA does not provide protections for land uses, but the Act and agency actions have means for addressing potential conflicts.

# Resources for Landowners

## Section 10 Permits

- Allows the permit-holder to legally proceed with proposed land development that would otherwise unlawfully “take” a listed species.
- Requires Habitat Conservation Plans that describe the anticipated effects on CWTD of the landowner’s action; how those effects will be minimized or mitigated; and how it is to be funded.
- Provide “No Surprise” assurances that further commitments or restrictions would not be applied.

## USDA Working Lands for Wildlife

- Provides peace of mind that no matter the legal status of a species, landowners can keep their working lands working if they agree to enhance wildlife habitat.
- Similar to an insurance policy.
- Requires an NRCS conservation plan.



# Landowners and the Endangered Species Act

## **The 4(d) rule means that landowners can:**

- Non-lethally harass CWTD or lethally take a problem CWTD causing damage with a permit from ODFW;
- Accidentally take a CWTD that is mistaken for a black-tailed deer during permitted and lawful hunting of black-tailed deer; and
- Accidentally take a CWTD during the course of permitted and lawful damage management of black-tailed deer.

**Landowners can obtain two types of permits** that provide assurances that landowners will not be subject to additional regulatory restrictions beyond the agreements.

- Incidental Take permits allow take of deer during land development provided landowners undertake conservation measures as outlined in a Habitat Conservation Plan.
- Enhancement of Survival permits for Safe Harbor Agreements, which encourage landowners to voluntarily conduct management actions to benefit listed species in exchange for assurances.

# Columbian White-tailed Deer Biology and CSR

## Public Comment:

- CSR is inadequate for translocation (size, habitat, boundary).
- Elk will outcompete CWTD; precluding their use of CSR.
- Black-tailed deer will compete and hybridize with CWTD.
- Proposed predator control will have little impact on coyote populations.
- Small CWTD home ranges and limited movement behavior will foil intended connectivity of subpopulations.

## Agency Response to Comments:

- The agencies evaluated determined that habitat conditions on CSR, including area, seasonal high water, and other species, prior to determining that CSR can be sufficient to support a CWTD subpopulation.
- CWTD is at disadvantage in Competition with elk but it will not won't preclude successful CWTD occupancy of CSR.
- CWTD and CBTD Deer are expected to partition habitat as they have historically and presently resulting in low risk of hybridization do elsewhere in Columbia River basin; hybridization is rare and thus not a threat to success.
- EA acknowledges inability to eliminate coyote predation. Proposal is for targeted Coyote control is targeted at key times to reduce fawn mortality and is not meant to eliminate coyote populations before translocation and during fawning to reduce risk at key times.
- Connectivity is based on occasional dispersal movements of individual deer that provide genetic exchange, not on home range size or daily movement patterns.

# Care to Comment?

**Although the comment periods for scoping and for review of the Draft Environmental Assessment have closed, the US Fish and Wildlife Service and Bonneville Power Administration will accept comments at any time.**

To submit a comment, please fill out a comment form tonight.

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