



NEWS RELEASE:
Tribe closes sale on 8,400 acre Rainwater Ranch

***Joint News Release: Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
and the Bonneville Power Administration***

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
TUESDAY, September 22, 1998

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT: Carl Scheeler or Allen Childs, CTUIR, (541) 278-7642;
[Carlene Stenehjem](#), BPA 503-230-5109**

[Click here for other BPA news releases](#)

TOUCHET, Wash. -- The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) have purchased an 8,441-acre ranch in southeastern Washington for fish and wildlife habitat. The sale closed Sept. 11. The CTUIR now will begin developing a management plan for the property -- an effort that will include involvement of the tribal members, the local communities, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and Bonneville Power Administration (BPA).

The Rainwater Ranch, previously owned by Miller Shingle Co. of Granite Falls, Wash., includes 5,500 acres of timber, plus rangeland, and about eight miles of anadromous fish spawning and rearing habitat in the South Fork Touchet River. The property is summer and winter range for Rocky Mountain elk, mule and white-tailed deer, black bear and mountain lion. It supports healthy populations of wild turkey and grouse and provides important habitat for a wide variety of non-game species.

The property is located in Columbia County, adjacent to the Mill Creek Watershed and the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness Area of the Umatilla National Forest. It is part of the lands ceded to the U.S. government by the CTUIR in the 1855 Treaty.

The CTUIR purchased the ranch using Bonneville Power Administration fish and wildlife mitigation funds under an agreement between state, tribal and federal wildlife managers in Washington. The funds help mitigate, or make up for, impacts of construction of and inundation by McNary and John Day hydropower dams on the Columbia River. The CTUIR is committed to providing public access to the land, as a BPA-funded project.

Antone Minthorn, Chairman of the CTUIR's Board of Trustees, said "We are looking forward to working with the local communities and our other resource management partners to craft a shared vision for the long term management of these lands. Through this process we hope to break down some of the barriers to cooperation and understanding that we have seen in the past and create a place of lasting value to us all."

Bruce Smith, WDFW Regional Director said, "We view this acquisition as essential to the future of fish and wildlife in Columbia County. It ensures that an important, large contiguous tract of fish and wildlife habitat is not subdivided and developed. We expect to consummate necessary Memorandums of Agreement to ensure the success of the tribe's mitigation efforts. This partnership will guarantee all citizens a stake in the future management of the Rainwater Ranch."

"We are pleased to be a part of the cooperative effort on this project," said BPA Administrator Judi Johansen. "BPA is committed to enhancing fish and wildlife, and this projet is designed to do both by protecting habitat in the upper watershed."

The Rainwater Ranch was selected because the property meets all of the priorities in the Tirbes' wildlife mitigation plan. That plan focuses on securing properties that provide dual benefits for anadromous fish and wildlife, and ties into other areas where the Tribes have access to exercise treary rights, such as the federal lands adjacent to the property.

The CTUIR will undertake an in depth public outreach iffort during development of a site-specific management plan. The outreach effort will begin in October. That plan will include habitat enhancement strategies, access and travel management alternatives, noxious weed control, fire suppression, operations and maintenance. It will also include monitoring and evaluation to assure that strategies are improving watershed resources and species impacted by the dams.

###
