

[in the news](#)[home](#) [site search](#) [org chart](#) [contact us](#) [web comments](#)

BPA, Tribes join to protect and restore 24,304 acres of prime wildlife habitat in Wheeler County

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

Bonneville Power Administration
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
TUESDAY, October 5, 1999
PR 65 99

CONTACTS: [Perry Gruber](#) (BPA), (503)230-3176

PORTLAND, Ore. - The Bonneville Power Administration has funded the purchase of 24,304 acres of wildlife habitat in Wheeler County, Ore., and the Warm Springs Tribe will manage it, the two entities announced today.

"This is an example of how ratepayer dollars are invested in environmental projects with potentially large dividends," said Judi Johansen, BPA administrator. "Our Native American partners will now take the project and enhance it as habitat for wildlife, including salmon and steelhead."

The Warm Springs Tribe purchased Pine Creek Ranch from its private owner for \$3.2 million using BPA funding from the agency's watershed and wildlife budget.

"This project represents the first opportunity for the Warm Springs tribes to manage wildlife acreage purchased to mitigate for habitat removed by the construction of dams," said Terry Luther, spokesman for the tribes. "It is prime wildlife habitat that will now be enhanced and protected in its natural state in perpetuity."

Pine Creek Ranch sprawls over the Pine Creek watershed, an area of approximately 42,000 acres of arid rangeland in northwestern Wheeler County. Pine Creek is a tributary of the main stem of the John Day River and has its confluence near Clarno, Ore.

The watershed is home to at least 36 animal and plant species that are listed as sensitive, threatened or endangered. It provides spawning and rearing habitat for one of the few remaining native steelhead populations in the lower John Day River basin. The watershed also provides wintering habitat for deer and elk.

Years of cattle ranching have severely damaged ecosystems on the land and in the tributaries and streams. BPA will work with the tribe over the next year to create a management plan to restore the ecosystem of the Pine Creek watershed through passive measures, primarily eliminating practices that have historically caused damage or gradual degradation of the watershed or prevented natural recovery of riparian zones and other areas on the land.

One of the ways BPA restores habitat is by purchasing land and having other organizations own and manage it. All such purchases are credited against a ledger of habitat losses resulting from dam construction.

###
