

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

BPA will fund special projects designed To "jump start" fish recovery

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

Bonneville Power Administration

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: THURSDAY, May 10, 2001

PR 33 01

CONTACTS: [Ed Mosey](#) or [Mike Hansen](#), BPA (503) 230-5131

PORTLAND Ore. – The Bonneville Power Administration announced today that it will fund 11 "high priority" projects designed to provide immediate aid to endangered salmon and steelhead in the Columbia Basin. The cost is expected to be approximately \$15 million.

In addition, four projects will require further clarification before a final decision can be made to proceed. If these four "provisional" projects are also implemented, the total cost for high priority projects would be approximately \$19 million.

Last November, BPA and the Northwest Power Planning Council jointly sent out a solicitation calling for proposals that could "jump start" fish recovery. The 15 projects, which are spread out across the Columbia Basin, were selected from a total of 96 proposals.

High priority projects are those that can be implemented within the year and begin providing immediate and measurable benefits to anadromous fish (salmon and steelhead) that have been listed under the Endangered Species Act as threatened or endangered. All preliminary work such as planning, obtaining permits, compliance clearances and landowner agreements must be sufficiently completed so that groundwork for the projects can begin by September 30, 2001.

BPA Acting Administrator Stephen Wright credited his predecessor, Judi Johansen, as the driver behind using such projects to "jump start" a long-term effort to recover ESA-listed species. "She had the foresight to realize that we couldn't afford to wait until all the planning and pre-work were done. In some cases, that can take two or three years. So we focused on projects that can hit the ground and run this year. It's especially important to act quickly this year because we are battling the effects of severe drought," he said.

The projects address improving water quality and quantity, improving fish passage in tributaries, and enhancing or protecting fish habitat. (*See attached list of projects and locations.*) Those projects that provide multiple benefits and those that are part of a collaborative effort received additional consideration. Some of the projects include cost sharing, and special emphasis was given to projects where delay could jeopardize funding from sources other than BPA. Only actions over and above what

already have been authorized or are required by other entities were considered.

"These projects will provide an on-the-ground balance to others that involve more extensive planning and review. I believe they are unique opportunities to do something right away," said Sarah McNary, BPA's fish and wildlife director.

Each project received extensive scrutiny to ensure that it not only met the high priority criteria, but that it also was consistent with the existing planning for ESA-listed salmon and steelhead. The Northwest Power Planning Council included the high priority funding initiative in its recently amended fish and wildlife program. The Independent Science Review Panel, a group of fishery scientists, and the Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Authority, which represents fish and wildlife agencies and tribes, also reviewed the projects. The proposals also were available for public comment. Finally, the National Marine Fisheries Service screened the proposals to ensure they are consistent with its "2000 Federal Columbia River Basin Power System Biological Opinion."

High priority projects are a one-time funding commitment, but they do not foreclose other avenues for projects that did not make the selection. Sponsors whose projects did not make it into the high-priority funding category will have other opportunities to put their projects forward. In some cases, projects were not ready for on-the-ground implementation by this fall, and, in other cases, the projects did not meet the criteria for immediate benefits. They can be resubmitted in the appropriate Northwest Power Planning Council's Provincial Review process. In addition, BPA currently has a separate solicitation out calling for proposals that address the impacts of emergency hydro operations on endangered salmon and steelhead. Any project that meets the criteria of that solicitation is eligible for consideration.

###

Note attachment

High Priority Projects and Locations

For further information on each project, go to <http://www.efw.bpa.gov/cgi-bin/FW/welcome.cgi> or contact the BPA information center in Portland (503) 230-7334 or outside Portland 1-800-622-4520. (Here is the [letter](#) to Council identifying projects to be implemented with [project location map](#).)

Approved Projects

1. Evaluation of live capture selective harvest methods for Columbia River commercial fisheries. Lower Mid-Columbia Subbasin.
2. Protection of Bear Valley wild salmon, steelhead and bull trout spawning and rearing habitat. Salmon Subbasin.
3. Ames Creek restoration. Willamette Subbasin.
4. Arrowleaf/Methow River conservation project. Methow Subbasin.
5. Installation of fish screens to protect steelhead and bull trout. Walla Walla Subbasin.
6. Gourley Creek Dam fish ladder. Willamette Subbasin.
7. Acquisition of Wagner Ranch. John Day Subbasin.
8. Acquisition of Forrest Ranch. John Day Subbasin.
9. Farmers Irrigation District mainstem fish screen project. Hood River Subbasin.
10. Acquisition of Camp Creek Ranch at Zumwalt Prairie. Imnaha Subbasin.

11. Conservation easement, Baker Ranch, Salmon River East Fork. Salmon Subbasin.

Provisionally Approved Projects

1. Restoration of anadromous fish access to Hawley Creek. Salmon Subbasin.
2. Reconnection of Little Morgan Creek to the Mainstem Pahsimeroi River. Salmon Subbasin.
3. Increase in-stream flows to dewatered stream reaches. Walla Walla Subbasin.
4. Acquisition of Tucannon River water rights. Tucannon Subbasin.

###
