

factsheet

April 2009

Flathead River Watershed conservation easement protects trout habitat

The Bonneville Power Administration is proposing to fund the acquisition of several parcels of land in northwest Montana for fish habitat mitigation (see map). These parcels total about 95 acres and are located within the boundaries of the Flathead Indian Reservation in Sanders County.

These properties were selected for protection for several reasons. First, they are within the Flathead River Watershed, an area designated as critical habitat for bull trout, resident fish that are listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. The Flathead River is also home to migratory westslope cutthroat trout, a species that is considered at risk by local tribes and the state of Montana.

Over the years, various land-use disturbances have degraded stream channel conditions, elevated temperatures and increased sediment levels in the river, causing fish populations to decline in the area. The Flathead River Watershed was selected as a focus for protection and restoration efforts because the high rate of development in the area increases the risk that more habitat resources will be damaged in the future.

Additionally, this land is significant to the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, and evidence of traditional use goes back hundreds of years.

Acquiring these properties would provide BPA with credits for partial mitigation of resident fish habitat losses due to the construction and inundation of Hungry Horse Dam, a federal dam located on the

South Fork of the Flathead River. Other agencies involved with this project include Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Land to get management plan

Once these parcels have been acquired, which is expected in spring 2009, a conservation easement would be placed on the properties to ensure that the fisheries values and habitat are protected in perpetuity. The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes would provide long-term stewardship for the land and develop a management plan to guide the protection and enhancement of habitat resources on the properties.

Pending BPA's approval of the management plan, any activities that could damage habitat (such as harvesting of wood products, grazing or livestock or construction of buildings) would be prohibited from occurring on this land.

For more information

If you have any questions about this proposal or would like additional information, please contact Cecilia Brown, BPA, at (503) 230-3462, toll-free at (800) 282-3713 or e-mail at ckbrown@bpa.gov. You may also contact Lynn DuCharme of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes at (406) 883-2888 or e-mail at lynnd@cskt.org.



Flathead River Watershed Conservation Easement

Sanders County, Montana

