

JOURNAL

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Web Site: www.bpa.gov/corporate/kc/home/journal

The region speaks on BPA finances

More than 8,000 organizations and individuals answered BPA's request for thoughts on its financial choices for 2003-2006.

The comments fall into two major areas – those focused most on rates and those focused most on specific program benefits. For example, a number of BPA utility customers say, “BPA should establish as an overriding agency goal reducing its expenditures to the levels forecast in the rate case.” Expressing the second view, form letters from 180 people said, “Cutting critical investments in salmon recovery, renewable energy, and energy conservation is the wrong way to go.”

BPA's responses to the Financial Choices comments and decisions for 2003-2006 are due later this year.

Regional Dialogue generates comments

Over 1,000 people attended Regional Dialogue public meetings, sponsored by BPA and the Northwest Power Planning Council, to discuss BPA's future power supply role. More than 400 comments were submitted supporting different positions. The dialogue will help shape how BPA's benefits and costs are distributed within the region after 2006.

Suggestions included support from a utility coalition for 20-year contracts that would establish the distribution of the costs and benefits of the Federal Columbia River Power System.

Another group proposed firm power contracts for direct-service aluminum companies as well as credit support for power generators that may be developed by aluminum companies. Among other things, conservation groups suggested that conservation and renewables be the source of energy to meet all load growth over the next 20 years, while salmon supporters proposed that tribes have a stronger voice regarding fish-related decisions.

BPA crew members roll the first of 36 new AC/DC converter valves out of the Celilo Converter Station assembly room. These units will replace original valves installed at the DC intertie's northern end in the 1970s.

The council will develop its recommendations to BPA by early December. During the next few months, BPA will meet with customer groups, stakeholders and others to clarify proposals and share ideas. BPA expects to develop a proposal that will go out for public comments early in 2003. BPA's final decision is expected in mid-2003. More information is available via the Internet at www.bpa.gov/power/regionaldialogue.

Dry Year Strategy plan advances

Now that the public comment period has closed, BPA is analyzing suggestions from customers, constituents and tribes on its proposed Dry Year Strategy. The idea is to have a plan to help BPA meet future critical periods marked by abnormal conditions such as drought, extremely volatile market prices or significant reductions in power availability. Under such conditions extraordinary efforts may be necessary to meet requirements in economically and environmentally sound ways.

BPA wants to have a strategy completed by the end of November. The strategy will be a catalog of tools available without priorities. Conditions in any year would determine which tools would be chosen.

30-year-old AC-DC converters replaced

New solid-state AC-DC power converters, called valves, are being installed at BPA's Celilo Converter Station near The Dalles, Ore. They replace the original vintage-1970 valves that convert alternating current power to direct current before sending it to California. Direct current is more efficient for long distance transmission.

This is the first step in a \$25 million project to replace all the original valves and related equipment on the north end of the 846-mile direct-current intertie transmission line to California. The replacement will



maintain the line rating at 3,100 megawatts for the next 30 years. The southern partners of the DC intertie, Southern California Edison and the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, are making similar improvements to Sylmar Converter Station at their end of the line. Through Dec. 6, while the new equipment is being installed, the DC intertie rating will be reduced. The new valves are expected to be operating by Dec. 18.

BPA pays U.S. Treasury

BPA made its 2002 payment to the U.S. Treasury for federal investments in the Federal Columbia River Power System, including dams and transmission facilities. The payment rounds up to \$1.056 billion and includes \$505 million in principal and \$483 million in interest. It's the 19th consecutive year BPA has made the payment on time and in full.

Fall chinook protected at Columbia River's Vernita Bar

Salmon born four years ago along Vernita Bar in the Columbia River are returning to their spawning gravels in near-record numbers. Fishery managers and hydro-power system operators are controlling river flows to protect this critical spawning area. According to Scott Bettin, BPA fish biologist, 78,000 fall chinook are expected to spawn this year in the reach between McNary and Priest Rapids dams. Such a return would nearly double last year's tally of 44,000 and become the second-highest return in 40 years of counting.

"A combination of actions taken by dam operators, along with favorable ocean conditions, is yielding excellent results," Bettin said. "After 16 years of managing this program, the returning adult salmon numbers speak well for the program and our progress toward salmon recovery."

Vernita Bar is a large gravel bar in the Columbia River four miles downstream from Priest Rapids Dam. There, and in three other places in the reach, salmon dig nests (redds) in the gravel to lay their eggs.

From mid-October to the weekend before Thanksgiving, river levels below Priest Rapids Dam are reduced during the day. Lower water encourages salmon, which spawn during the day, to dig their redds lower on the riverbanks. At night, flows increase to allow water to go downstream. The objective is to ensure that eggs are deposited in areas that will remain submerged until they hatch. The winter protection level will be set on Nov. 24 and maintained until spring.

Federal agencies, tribes, states and public utility districts in the region all cooperate to make the agreement possible.

Fall fish runs set records

Good ocean conditions and federal salmon recovery efforts appear to be paying off, according to biologists. The fall chinook tally at Bonneville Dam is the highest since counting began in 1938, surpassing 2001. To date, over 470,000 fall chinook have passed the counting stations.

The good run was anticipated based on last year's jack count. Jacks are young salmon that return after only a year at sea. They are precursors of their spawning class, which returns after two to five years in the ocean.

Public service award granted

BPA Administrator Steve Wright presented an award for exceptional public service to Aaron Jones, former general manager of the Washington State Rural Electric Cooperatives Association. Jones recently accepted the position of executive vice president and general manager for Golden State Power Cooperative in California after 14 years with WRECA.

In presenting the award, Wright said of Jones, "He has been an effective champion for public power and a strong supporter of the Bonneville Power Administration. He has been a personal voice in the mission of delivering power at cost to rural electric cooperatives and public bodies. His work communicating with and educating federal and state legislators on key BPA issues has been invaluable over the years."

BPA's Eastern Power Business Manager Rick Itami noted that Jones ended every recent WRECA annual meeting with Woody Guthrie's song, "Roll on Columbia." Itami said, "Jones used this to remind all of us involved with public power of the truly great resource we have been blessed with, and the awesome responsibility we have to use it wisely."

Editor's note: Thanks to our readers

Fewer paper copies of the *Journal* were mailed this month thanks to readers who are now viewing it on our Web site. Electronic delivery is more immediate and helps us cut costs. The *Journal* is available at www.bpa.gov/corporate/kc/home/journal.

We can also notify readers via e-mail when the *Journal* is posted and provide a link to the Web site.

Are you willing to view the *Journal* electronically? Please send an e-mail to comment@bpa.gov letting us know that a paper copy mailed to your address is no longer necessary and if you want e-mail notice of each month's *Journal*. Paper copies will still be mailed to those who want them.

NEW PROJECTS

White Sturgeon Mitigation and Restoration in the Columbia and Snake Rivers Upstream of Bonneville Dam EA – Ore., Wash. and Idaho

To restore and mitigate for documented lost white sturgeon productivity caused by development and operation of the hydropower system. An EA is being prepared. Call to be added to the mail list.

ONGOING PROJECTS

BPA's Power Supply Role After 2006

A regional discussion regarding how BPA will market power and share the costs and benefits of the Federal Columbia River Power System in the Pacific Northwest after 2006 is under way. In the first phase of this discussion, BPA and the Northwest Power Planning Council requested interested parties to share proposals and comments with the region. Proposals and comments that reached BPA prior to Sept. 12, were discussed at public meetings in September. The close of comment was Oct. 18, 2002. All proposals and comments received are posted to the council's Web site at www.nwccouncil.org/energy/bpa. BPA plans to hold meetings and/or workshops at which post-2006 power sales, sharing of costs and benefits of the FCRPS, and other topics will be discussed. Please refer to BPA's Web site for further information www.bpa.gov/power/regionaldialogue.

Cliffs Energy Project ROD – Klickitat Co., Wash.

BPA has decided to offer contract terms for integrating power from GNA Energy LLC (GNA) at Harvalum Substation for a proposed 300-MW combustion turbine generation plant. GNA would build the power plant, five miles of new natural gas pipeline and 700 feet of 230-kV transmission line to BPA's Harvalum Substation. Klickitat County issued a Mitigated Determination of Non-Significance on June 6 for the power plant project. A ROD was published in the Federal Register on Sept. 23. See www.transmission.bpa/projects for more information.

COB Energy Facility Interconnect EIS – Klamath Co., Ore.

Peoples Energy Resources Corp. has requested interconnection of its proposed 1,200-MW combustion turbine project at a site near Bonanza in Klamath Co., Ore. The project would require a new 500-kV transmission line to BPA's Captain Jack Substation. The project is subject to Oregon Energy Facility Siting Council certification. The draft EIS is scheduled for publication this fall.

Draft Guide to the Tools and Principles for a Dry Year Strategy

This draft describes the principles that would guide decision making regarding the use of specific tools in a dry year to balance the environment, power supply and reliability facets of the Federal Columbia River Power System should a critically dry year, such as the one experienced in 2001, occur again between now and 2007. The comment period closed on Oct. 31.

Federal Columbia River Power System Implementation Plan

This federal draft plan for Columbia River Power System Operations in 2002-2006 would carry out biological opinions issued under the Endangered Species Act. See www.salmonrecovery.gov.

Fish and Wildlife Implementation Plan EIS – Regionwide

This EIS examines potential impacts of implementing any of the fish and wildlife policy directions being considered in regional processes. BPA has developed a preferred alternative from the regional guidance. The final EIS is expected later this year.

Grand Coulee-Bell 500-kV Transmission Line (Eastern Washington Reinforcement) EIS – Wash.

This project would replace about 84 miles of 115-kV transmis-

sion line with a new, higher capacity 500-kV line. The proposed line would connect BPA's Bell Substation in Spokane to the Bureau of Reclamation's switchyard at Grand Coulee Dam. It would be located primarily on existing BPA right-of-way. A final EIS is expected in December and a ROD is expected in January 2003. See www.transmission.bpa.gov/projects for more information.

Grande Ronde and Imnaha Spring Chinook Project EIS – Wallowa and Union Cos., Ore.

This project would build fish trapping, incubation, rearing and release hatchery facilities to help boost native spring chinook salmon populations in the Lostine and Imnaha rivers of Northeast Oregon. Planned hatchery facilities would modify and augment existing Lower Snake River Compensation Plan facilities. A summary of the public scoping comments is available on request. A draft EIS will be available for comment later this year.

Grizzly Generation Project EIS – Jefferson Co., Ore.

Cogentrix proposes to build a 980-MW combined-cycle combustion turbine power plant and has requested interconnection at BPA's Grizzly Substation. An EIS will evaluate natural gas, water pipeline and transmission easements for facilities servicing the project. The U.S. Forest Service is the lead federal agency; BPA and the Bureau of Land Management are cooperating. Oregon EFSC is conducting a coordinated state siting process. The applicant has withdrawn Grizzly Power's site application to Oregon EFSC. Oregon EFSC has denied an extension of the project's notice of intent, which expires on Dec. 4, 2002.

Horse Heaven Wind Project EIS – Benton Co., Wash.

BPA proposes to purchase up to 50 aMW from a 225-MW wind project proposed by Washington Winds Inc. The developer would build, own and operate the project and would build about 12 miles of transmission line to interconnect with BPA's transmission grid.

Johnson Creek Artificial Propagation Enhancement EA – Valley Co., Idaho

This project seeks to recover the creek's depleted native summer chinook salmon population. It would include additional facilities at the McCall Fish Hatchery in McCall, Idaho, and acclimation facilities along Johnson Creek. This project is currently on hold.

Kangley-Echo Lake Transmission Line Project – King and Kittitas Cos., Wash.

BPA proposes to build a 500-kV transmission line to connect an existing transmission line near Kangley to BPA's Echo Lake Substation in western Washington. BPA's preferred alternative would run parallel to the major portion of the Raver-Echo Lake 500-kV line. The project is needed to improve transmission system reliability and to enhance BPA's ability to meet treaty requirements with Canada. BPA is preparing a supplemental draft EIS (SDEIS) that will analyze four alternatives not considered in detail in the draft EIS. Six public meetings were held in June and July to take comments on the scope of the SDEIS. The SDEIS will be released for a 45-day public and agency review in January 2003. Public meetings will follow. See www.transmission.bpa.gov/projects for more information.

Maiden Wind Farm EIS – Benton and Yakima Cos., Wash.

Washington Winds Inc. proposes to build and operate a wind project of up to 494 MW north of Prosser. BPA proposes to acquire and transmit up to 50 aMW but will study the full electrical output of the project. The draft EIS is available. See www.efw.bpa.gov/cgi-bin/PSA/NEPA/SUMMARIES/MaidenWindFarm.

McNary-John Day 500-kV Line Project – McNary to John Day dams, Ore. and Wash.

BPA proposes to build about 79 miles of new 500-kV transmission line parallel to existing BPA lines between McNary and John Day substations. The line would cross the Columbia River below McNary Dam, run parallel to the north side of the Columbia through Benton and Klickitat counties and cross back into Oregon near John Day Dam. It is needed to integrate some of the many new generating projects considered for this area and to reinforce transmission reliability. The final EIS is available. A ROD is expected this fall. See www.transmission.bpa.gov/projects for more information.

Noxon to Kalispell (Libby Loop Section) Fiber Optic Cable Project

BPA plans to add fiber optic cable to some of the existing transmission lines between the Noxon Communications Hut in Sanders Co., Mont., and the Libby Substation located in Lincoln Co., Mont. The project route is approximately 23 miles in length. This fiber optic cable installation will complete work that was started last year. The cable, which ranges from ¾ to 1 inch in diameter, will be attached to each transmission structure along the route.

Plymouth Generating Facility EIS – Benton Co., Wash.

Plymouth Energy requested interconnection of its proposed 306-MW combustion turbine project near Plymouth in Benton Co., Wash. BPA is preparing a joint NEPA/SEPA EIS with Benton Co. A draft EIS is available for review. The comment period on the DEIS ended on Oct. 15, 2002.

Raymond-Cosmopolis 115-kV Transmission Line EA –

Grays Harbor and Pacific Cos., Wash.

BPA proposes to rebuild an existing 115-kV transmission line between Raymond and Cosmopolis, roughly parallel to Hwy. 101. Most of the 18-mile-long line will remain in existing right-of-way. A preliminary EA will be available for public review this fall. See www.transmission.bpa.gov/projects for more information.

Salmon Creek EIS – Okanogan Co., Wash.

BPA proposes to fund a project to enhance fish habitat and fish passage and to increase instream flows in 4.3 miles of lower Salmon Creek, a tributary of the Okanogan River. The project would rehabilitate the stream channel, revegetate stream banks and increase streamflows. A draft EIS is anticipated in summer 2003.

Schultz-Hanford Area 500-kV Line Project – near Ellensburg to near the Hanford Reservation, Wash.

BPA proposes to build a new 500-kV line from Schultz Substation to the new Wautoma Substation, southwest of the Hanford Monument. A final EIS is expected in December and a ROD is expected in January 2003. See www.transmission.bpa.gov/projects for more information.

South Fork Flathead Watershed/Westslope Cutthroat Trout Conservation Program – Flathead National Forest, Mont.

BPA proposes to fund a project to remove exotic trout species from selected lakes in the South Fork of the Flathead drainage and replace them with genetically pure westslope cutthroat trout. BPA is preparing an EIS. A scoping period will begin in the winter.

Summit/Westward Project – Columbia Co., Ore.

Westward Energy Co. proposes a 520-MW natural-gas-fired combustion-turbine facility in Columbia Co. near Clatskanie, Ore., and requested interconnection to the federal grid. EFSC is the lead agency for the environmental review of the generation project; BPA has the lead on integrating transmission.

Umatilla Generating Project EIS – Umatilla Co., Ore.

Umatilla Generating Co. LP proposes to build a 550-MW combined-cycle combustion turbine. Umatilla Electric Co-op would reconductor about 11 miles of transmission to 230-kV and build about a half mile of new 230-kV line to BPA's McNary Substation where BPA would integrate the power into the grid. The ROD for the electrical interconnection of the Umatilla Generating Project is available. See www.efw.bpa.gov/cgi-bin/PSA/NEPA/summaries/Umatilla. BPA has decided to offer contract terms for connecting and integrating power from the Umatilla Generating Project into the Federal Columbia River Transmission System at BPA's McNary Substation.

Wallula-Smiths Harbor Transmission Line Project –

Walla Walla Co., Wash.

A 5.1-mile segment of 500-kv transmission line is proposed to connect power from a 1,300-MW natural-gas-fired combined-cycle combustion gas turbine facility (the Wallula Power Project) to a new BPA switchyard (Smiths Harbor) near Wallula Junction in Walla Walla Co., Wash. A 28-mile segment of transmission line adjacent to an existing transmission line was also proposed between the Smiths Harbor switchyard and BPA's existing McNary Substation but will not be built at this time because it is not needed for firm transmission of power from the Wallula power project. A final EIS was released to the public Aug. 16. A ROD is expected this fall. See www.efsc.wa.gov/wallula.html or www.transmission.bpa/projects for more information.

Wanapa Energy Center Generation Proj. EIS – Umatilla Co.

The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation requested interconnection of the Wanapa Energy Center, a proposed 1,300-MW gas-fired combined-cycle combustion turbine project, into the transmission grid. The project would be located on tribal trust land. The Bureau of Indian Affairs plans to prepare an EIS on the project, and BPA is participating as a cooperating agency. A draft EIS is expected in December 2002.

SUPPLEMENT ANALYSES

Watershed Management EIS

- SA-90 Naches River Water Treatment Plant Intake Screening Project
- SA-91 Hood River Fish Habitat (Evans Creek Culvert Replacement) Project
- SA-92 Asotin Creek Six-Year Direct Seed Program
- SA-93 Couse/Tenmile Creeks Six-Year Direct Seed Program

Wildlife Management EIS

- SA-29 Blue Creek Winter Range – Spokane Reservation (Acquisition of Smith and Parsons Properties)

If you have questions or comments, or you want to be added to the mailing list for any project, call (503) 230-3478 (Portland) or 1-800-622-4519.

To order copies of documents, call: 1-800-622-4520 or (503) 230-7334. Written comments may be sent to: BPA, P.O. Box 12999, Portland, OR 97212. E-mail address: comment@BPA.gov. BPA home page: <http://www.bpa.gov>. For details on BPA environmental reviews listed above, including site maps and documents issued to date, see <http://www.efw.bpa.gov/cgi-bin/PSA/NEPA/Projects>. Process Abbreviations: DEIS-Draft Environmental Impact Statement, EA-Environmental Assessment, EFSEC-Washington Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council, EFSC-Oregon Energy Facility Siting Council, EIS-Environmental Impact Statement, FONSI-Finding of No Significant Impact, NOI-Notice of Intent, ROD-Record of Decision, SA-Supplement Analysis.

