

Journal

November 2009

Comment invited on I-5 Project

For several years, transmission in the I-5 corridor has been strained with increasing congestion and growing risks to reliability. BPA developed operational procedures that put off the need to string new wires. However, these alternatives have been exhausted, and BPA is seeing increased requests for transmission to and through the Portland/Vancouver metropolitan area as growth continues.

As a result, BPA is proposing a 500-kilovolt transmission line called the I-5 Corridor Reinforcement Project. It could extend approximately 70 miles from a new substation near Castle Rock, Wash., to a new substation near BPA's existing Troutdale Substation in Oregon.

This line would increase the reliability of the region's transmission system by relieving the heavily congested area along the I-5 corridor. It would also enhance renewable energy in the Northwest by allowing increased flow of renewable wind energy from generation sources, largely east of the Cascades, to population centers in the I-5 corridor.

The I-5 Corridor Reinforcement Project is currently undergoing public review on issues to consider in an environmental review. If BPA decides to proceed with construction after the review process is complete, construction could begin in 2012-2013 with completion as early as 2015.

McNary-John Day line ahead of schedule

Only the first 10 miles of the new 500-kilovolt McNary-John Day transmission line were to have been completed before winter. But by mid-October, crews were already past mile 22 and moving quickly.

Near McNary Dam, towers are already up and waiting for line to be strung. The right-of-way parallels existing BPA lines along the north shore of the Columbia River.

"We have skipped a few structures," said BPA's Dan Holzer. "We wanted to be a good neighbor, so we waited for grapes and circle-irrigated crops to be harvested before the construction contractor went into those areas."

Plans call for work to continue through most of the winter. Access roads have been going well, and crews could start stringing line as soon as January instead of next spring.

The McNary-John Day project, including Columbia River crossings, is due to be completed by February 2012.

New technology tracks fish home

Crews in Idaho installed the largest fish detection antenna ever in a free-flowing river this past October. The new BPA-funded antenna array will improve tracking of Columbia River salmon and steelhead by a fish-monitoring network that has become the largest of its kind in the world.

The array resembles a narrow sidewalk across the bottom of the South Fork of the Salmon River east of McCall, Idaho. It's actually a 120-foot line of six fiberglass panels that house antenna wiring and lie flush with the riverbed. As fish cross over the panels, the antenna array silently picks up codes from tiny electronic tags (Passive Integrated Transponders) implanted in juvenile and adult fish.

A transmitter then sends the codes by satellite into a Portland-based database that collects similar data from other tracking arrays at dams, fish hatcheries and in rivers across the Northwest. Biologists can sit at their desks and track fish through some of the most remote parts of the region. The unprecedented detail will help measure the effectiveness of habitat restoration funded by BPA.

Anglers earn bucks while helping salmon

Tens of thousands of northern pikeminnow, rapacious predators of young salmon, were caught this year as part of the 2009 Northern Pikeminnow Sport Reward Fishery Program, which ended Oct. 11. The annual program, sponsored by BPA and Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, began last May.

All told, 141,645 pikeminnow were caught this season in the Columbia and Snake rivers, down from a typical 160,000 to 200,000.

"This year the number of pikeminnow caught was lower than in recent years, but we believe it's due to the program doing what it was designed to do: reduce the number of pikeminnow in the river," said Russell Porter, senior program manager for the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission.

Last year 158,191 northern pikeminnow were turned in. As a result, northern pikeminnow predation on juvenile salmon in 2009 was cut by an estimated 37 percent.



BPA supports Hemlock Dam removal

With little fanfare, Hemlock Dam in southwestern Washington was removed through a project partially funded by BPA.

“BPA supports dam removal where it makes sense,” said BPA Vice President for Environment, Fish and Wildlife Greg Delwiche. “While hydroelectric dams provide emissions-free electricity and other extremely valuable power benefits, Hemlock Dam was obsolete. And it was the number one limiting factor in the recovery of endangered wild steelhead native to this area,” Delwiche added.

Trout Creek was originally dammed in the early 1900s, when settlers erected a wooden “splash dam” to help move logs downstream. Thirty years later, the Civilian Conservation Corps built a concrete dam in the same place to provide power and irrigation to nearby U.S. Forest Service facilities.

In 2007, BPA stepped forward to help fund removal of Hemlock Dam. Other sponsors provided a 30 percent cost-share, including the Forest Service, Salmon Recovery Funding Board, the Yakama Nation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ecotrust, Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group, NOAA Fisheries and American Rivers.

Lifeline hatcheries save diversity

A careful effort to preserve their genes appears to be helping the fight to save Snake River sockeye salmon.

This year, 833 fish returned to Redfish Lake high in Idaho’s Sawtooth Mountains – traveling 900 miles through eight dams and climbing more than 6,500 feet. This is far more than any year since 1957. Most of these fish were born in hatcheries.

Designed to be a “safety net” for a species that biologists acknowledge was “functionally extinct,” the Snake River sockeye hatchery program emphasizes preserving the species’ unique genetic material. The goal is to produce fish whose genes are as close as possible to their wild ancestors.

Hatcheries are often implicated as contributing to the decline of wild stocks. One way this happens is when a hatchery uses only a small number of fish to create new hatchery stock. This reduces the stock’s genetic diversity and makes hatchery fish less successful surviving and producing in the wild.

According to Paul Kline of the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, the Snake River sockeye hatchery program tests every fish to determine its degree of relatedness to every other fish in the hatchery before it is allowed to spawn. This year, for instance, managers kept 147 of the adult fish that returned to Redfish Lake because “those fish represented the full spectrum of genetic material that we know of” for Snake River sockeye, Kline said.

NOAA Fisheries scientists found that the BPA-funded program has preserved 93 percent of the genetic diversity of the species. No other hatchery program approaches that success rate, Kline said.

New wind meters installed

The final of 14 new wind meters, officially called anemometers, spun into the wind over a hill north of Sunnyside, Wash., on Sept. 29.

A BPA crew spent the summer traversing BPA’s grid from the Oregon coast to the Tri-Cities, Wash., area climbing towers and installing the anemometers. It’s one of the first steps in developing BPA’s wind forecasting system.

“The system will take data from the National Weather Service and other sources, and our anemometers will add crucial surface measurements,” explained Matt Neel, project manager. “As the weather funnels toward the gorge from the coast or from the basin, they’ll feed data into the system. They’ll act as sentinels for moving fronts to give our dispatchers and wind project operators a better idea of what their plants will produce over the next minutes to hours.”

Wind speed and direction, temperature, humidity and barometric pressure data will flow from each anemometer’s sensors into a small data recorder once the recorders are connected to BPA’s control centers later this year. Dispatchers in Vancouver and Spokane will know what’s happening instantly across the gorge and beyond. The data will be made available to all interested parties to enable development of increasingly accurate wind forecasting models.



John Lodahl adjusts the angle of BPA’s newest anemometer to keep it precisely in line with others in the agency’s new wind forecasting fleet.

NEW PROJECTS

Quarterly Business Review – Regionwide

BPA will hold its Quarterly Business Review from 1-4 p.m., Nov. 2, in Conference Room C in the 911 N.E. 11th Avenue building adjacent to BPA headquarters. This meeting will provide a closeout of the last quarter of FY 2009 and present the FY 2010 start-of-year budget. The QBR is an ongoing forum that focuses on BPA's finances with a review of current fiscal year actual financial results compared to financial forecasts. It is part of the Integrated Business Review.

A final agenda and presentation materials will be posted a day or two before the meeting at: www.bpa.gov/corporate/Finance/IBR/QBR/.

I-5 Corridor Reinforcement Project – Oregon and Washington

BPA is proposing a 500-kilovolt transmission line from a new substation near Castle Rock, Wash., to a new substation near BPA's Troutdale Substation, Troutdale, Ore. This project would help ease transmission congestion in the northwest Oregon and southwest Washington area. It would allow BPA to fulfill existing and new transmission service requests, improve system reliability and meet continued electric load growth. To determine whether to build the line and substations, BPA will prepare an EIS and will hold three public scoping meetings in November (three were held in October) to receive comments on the scope of the EIS and to help identify other issues and alternatives. BPA is accepting comments through Nov. 23, 2009. For information, go to www.bpa.gov/go/i5.

Central Ferry Substation – Garfield County, Wash.

BPA is proposing a new 500/230-kilovolt substation to interconnect a wind project proposed by Puget Sound Energy Inc. PSE asked BPA to interconnect up to 1,250 MW of electricity generated from its proposed Lower Snake River Wind Energy Project in Garfield and Columbia counties, Wash. The proposed Central Ferry Substation would require approximately 25 acres in the Pomeroy area of Garfield County, Wash. The substation would be adjacent to the existing rights-of-way along Little Goose-Lower Granite 500-kilovolt transmission lines. BPA is accepting comments on the proposed interconnection through Nov. 13, 2009. For information, go to www.efw.bpa.gov/environmental_services/Document_Library/Central_Ferry_Substation_Project/.

Draft Resource Program – Regionwide

BPA has released a draft Resource Program that examines the agency's projected power supply needs for 2012–2019 under Regional Dialogue contracts. BPA is taking comments on the draft Resource Program through Nov. 30. For information, go to www.bpa.gov/power/P/ResourceProgram/Index.shtml.

FISH AND WILDLIFE – PROJECTS UNDER REVIEW

Chief Joseph Hatchery Program – Okanogan County, Wash.

This program, sponsored by the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, would assist mitigation and recovery of summer/fall chinook salmon in the Okanogan subbasin and the Columbia River below Chief Joseph Dam. A final EIS is expected this November. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is a cooperating agency in the EIS. For information, go to www.efw.bpa.gov/environmental_services/Document_Library/Chief_Joseph/.

Klickitat Hatchery Program EIS – Klickitat County, Wash.

For information, go to www.efw.bpa.gov/environmental_services/Document_Library/Klickitat_Hatchery_Program/.

Yakama Nation – Mid-Columbia Coho Restoration Project – Chelan and Okanogan counties, Wash.

For information, go to www.efw.bpa.gov/environmental_services/Document_Library/Mid-Columbia_Coho_Restoration_Project/.

Northeast Oregon Hatchery Program, Grande Ronde-Imnaha Spring Chinook Hatchery Project – Wallowa County, Ore.

A ROD authorizing construction is planned for December 2010 or January 2011 to coincide with NOAA Fisheries Service review of the program's Hatchery Genetics Management Plan. For information, go to www.efw.bpa.gov/environmental_services/Document_Library/Grand_Ronde/.

POWER – PROJECTS UNDER REVIEW

DSI service to Port Townsend – Regionwide

BPA accepted public comment through Oct. 19 on a proposed 14-month Block Power Sales Agreement to Port Townsend Paper Company at the Industrial Power rate. BPA also accepted public comment on its analysis of the proposed block contract. BPA staff are evaluating the comments.

For information, go to www.bpa.gov/power/pl/regionaldialogue/implementation/documents/.

Tier 2 pricing – Regionwide

Preference customers had until Nov. 1 to elect whether they intend BPA to supply all or a portion of their above-high water mark power needs for FY 2012, 2013 and 2014, and, if so, how much and through what rate alternative. BPA has been working with customers to bring greater certainty about the types, costs, risks and other characteristics of resources BPA expects to secure. For information, go to www.bpa.gov/power/pl/regionaldialogue/implementation/meetings/.

TRANSMISSION – PROJECTS UNDER REVIEW

Grand Coulee Dam Line Replacement – Okanogan, Grant and Douglas counties, Wash.

The Bureau of Reclamation has asked BPA to construct six new 500-kV overhead transmission lines at Grand Coulee Dam to replace aging underground lines between the dam's third powerhouse and the 500-kV spreading yard. The project would help ensure safe and reliable transmission from Grand Coulee. For information, go to www.efw.bpa.gov/environmental_services/Document_Library/Grand_Coulee/.

Transmission Services Facility Project – Vancouver, Wash.

BPA is considering building a new three-to-five story office building on its Ross Complex in Vancouver to meet long-standing work space needs. For information, go to www.efw.bpa.gov/pdf/Transmission_Services_September_2009.pdf.

Big Eddy-Knight Transmission Project – Wasco County, Ore., and Klickitat County, Wash.

BPA is proposing a new 500-kV transmission line between BPA's existing Big Eddy Substation in The Dalles, Ore., and a new

substation (Knight) that would be under an existing BPA line about four miles northwest of Goldendale, Wash. The proposed line responds to requests for transmission service in this area. BPA expects to issue a draft EIS in spring 2010. For information, go to www.efw.bpa.gov/environmental_services/Document_Library/Big_Eddy_Knight/.

Central Ferry-Lower Monumental Line Project – Garfield, Columbia and Walla Walla counties, Wash.

BPA is proposing a new 500-kV transmission line between the new BPA Central Ferry Substation in Garfield County and BPA's Lower Monumental Substation in Walla Walla County, Wash. BPA expects to issue a draft EIS in summer 2010. For information, go to www.bpa.gov/go/centralferry.

Hooper Springs Substation and Hooper Springs-Lower Valley Transmission Line Project

This project is currently on hold as BPA and the customer evaluate the scope of the project. For information, go to www.transmission.bpa.gov/PlanProj/Transmission_Projects/.

Golden Hills Wind Farm Interconnection – Sherman County, Ore.

For information, go to www.transmission.bpa.gov/PlanProj/Wind/.

Invenergy Winds Project – Gilliam and Morrow Counties, Ore.

For information, go to www.efw.bpa.gov/environmental_services/Document_Library/Horn_Butte_Wind_Project/.

Kittitas Valley Wind Project Interconnection – Kittitas County, Wash.

For information, go to www.transmission.bpa.gov/PlanProj/Wind/.

Whistling Ridge Wind Interconnection Project – Skamania County, Wash.

For information, go to www.efw.bpa.gov/environmental_services/Document_Library/Whistling_Ridge/.

FISH AND WILDLIFE – PROJECTS UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Lyle Falls Fish Passage Project – Klickitat County, Wash.

For information, go to www.efw.bpa.gov/environmental_services/Document_Library/Lyle_Falls/.

TRANSMISSION – PROJECTS UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Albany-Burnt Woods/Santiam-Toledo Pole Replacement – Linn, Benton and Lincoln counties, Ore.

For information, go to www.efw.bpa.gov/environmental_services/Document_Library/Albany/.

Leaning Juniper II-Jones Canyon Substation Expansion Wind Interconnection Project – Gilliam County, Ore.

For information, go to www.efw.bpa.gov/environmental_services/Document_Library/Leaning_Juniper/.

Libby-to-Troy Line Rebuild – Lincoln County, Mont.

For information, go to www.efw.bpa.gov/environmental_services/Document_Library/Libby/.

McNary-John Day Transmission Line Project – Sherman and Umatilla counties, Ore., Klickitat and Benton counties, Wash.

For information, go to www.transmission.bpa.gov/PlanProj/Transmission_Projects/.

Olympic Peninsula Transmission Line Reinforcement Project – Thurston and Mason counties, Wash.

BPA energized the new double-circuit transmission line in September 2009. BPA continues to finish up other construction activities and complete the project by the end of 2009. For information, go to www.efw.bpa.gov/environmental_services/Document_Library/Olympic/.

Palisades-Goshen Transmission Line Reconstruction – Bonneville and Bingham Counties, Idaho

For information, go to www.efw.bpa.gov/environmental_services/Document_Library/Palisades/.

SUPPLEMENT ANALYSES

SA-400 Dworshak Power House-Dworshak #1, Clearwater County, Idaho

SA-401 Taft-Bell #1, Mineral County, Mont., and Shoshone and Kootenai Counties, Idaho

SA-402 South Tacoma-Cowlitz #1, Pierce County, Wash.

SA-403 Cowlitz Tap to Chehalis-Covington #1, Pierce County, Wash.

SA-03 Fish and Wildlife Implementation Program EIS – 2009 Fish and Wildlife Program, regionwide

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

To view BPA's public involvement calendar, go to www.bpa.gov/corporate/public_affairs/Calendar/.

Quarterly Business Review – Nov. 2, 1 to 4 p.m.,
Conf. Room C, 911 building adjacent to BPA headquarters.

I-5 Corridor Reinforcement Project –

Nov. 3, 4 to 7 p.m., Liberty Middle School, 1612 N.E. Garfield St., Camas, Wash. 98607

Nov. 5, 4 to 7 p.m., Gresham Holiday Inn, 2752 N.E. Hogan Drive, Gresham, Ore. 97030

Nov. 7, 1 to 4 p.m., Hazel Dell Grange, 7509 N.E. Hazel Dell Ave., Vancouver, Wash. 98665, No wheelchair access at this meeting

For Americans with Disabilities Act accommodations, please call toll free 800-622-4519.

CLOSE OF COMMENT

Nov. 16 – Central Ferry Substation

Nov. 23 – I-5 Corridor Reinforcement Project

Nov. 30 – Draft Resource Program

The Journal is a monthly publication of the Bonneville Power Administration. If you have questions or comments, or you want to be added to the mailing list for any project, call toll free (800) 622-4519.

To order copies of documents, call: (800) 622-4520 or (503) 230-7334. Written comments may be sent to: BPA, P.O. Box 14428, Portland, OR 97293-4428. E-mail address: comment@BPA.gov. BPA home page: www.bpa.gov. For details on BPA environmental reviews listed above, including site maps and documents issued to date, see www.efw.bpa.gov/environmental_services/nepadocs.aspx. Process Abbreviations: EA-Environmental Assessment, EIS-Environmental Impact Statement, ESA-Endangered Species Act, FONSI-Finding of No Significant Impact, NOI-Notice of Intent, ROD-Record of Decision.

