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A PUBLICATION FROM THE BONNEVILLE POWER ADMINISTRATION

Journal

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WSCC board votes to increase California-Oregon intertie capacity

On April 24, the Western Systems Coordinating Council board voted to increase the California-Oregon Intertie capacity from 6250 megawatts to 7200 megawatts. The WSCC members will now review the proposed increase. Studies on the transfer capabilities of two paths — one path is the parallel lines between southern Nevada and southern California and the other path is the lines between Idaho and Washington/Oregon — must also be completed before the Intertie capacity will be increased. Increasing intertie capacity will help reduce spill at federal dams on the Columbia River at a time when record high spring runoff is expected. Reduced spill will also help salmon as they migrate to the sea.

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Energy restructuring conference will be held at BPA on May 30

The Portland State University School of Government and the Northwest Public Power Association are co-sponsoring a conference in Portland to examine the current state of energy industry restructuring. The one-day conference will focus on important energy policy developments in the Pacific Northwest since the Comprehensive Review of the Northwest Energy System's Steering Committee's final report was published late last year. Conference attendees will hear from key national and regional players on the current state of energy industry restructuring. Speakers include some members of the Northwest congressional delegation, former U.S. Senators Mark Hatfield and James McClure, a representative from the Clinton administration, members of the steering committee, state legislators and regulators, Northwest tribes, local government officials, utility leaders, and representatives of power customer organizations, environmental and consumer groups. BPA Administrator Randy Hardy will be the luncheon speaker. The conference will be held at BPA in Portland on May 30. The cost is \$135. For more information, please call the Northwest Public Power Association at (360) 254-0109.

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BPA joins Power Pool of Alberta

BPA joined the Power Pool of Alberta in March and began offering limited amounts of surplus power to the pool in early May. The pool is an independent, non-profit financial clearinghouse for all electricity transactions in the Province of Alberta, Canada. BPA joined the pool to learn how a power pool operates and to test its ability to participate in a power pool. The pool provides a market to sell surplus energy, which is particularly valuable to BPA during this spring's projected high runoff. If BPA decides to purchase from the pool in the future, the pool could provide a supply at times when the federal hydrosystem is unable to meet power demand.

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BPA and Environmental Resources Trust agree to market green power

BPA and the Environmental Resources Trust, a non-profit organization, have signed an agreement to

market green power (power from renewable resources). The ERT will act as a broker offering green power at prices reflecting market or above-market price. The green power will include energy from power created as a result of hydro operations to help fish, including spill reduction; BPA supported renewable resource projects; and power sold to displace thermal power plants with surplus BPA hydropower. The ERT was founded with the help of the Environmental Defense Fund and 75 percent of all funds it receives will be invested on fish and wildlife and other environmental projects in the Pacific Northwest.

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Retail wheeling update

For more than a year BPA has been considering the implications of full open transmission access and retail wheeling. In recent months retail wheeling pilot programs have been proposed or put into effect in both Washington and Oregon. Legislation has also been proposed in other states in the region. From Feb. 4 to April 3, BPA's Transmission Business Line held five public meetings to identify issues, to hear concerns of parties other than BPA and to hold an open discussion of issues related to retail wheeling. The meetings were to determine if, in response to the rapid approach of retail wheeling, it were appropriate or necessary for BPA to establish a policy with respect to retail wheeling. During the public meeting process it became apparent that it is not necessary for BPA to take significant action at this time. The TBL could support retail wheeling transactions within existing transmission rates, tariffs, and scheduling practices so long as any retail transactions done by public power customers are consistent with the terms of their power contracts and do not exceed diversification rights within their power contracts. Customers without power contracts are not limited by diversification. In neither case will the TBL make direct deliveries to end-users, with the exception of direct service industries already being served. The local distribution utility must remain a link in the delivery regardless of the purchasing party. In the event of new state or federal legislation, or if other circumstances make it necessary, BPA still reserves the right to reopen the issue at a future date.

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Post-2001 power sales update

The Pacific Northwest Utilities Conference Committee coordinated public meetings in March in which BPA, its customers and other parties discussed the federal power subscription process recommended by the Comprehensive Review of the Northwest Energy System. The meetings addressed the subscription work plan including the fact that environmental review of subscription offers will be based on BPA's Business Plan Environmental Impact Statement. During this process, customers and stakeholders in the region asked BPA to make power sales extending past 2001 in advance of the completion of the subscription process. In keeping with the recommendations of the Comprehensive Review of the Northwest Energy System, BPA would consider making presubscription sales to meet customers' urgent needs but within boundaries that would avoid undermining the subscription process itself. Anticipated boundaries include a limit on the amount of presubscription sales, preservation of existing stranded cost obligations, limits on the length of the contracts and use of conservative pricing principles to reduce price risk to BPA. Other considerations include timing of the actions, relationship to the overall subscription process and review of the Business Plan Environmental Impact Statement for coverage of environmental issues. BPA proposed this interim marketing plan to enable BPA to offer a limited amount of sales before subscription in response to requests from customers who have been approached with offers from other sellers. On April 22, BPA presented its interim marketing plan to the Governors'

Transition Board. The Transition Board endorsed BPA's proposal to sell up to 500 megawatts of power to Northwest publicly owned utilities and direct-service industries for the period after 2001. The Transition Board also endorsed BPA's proposal to sell up to 800 megawatts in extra-regional sales that might go beyond 2001, but not beyond 2006. (See back page — calendar of events.) Anglers will be rewarded for squawfish catches. The 1997 Northern Squawfish Management Program begins May 19. The BPA-sponsored sport fishery reward program pays anglers to catch squawfish in the Columbia and Snake rivers. Anglers have caught over one million fish since the program began in 1990. The northern squawfish is a voracious predator that feeds on juvenile salmon as they migrate to the sea. In cooperation with Northwest fish management agencies and tribes, BPA and its ratepayers sponsor the squawfish program as part of a comprehensive effort to protect and recover fish and wildlife affected by hydropower development in the Columbia River Basin. Anglers receive \$3 for each of the first 100 fish they catch, \$4 for each fish after that up to 400 and \$5 for every fish over 400. The season will run through October 5. To learn more about the squawfish program, call the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's squawfish hotline at (800) 858-9015. In Vancouver, Wash., call (360) 737-2091.

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Western Montana schools get computers

BPA donated 44 surplus computers to 19 western Montana schools in late April. Schools receiving computers are in Kalispell, Eureka, Cut Bank, Melrose, Wise River, St. Ignatius, Dixon, Trego, Browning, Pablo, Babb, Ronan, Dillon, Polson, Thompson Falls and Stevensville. The donations are part of the Clinton administration's executive order directing federal agencies to transfer surplus computers and related tools, such as printers and monitors, to schools and nonprofit educational organizations.

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BPA crew saves tower

In mid-April, just outside of Sedro Wooley in Northwest Washington, BPA crews accomplished an amazing feat. In fewer than five days, BPA crews had to build a new transmission tower site, move an existing tower and restring the conductor—all on a steep, muddy slope looming 1,000 feet over the Skagit River. A transmission tower that had stood at the edge of a cliff created the problem. Due to heavy rains, so much erosion had occurred that one of the tower's legs was virtually suspended in air. It posed an emergency when the condition worsened, threatening a catastrophic loss of the Monroe-Custer 500 kilovolt line to Canada. A line failure would have taken weeks to fix. The tower replacement plan was devised and implemented. In addition to the engineering and construction challenges, the crews working with the environmental staff also had to mitigate against the very real threat of additional mud slides at the site. The staff estimated that up to 300 tons of additional soil could be lost at the site, much of that ending up in the river, if adequate erosion control measures weren't undertaken. To offset that risk, a mitigation plan was developed that called for planting 1,500 shrubs selected for their ability to stabilize banks as well as the application of a fairly new product, which when sprayed on the soil, forms a blanket called a "bonded fiber matrix." This new biodegradable product not only sticks to vertical surfaces but actually holds soil in place.

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Public Involvement

Status Reports

Billy Shaw Dam and Reservoir Resident Fish Project EA. Duck Valley Indian Reservation, Nevada — Partial mitigation for the loss of anadromous fish. The final EA/FONSI is available. Call for a copy.

BPA/Lower Valley Transmission Project. Idaho and Wyoming — To resolve a voltage stability problem in the Jackson and Afton, Wyo. areas; new 115-kV line proposed on existing right-of-way where possible. The draft EIS is being prepared. Call to be added to the mail list.

Bonneville-Hood River Vegetation Management EA. Oregon — To control vegetation on the 115-kV transmission line right-of-way between Bonneville Dam and Hood River in the Columbia Gorge Scenic Area. The Forest Service is a partner in developing the EA. Call to be added to the mail list.

Columbia Windfarm #1. Washington — The final EIS (#2682) has been completed. Call to get a copy.

Four Mile Hill Geothermal Project EIS (Glass Mountain). Northern California — A geothermal power plant and 30 miles of new transmission line have been proposed on Forest Service lands in the Klamath and Modoc Forests. The Forest Service has the lead; BPA is a cooperating agency. The draft EIS is being prepared. Call to be added to the mail list.

Grande Ronde River Spring Chinook Project. Oregon — Captive broodstock program. The preliminary EA will be available in May. Call to receive a copy.

Kootenai River White Sturgeon Conservation Aquaculture Project. Northern Idaho, Montana and Canada — Captive broodstock program. A final EA/FONSI (#2947) is available. Call to receive a copy.

Methow Valley Irrigation District EA. Northern Washington — A proposal to convert the open canal irrigation system to pressurized pipes and wells. An EA is being prepared. Call to be added to the mailing list.

Nez Perce Tribal Hatchery EIS. Idaho — Supplementation of anadromous salmonids. The final EIS is being prepared. Call to be added to the mail list.

Northwest Regional Power Facility. Washington — To construct a combustion turbine near Creston. The final EIS (#2887) is available. Call for a copy.

Upper Snake River Fish Culture Facility. Idaho — BPA plans to purchase a tribal hatchery for domestic rainbow trout and develop an experimental hatchery for Yellowstone cutthroat and redband trout. A preliminary EA is being prepared.

Watershed Management Program. Region-wide — Guidelines for funding watershed improvement projects. The final EIS is being prepared. Call to be added to the mail list.

Wildlife Mitigation Program EIS. Region-wide — Guidelines for funding wildlife mitigation projects. The ROD will be available in May. Call to receive a copy.

Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Project Programmatic EIS. Washington — The Bureau of Reclamation is taking the lead on this project. BPA is a cooperating agency. The draft programmatic

EIS has been delayed until June. For further information or to be put on the mailing list, contact John Tiedeman, BOR, at (509) 575-5848 ext. 238.

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Calendar of Events

Subscription Process Public Meetings:

May 7, 9 am – 4 pm, Sheraton Portland Airport Hotel, Columbian “C” Room, Portland, Ore.;

May 21, 9 am – 4 pm, Sheraton Portland Airport Hotel, Mt. Hood “A” Room, Portland, Ore. Call Mike Hansen at (503) 230-4328 for further details.

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Acronyms:

EA: Environmental Assessment

EIS: Environmental Impact Statement

FONSI: Finding of No Significant Impact

NOI: Notice of Intent

ROD: Record of Decision

Visit the BPA home page at <http://www.bpa.gov>.

The *Journal* is available on the Intranet at <http://www.bpa.gov/Corporate/KC/home/journal/>.

We welcome all comments from you at Journal-ACS, Bonneville Power Administration, P.O. Box 3621, Portland, OR 97208-3621 or enballa@bpa.gov.

For More Information or To Get Involved:

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