



Department of Energy

Bonneville Power Administration
P.O. Box 3621
Portland, OR 97208-3621

ENVIRONMENT, FISH & WILDLIFE

December 29, 2014

In reply refer to: KEC-4

To: Parties interested in the Wallooskee-Youngs Confluence Restoration Project

The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) has prepared a draft environmental assessment (EA) to evaluate whether to fund the proposed Wallooskee-Youngs Confluence Restoration Project in Clatsop County, Oregon. This letter requests your comments on the draft EA and outlines the next steps.

BPA is considering whether to fund the proposed Wallooskee-Youngs Confluence Restoration Project on a 221-acre property at the confluence of the Wallooskee and Youngs rivers five miles southeast of the Columbia River near Astoria, Oregon. The proposed project would restore and enhance 193 acres of tidal wetlands and includes modifying a levee to allow tidal influence to return to the area, creating a network of tidal channels, and restoring native vegetation. A portion of state highway Oregon Route 202 and a BPA transmission line and access road within the project area would be modified to withstand the restored tidal regime.

The proposed Wallooskee-Youngs project would help BPA meet some of its federal Endangered Species Act obligations as defined in the Federal Columbia River Power System, 2014 Supplemental Biological Opinion (BiOp). BPA works with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation to offset the effects of federal dams on salmon and steelhead. Estuary habitat improvements are a key component of this work. The estuary's nutrient-rich habitat provides food and refuge for juvenile salmon as they make their critical transition from fresh water to salt water. Estuary projects can be complex, often involving a diversity of land owners and issues. The goal is to reconnect areas of the Columbia River floodplain and restore juvenile habitat by opening dikes or upgrading tide gates or culverts. Fish feeding in the estuary can grow quickly, better positioning them to survive in the ocean. Since 2007, the agencies have protected and restored more than 5,000 acres of estuary habitat, greatly increasing the survival benefits for salmon and steelhead in the estuary. The project would also provide habitat for wildlife such as deer, elk, waterfowl, and river otter.

Astoria Wetlands, LLC, an environmental resources company, currently owns the property and would conduct the restoration work. The Cowlitz Indian Tribe would assist in project implementation and provide long-term stewardship by managing the property to benefit fish and wildlife.

Draft EA

The draft EA describes the project and why it is needed, discusses the environmental impacts the project would create – including assessment of the impacts to the floodplain, infrastructure, and nearby properties, and lists the mitigation measures that would lessen or eliminate those impacts.

How to Comment

Please submit your comments by **January 28, 2015** and reference the Wallooskee-Youngs Confluence Restoration. All comments we receive will be available on our project website at www.bpa.gov/goto/WallooskeeYoungs. Choose the way you would like to comment:

Mail: Bonneville Power Administration Public Affairs – DKE P.O. Box 14428 Portland, OR 97291-4428	FAX: 503-230-4019
	On-Line: www.bpa.gov/comment
	Toll-free: 800-622-4519

Next Steps

We will consider all comments submitted during the comment period and provide responses to comments in the final EA. When the final EA has been prepared, BPA will use the analysis to determine whether or not to provide funding for the project. BPA would decide whether a finding of no significant impact could be made, or whether an environmental impact statement would be prepared. That determination would likely be made in spring 2015.

For More Information

The draft EA is available for your review and comment at www.bpa.gov/goto/WallooskeeYoungs, or if you requested a copy of the document, it is enclosed. If you would like a hard copy (about 200 pages), please call our toll-free document request line at 800-622-4520. If you have questions regarding the environmental process, please contact me at 503-230-3796 or dlrose@bpa.gov or Jesse Wilson, Contract Environmental Protection Specialist, David Evans Associates, at jcwilson@bpa.gov or 503-230-4506. You can also reach us toll free at 800-622-4519.

Thank you for your interest in this project.

Sincerely,

/s/ Donald L. Rose

Donald L. Rose
Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Enclosures: (If requested)

Draft EA
Comment Form
Return Envelope