

# Journal

August 2013

## BPA adopts new rates

In July, BPA adopted a 9 percent average wholesale power rate increase and an 11 percent average transmission rate increase for the fiscal year 2014–2015 rate period. The transmission rate increase is the first in six years. The new rates support needed improvements to ensure the region's federal hydropower and transmission systems continue to reliably deliver carbon-free, affordable power to Northwest homes and businesses. The new rates take effect Oct. 1, 2013.

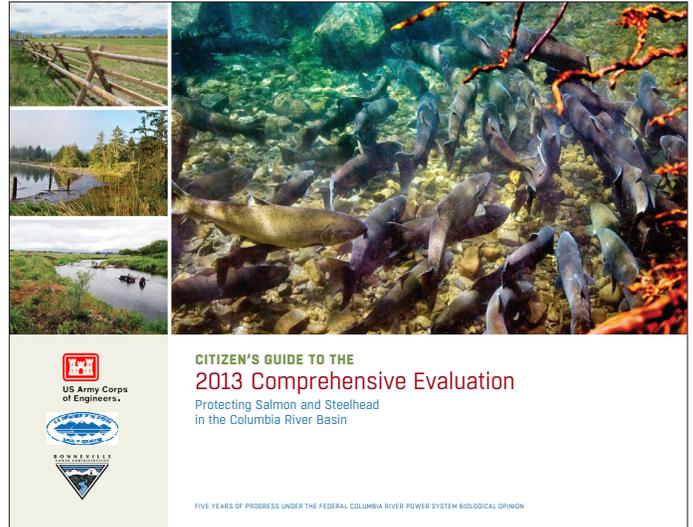
"We recognize that rate increases are very challenging for customers, especially for those still in the throes of a slow economy," said BPA Acting Administrator Elliot Mainzer. "But the increases are necessary so that we can preserve the long-term value of carbon-free federal generation and support the reliability of the high-voltage transmission lines that serve Northwest public utilities."

For BPA's utility power customers, the wholesale rate increase will be an average of 9 percent higher than current rates. The increase stems from higher costs to operate and maintain the federal hydroelectric system, higher costs to fund existing long-term agreements for the fish and wildlife mitigation program, and reduced revenues from surplus power sales due to low market prices.

For transmission customers, the first rate increase in six years averages 11 percent higher than current rates. The transmission rate increase stems from a growing construction program driven by the need to repair and replace aging infrastructure and increase spending on mandatory compliance and security requirements. An average of \$20 million per year in financial reserves will be used to offset part of the rate increase.

Wholesale power and transmission rates are developed every two years through a formal rate-setting process with BPA's utility customers and other stakeholders. The process began in November when BPA announced its rate proposals for fiscal years 2014 and 2015.

The new rates will affect utilities differently depending on the amount of power and type of services they purchase from BPA. Local utilities ultimately determine the rate impact of BPA rates on individual businesses and residents.



"A Citizen's Guide to the 2013 Comprehensive Evaluation" provides the highlights of the report in a more visual, easy-to-understand format.

## Draft report shows gains for fish

Federal agencies released a report in July outlining five years of accomplishments in improvements to hydro system operations and facilities, habitat rehabilitation and hatchery reforms to protect and benefit Columbia and Snake river fish.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Bureau of Reclamation and BPA — collectively known as the federal action agencies — released the 2013 draft Comprehensive Evaluation, which assesses results under the first five years of the 2008/2010 Biological Opinion developed by NOAA Fisheries. Work under this plan is the largest effort of its kind ever undertaken in the Columbia River Basin.

The draft report, which is open to a 30-day public comment period, shows wild salmon and steelhead have returned to the Columbia and Snake rivers and tributaries to spawn in greater numbers since the first Endangered Species Act listings.

"The draft Comprehensive Evaluation shows the strides we've made to bring more fish back to the river," said Lorri Bodi, vice president of BPA's Environment, Fish and Wildlife division.



Halfway through the 10-year term of the BiOp, the action agencies and their partners have already met or exceeded the tributary habitat goals for more than half the salmon and steelhead populations. These fish have quickly returned to reopened habitat, spawning in greater numbers in restored reaches and increasing in abundance.

“This draft Comprehensive Evaluation offers a great opportunity to update the region on our progress,” said Rock Peters, senior fishery program manager for the Corps of Engineers.

The draft report also shows the extensive coordination of efforts to achieve gains for fish.

“The success of this program is built on unprecedented partnerships and collaboration with tribes, states, land-owners, irrigators and watershed councils throughout the region,” said Lorri Lee, regional director for Reclamation’s Pacific Northwest Region. “Together, we have forged a strong commitment to increase the survival of salmon and steelhead in the Pacific Northwest.”

An easy-to-read, 16-page paper called “A Citizen’s Guide to the 2013 Comprehensive Evaluation” captures the highlights of the report. The guide and the draft Comprehensive Evaluation are available at [www.salmonrecovery.gov](http://www.salmonrecovery.gov).

## Turning science visions into reality

From purchasing energy robotic kits to providing funds for the construction of small-scale hydropower generators, BPA is partnering with educators across the Northwest to advance science and energy education. The agency recently awarded \$20,000 in grants to seven finalists in its Science and Energy Education Grants Program.

“The Science and Energy Education Grants Program gives BPA a cost-effective way to promote energy awareness and understanding in communities we serve. It also sparks student interest in science, engineering, technology and math,” said Elliot Mainzer, BPA’s acting administrator.

“This will help ensure that our future energy users and ratepayers have an understanding and appreciation for the Pacific Northwest’s energy resources, particularly our hydroelectric system.”

This year’s successful applications were marked by creativity in developing programs that provide hands-on challenges for students as well as resourcefulness in bringing together support from the community.

“It is so rewarding to see the innovation and excitement that educators display in making these topics real for their students,” said Christy Adams, BPA education and volunteer coordinator. “With a modest investment, BPA is able to make their vision a reality and bring exciting, effective, real-world studies to life for thousands of students.”

For information on BPA’s education grants, as well as a list of this year’s recipients and a description of the projects the grants will support, go to [www.bpa.gov/goto/Education](http://www.bpa.gov/goto/Education).



*A student releases salmon into the Columbia River near Kennewick, Wash., as part of Benton Conservation District’s “Salmon Power!” education program. The district received a grant from BPA to help fund the program that will reach 6,500 students in eastern Washington this year.*

## Bekkedahl on new reliability committee

Larry Bekkedahl, senior vice president of Transmission Services, will help establish a new organization that will take over the region’s reliability coordinator role currently held by the Western Electricity Coordinating Council.

In a landmark decision on June 27, the council’s board of directors agreed to split WECC into two separate organizations: one that focuses on reliability and one that performs regulatory activities. Following that decision, WECC members selected Bekkedahl and 14 other member representatives to serve on the advisory committee of what is being called the Reliability Coordination Co.

In his role on the advisory committee, Bekkedahl will represent the interests of large transmission operators and owners, communicating BPA’s perspective to the reliability company’s independent board of directors.

WECC is one of 15 reliability coordinators registered with the North American Electric Reliability Corp. That means it provides situational awareness and real-time supervision of the entire Western Interconnection, which spans from Baja, Mexico, into Canada. WECC also performs regulatory functions, including monitoring and enforcing compliance with national reliability standards.

The decision to split WECC was prompted by the Sept. 8, 2011, Southwest blackout, in which a single-point failure

triggered a cascading outage that affected nearly seven million people. The blackout raised questions about WECC's dual roles, and the corporation found that meeting its regulatory responsibilities prevented it from fully delivering on its core reliability mission.

"Reliability hinges on the transfer of knowledge between transmission operators," Bekkedahl says. "But as demonstrated by the Southwest blackout in 2011, the flow of information today just isn't enough."

The Western Interconnection Synchrophasor Program is a starting point for more sharing, Bekkedahl says. BPA is a participant in WISP, a project funded by Western utilities and the Department of Energy to install more than 400 synchrophasors and build an infrastructure to improve data exchange among multiple operators.

"Shared information and oversight of balancing authorities will be the core functions of the new RCCo," adds Bekkedahl. "This bifurcation provides the opportunity to focus on enhancing grid operation."

The new organization will provide the reliability coordination services within the Western Interconnection, while WECC will continue to perform its regulatory duties. Over the next five months, the RCCo member advisory committee will help decide funding issues and determine the roles and responsibilities of various committees. The RCCo will begin operating as a stand-alone organization on Jan. 1, 2014.

## The case of the lost kilowatts

BPA facilities engineer Stewart McLaughlin knows every square foot of BPA headquarters — all 700,000 of them. Even though it's only eight stories, it's the fifth-largest commercial building in Portland, Ore. Recently, McLaughlin learned that the 26-year-old headquarters was getting up to some mechanical mischief, and having a direct impact on BPA's \$1 million a year electric bill.

Clues to the building's hidden life came to light thanks to an energy detective assigned to the case by the Kilowatt Crackdown, sponsored by the Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance. BPA signed up for the year-long program as part of its cross-agency sustainability targets. Those efforts, which began in 2009, have already generated a gold certification for headquarters from the Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability and 437,809 verified kilowatt-hours of energy savings in a 2012 Energy Trust of Oregon pilot.

To propel BPA toward its next goal — cutting energy use at headquarters by another 6 percent in 2013 — NEEA sent energy coach Brad Weaver of Northwest Energy Consulting to help sleuth out new opportunities.

Like many detectives, Weaver does some of his best work at night. A key investigative tool, the night walk, aims to expose invisible but costly flaws in the mechanical systems, especially those that heat and cool the building. The method is deceptively simple: Catch the building when its guard is down and more subtle failings are no longer masked by the bustle of daytime activities.

Few BPA employees ever venture into the mechanical penthouse on the eighth floor. Outside on the enclosed south terrace, there's nothing to see beyond four concrete walls. But the energy coach's trained ear instantly identified a malfunction from the most mundane clue — traffic noise.

"Hear that?" McLaughlin says. "That's I-84. And we shouldn't be hearing that."

McLaughlin's crew found that a large steel louver that controls the flow of air into the building had stopped doing its job. It was stuck open. Because the BPA building is pressurized, air doesn't just idly float in and out; it's pulled hard and in large volume.

That means a stuck damper has a significant impact on energy consumption in two ways. When outside temperatures are below 55 degrees, the open damper forces the heating system to work harder. And when it's warmer than 55 outside, the influx of warm air makes the eighth-floor chillers kick into high gear to pipe cool water down to the data centers on each floor.

The night walk yielded other specific observations that are being used to sharpen the function of the building. Weaver recommended that BPA save energy by turning off commercial-size kitchen fans and adjusting the cooling of server closets at night.

"All of these small but significant changes contribute to an overall energy intensity reduction and show that aggregate savings play a significant role in energy conservation," says Rodrigo George, BPA's sustainability team co-chair. The Kilowatt Crackdown, which began in January and runs through May of 2014, is also moving BPA closer to its goal of an Energy Star certification for headquarters.

## Watch us work

### **GOLDENDALE GOES DARK FOR A GLOWING FUTURE.**

See how one town in southern Washington went dark to allow for some important work at a nearby BPA substation. BPA crews worked all night to complete the upgrade.

**TO WATCH** this and other videos, go to our **YouTube** channel at [www.youtube.com/BonnevillePower](http://www.youtube.com/BonnevillePower).

# Public Involvement [updates & Notices]

## AGENCY PROJECTS

### Columbia River Treaty 2014/2024 Review [Regionwide]

BPA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers are seeking comments through Aug. 16 on the working draft of a regional recommendation concerning the future of the Columbia River Treaty with Canada. The working draft is a result of a multi-year, collaborative process between the U.S. Entity, regional sovereigns and the public. This document is the basis for further regional discussion with both sovereigns and stakeholders on this important matter. The U.S. Entity anticipates that a final draft regional recommendation will be available for stakeholder and public comment in September. The final regional recommendation is due to the U.S. Department of State in December. To view the working draft recommendation, go to [www.crt2014-2024review.gov](http://www.crt2014-2024review.gov). Submit comments to [www.bpa.gov/comment](http://www.bpa.gov/comment) or by email: [treatyreview@bpa.gov](mailto:treatyreview@bpa.gov), or call BPA at 800-622-4519 or the Corps at 503-808-4510.

### BP-14 and OS-14 Rate Cases [Regionwide]

BPA issued the final ROD for the BP-14 rate proceeding, adopting a 9 percent average wholesale power rate increase and an 11 percent transmission rate increase. The new rates support needed improvements to ensure the region's federal hydropower and transmission system can continue to reliably deliver carbon-free, affordable power to Northwest homes and businesses. The new rates take effect Oct. 1, 2013. In a separate docket, OS-14, BPA proposes rates to recover the costs incurred under the Oversupply Management Protocol. The OS-14 draft ROD is due in September. For information, go to [www.bpa.gov/goto/RateCase](http://www.bpa.gov/goto/RateCase).

## FISH AND WILDLIFE

### Biological Opinion Draft Comprehensive Evaluation [Regionwide]

BPA, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation are seeking public comments on the draft Comprehensive Evaluation, which details the first five years of progress in implementing NOAA Fisheries' Biological Opinion for operation of the FCRPS for Endangered Species Act-listed salmon and steelhead. The draft document reviews accomplishments in dam passage improvements, habitat restoration, hatchery reform and predator management, as well as the status of the fish. The comment period closes Aug. 16. For more information, go to [www.salmonrecovery.gov](http://www.salmonrecovery.gov).

### Clark Fork River Delta Restoration Project [Bonner County, Idaho]

BPA is seeking comments through Aug. 19 on its proposal to restore wetland and riparian habitat and to reduce erosion in the Clark Fork River delta. This project is part of the Idaho Department of Fish and Game's restoration efforts to mitigate impacts of the construction and operation of the Albeni Falls Dam and the inundation of the delta. For information, go to [www.bpa.gov/goto/ClarkForkRiverDelta](http://www.bpa.gov/goto/ClarkForkRiverDelta).

## TRANSMISSION

### Keeler-to-Pennwalt Transmission Line Removal Project [Multnomah and Washington counties, Ore.]

BPA is removing two segments of old, unused transmission line. The lines have been out of service for many years. If left unattended, they could pose a public safety risk. BPA is working with the Portland Parks and Recreation Department on the sections of this unique project that pass through Portland's Forest Park. For information, go to [www.bpa.gov/goto/WoodPoleRemoval](http://www.bpa.gov/goto/WoodPoleRemoval).

### Boyer-Tillamook Access Road Improvement Project [Tillamook and Yamhill counties, Ore.]

BPA expects to release a preliminary EA this summer on a project to improve a 13-mile portion of the access road system for the 115-kV Boyer-Tillamook No. 1 transmission line. For information, go to [www.bpa.gov/goto/BoyerTillamookAccessRoads](http://www.bpa.gov/goto/BoyerTillamookAccessRoads).

### Keeler-to-Tillamook Transmission Line Rebuild Project [Washington and Tillamook counties, Ore.]

BPA plans to release an EA this summer on its proposal to rebuild 58 miles of the existing 115-kV transmission lines between Hillsboro and Tillamook, Ore. For information, go to [www.bpa.gov/goto/KeelerTillamook](http://www.bpa.gov/goto/KeelerTillamook).

### I-5 Corridor Reinforcement Project [Cowlitz and Clark counties, Wash., and Multnomah County, Ore.]

All comments that BPA accepted on the draft EIS through March 25 are posted online. BPA will respond to comments in the final EIS, expected in 2014. For information, go to [www.bpa.gov/goto/i-5](http://www.bpa.gov/goto/i-5) or call 800-230-6593.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Information on other projects under environmental review is available at [www.bpa.gov/goto/NEPA](http://www.bpa.gov/goto/NEPA).

For information about the National Environmental Policy Act in general, go to [www.bpa.gov/goto/environmentalplanning](http://www.bpa.gov/goto/environmentalplanning).

## CLOSE OF COMMENT

- **Aug. 16**, Columbia River Treaty Review working draft recommendation
- **Aug. 16**, Biological Opinion Draft Comprehensive Evaluation
- **Aug. 19**, Clark Fork River Delta Restoration Project

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

To view BPA's public involvement calendar, go to [www.bpa.gov/goto/calendar](http://www.bpa.gov/goto/calendar). For Americans with Disabilities Act accommodations, call toll free 800-622-4519.

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. Email address: [comment@BPA.gov](mailto:comment@BPA.gov). BPA home page: [www.bpa.gov](http://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](http://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.

