

United States Government

Department of Energy
Bonneville Power Administration

memorandum

DATE: September 15, 2010

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEC-4

SUBJECT: Environmental Clearance Memorandum

TO: Dorie Welch
Project Manager – KEWM-4

Proposed Action: Provision of funds to The McKenzie River Trust (MRT) for purchase of Melevin Property

Fish and Wildlife Project No.: 1992-068-00, Contract # BPA-005027

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.25 Transfer, lease, disposition or acquisition of interests in uncontaminated land for habitat preservation or wildlife management, and only associated buildings that support these purposes. Uncontaminated means that there would be no potential for release of substances at a level, or in a form, that would pose a threat to public health or the environment.

Location: Township 16 South, Range 3 West, Section 31 of the Coburg Quad, in Lane County, Oregon (near Eugene, Oregon).

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) and MRT

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA proposes to fund the acquisition of the 58-acre Melevin property by MRT. BPA will be granted a perpetual conservation easement over the entire property as a condition of funding the acquisition. The Melevin tract being considered for purchase is currently an active aggregate mining operation on the southeast side of Green Island, near the confluence of the Willamette mainstem and the McKenzie River, and contains remnant McKenzie River channel and shallow gravel ponds. There is significant potential on the property to generate additional in-stream habitat for Upper Willamette River Chinook and Oregon chub and to create better floodplain connectivity with both the Mainstem Willamette and the historic McKenzie River channel. The property is located in an area identified as a priority area for fish and wildlife and acquisition of the Melevin tract will increase options for restoration of off-channel, emergent, and forested wetland habitat. The property proposed for acquisition contains habitat that will provide BPA with credits for partial mitigation of fish and wildlife habitat losses due to the construction and operation of the federal hydroelectric facilities on the Willamette River. This acquisition will also provide long-lasting benefits as part of a growing network of conservation lands in the Willamette Valley by allowing wildlife access to native off-channel, emergent, and forested wetland habitat, with a special emphasis on the critical Oregon chub habitat located in the historic McKenzie channel and ensuring that restoration activities do not dewater this habitat.

Once the property has been acquired, MRT will perform restoration and wildlife enhancements and provide long-term stewardship of the land to benefit numerous fish and wildlife species, including two listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), spring Chinook and Oregon chub, as an integral part of the Green Island Project. The Green Island Project's objectives are to:

- Protect and restore native vegetation on site within the broader context of Willamette River riparian ecosystem restoration.
- Restore the area's historic hydrologic processes in an effort to create a dynamic connection between the river and the floodplain, enabling flood events to alter the course of the river to create new habitats, including islands, side channels, alcoves, wetlands, and sloughs.
- Identify, protect and promote native fish, wildlife and invertebrate species and their associated habitats with an emphasis on listed and at-risk species.
- Protect and enhance over 20 miles of riparian habitat.

The purchase will also support the Willamette Subbasin Plan's habitat objectives using ecosystem and adaptive management principals. The Willamette Subbasin Plan was developed by the Northwest Power and Conservation Council (NPCC) as a subbasin-level recovery framework to help protect, provide mitigation for and enhance fish and wildlife populations adversely affected by the development and operation of the Federal Columbia River Power System. The completed plan was adopted as part of NPCC's Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program, helps direct BPA funding of watershed-related projects, and serves to guide a wide range of conservation organizations.

MRT agrees that this acquisition and the permanent protection of the property that will result are ultimately being undertaken for the benefit of the public. Ownership by MRT and the perpetual conservation easement to be held by BPA will ensure that the critical wildlife habitat values present on the property will be protected forever.

BPA is funding MRT's acquisition of the property and receiving a conservation easement. Prior to funding any management activities, BPA will conduct further environmental review.

Findings: BPA has determined that the proposed action complies with Section 1021.410 and Appendix B of Subpart D of the Department of Energy's (DOE) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Regulations (57 FR 15144, Apr. 24, 1992, as amended at 61 FR 36221-36243, July 9, 1996; 61 FR 64608, Dec. 6, 1996). The proposed action does not present any extraordinary circumstances that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal. The proposal is not connected [40 C.F.R. 1508.25(a)(1)] to other actions with potentially significant impacts, is not related to other proposed actions with cumulatively significant impacts [40 C.F.R. 1508.25(a)(2)], and is not precluded by 40 C.F.R. 1506.1 or 10 C.F.R. 1021.211. Moreover, the proposed action would not (i) threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, (ii) require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities, (iii) disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act-excluded petroleum and natural gas products that pre-exist in the environment such that there would be uncontrolled or unpermitted releases, or (iv) adversely affect environmentally sensitive resources. Based on the provision that a cultural resource survey will be conducted prior to any ground disturbing activities, this proposed action meets the requirements for the Categorical Exclusion

referenced above. We therefore determine that the proposed action may be categorically excluded from further NEPA review and documentation.

/s/ Israel Duran

Israel Duran

Environmental Protection Specialist – KEC-4

Concur:

/s/ Jim Kehoe for

Katherine S. Pierce

NEPA Compliance Officer – KEC-4

DATE: September 15, 2010

Attachment:

Environmental Checklist for Categorical Exclusions

Environmental Checklist for Categorical Exclusions

Name of Proposed Project: FY10 Willamette Basin Mitigation

Project #: 1992-068-00 Cont# BPA-005027

This project has been found to **not** adversely affect the following environmentally sensitive resources, laws, and regulations:

Environmental Resources	No Adverse Effect	No Adverse Effect With Conditions
1. Cultural Resources Funding land acquisition only.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. T & E Species, or their habitat(s) Funding land acquisition only.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Floodplains or wetlands Funding land acquisition only.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Areas of special designation Funding land acquisition only.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Health & safety Funding land acquisition only.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Prime agricultural lands Funding land acquisition only.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Special sources of water Funding land acquisition only.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Consistency with state and local laws and regulations Funding land acquisition only.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Pollution control at Federal facilities Funding land acquisition only.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Other Funding land acquisition only.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

List supporting documentation attached (if needed):

Signed: /s/ Israel Duran

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