

factsheet

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Jocko River conservation easement protects critical trout habitat

The Bonneville Power Administration is proposing to fund a 92-acre conservation easement in the Jocko River watershed in northwestern Montana for fish habitat mitigation. Located in Sanders County, this property is part of a watershed designated as critical habitat for the threatened bull trout as well as the westslope cutthroat trout, a subspecies that is considered at risk by local tribes and the state of Montana.

This property, which is located within the boundaries of the Flathead Indian Reservation, was selected for protection for several reasons.

First, it is a core recovery area for bull trout and is also home to the westslope cutthroat trout. Over the years, various land-use disturbances have caused fish populations to decline in the area. These activities have degraded stream channel conditions, elevated temperatures and increased sediment levels in the river. The high rate of development in the Jocko River watershed increases the likelihood that more habitat resources will be damaged in the future.

Additionally, this land is significant to the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, and evidence of traditional use goes back hundreds of years.

Acquiring the easement would provide BPA with credits for partial mitigation of resident fish habitat losses due to construction and of the federal Hungry Horse Dam, located on the South Fork of the Flathead River.

What happens next

After BPA finalizes the easement, which is expected in fall 2007, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes would provide long-term stewardship for the property. The tribes will develop a management plan

to guide the protection and enhancement of habitat resources on the property. The public will be given the opportunity to review and provide comments on the management plan.

Pending BPA's approval of the management plan, any activities that could damage habitat (such as harvesting of wood products, grazing of livestock or construction of buildings) would be prohibited from occurring on this land. The public would be allowed recreational access in accordance with existing tribal laws, but that access would likely be restricted to foot traffic only.

For more information

If you have any questions about this proposal or would like additional information, please contact Cecilia Brown with the Bonneville Power Administration, toll-free telephone (800) 282-3713, direct telephone number (503) 230-3462 or e-mail ckbrown@bpa.gov.

You may also contact Lynn DuCharme of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, (406) 883-2888 or e-mail lynnd@cskt.org.



Jocko River Conservation Easement

Sanders County, Idaho

