



Department of Energy

Bonneville Power Administration
P.O. Box 3621
Portland, OR 97208-3621
ENVIRONMENT, FISH & WILDLIFE

**Wallowa-Whitman
National Forest**
La Grande Range District
3502 Hwy 30
La Grande, OR 97850



September 18, 2017

In reply refer to: ECF-4

To: People interested in the Bird Track Springs Fish Habitat Enhancement Project.

Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) and the United States Forest Service, Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, (Forest Service) have prepared a draft environmental assessment (EA) for a river restoration project that has been proposed by the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation along the Grand Ronde River in Union County, Oregon. The project is partially located in the La Grande Ranger District managed by the Forest Service. The EA describes the proposed restoration project and discusses the environmental effects of the proposed action.

Proposal: BPA and the Forest Service are considering a proposal to restore aquatic habitat on a 1.9 mile stretch of the Grande Ronde River to benefit Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed spring Chinook salmon, summer steelhead, and bull trout. Approximately 1.2 miles of the project would be implemented on National Forest System Lands, 0.1 miles on state lands, and the remaining 0.6 miles on private lands. This reach of the Grande Ronde River was disconnected from its floodplain when the Grande Ronde River Road (Highway 244) and the railroad grade were constructed. BPA is considering whether to fund the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation to implement this proposal and the Forest Service is deciding what project activities will occur on Forest Service lands. Under Forest Service requirements, as a project or activity implementing the land management plan not authorized under the Healthy Forest Act, this project is subject to subparts A and B of the project level pre-decisional administrative review process as described in 36 Code of Federal Regulations 218.

Proposed actions include:

1. Excavation of new channel meander bends to improve aquatic and riparian habitat diversity and complexity, and increase channel-floodplain interactions.
2. Creation of secondary channels to increase the available area of juvenile salmon rearing habitat.
3. Placement of wood structures to increase habitat complexity.
4. Vegetation planting and seeding to improve streambank stability and provide protective cover for juvenile salmonids.

The draft EA can be viewed at the project website: www.bpa.gov/goto/BirdTrackSprings.

Process and Schedule: BPA’s proposed schedule for the EA process is as follows:

Draft EA available for public comment	September 2017
Final EA and USFS Draft Decision	October 22, 2017
Sign Decision/FONSI (if warranted)	December 2017/ January 2018
If decision to build, construction start	February 2018

How to Comment: Please send your comments by **October 16, 2017**, and reference the Bird Track Springs Project. We will consider all comments submitted during the comment period and provide responses to substantive comments in the final EA. In addition, comments will be available on the project website.

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comments-pacificnorthwest-wallowa-whitman-lagrande@fs.fed.us

Online: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=47283>

For More Information: If you have questions for BPA, please contact Dan Gambetta at 503-230-3493, toll free at 1-800-622-4519, or by e-mail at dagambetta@bpa.gov. If you have questions for the Forest Service, please contact Bill Gamble at the contact information provided above.

Thank you for your interest in this project.

Sincerely,

/s/ Dan Gambetta
Dan Gambetta
Environmental Protection Specialist
Bonneville Power Administration

/s/ Bill Gamble
Bill Gamble
La Grande District Ranger
Wallowa-Whitman National Forest