

memorandum

DATE: January 23, 2013

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEC-4

SUBJECT: Environmental Clearance Memorandum

TO: Dorie Welch
Project Manager – KEWM-4

Proposed Action: Provision of funds to acquire a conservation easement over the 310-acre Coyote Creek property.

Fish and Wildlife Project No.: 2011-003-00, Contract # BPA-006468

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.25 Real Property transfers for cultural protection, habitat preservation and wildlife management.

Location: Veneta and West Eugene quadrangles, in Lane County, Oregon (near Eugene, Oregon).

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA)

Description of the Proposed Action: The BPA is proposing to fund The Nature Conservancy's (Conservancy) purchase of the Coyote Creek property, a 310-acre parcel of land located just west of the City of Eugene in Lane County Oregon. It is within the Coyote Creek drainage of the U.S. Bureau of Land Management's West Eugene Wetlands Area of Critical Environmental Concern, and the 59,061-acre West Eugene Wetlands/Spencer Creek Conservation Opportunity Area (COA) as identified in Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's (ODFW) Conservation Strategy. As part of the purchase agreement BPA would be granted a conservation easement over the property prior to purchase by the ODFW which would then manage the property.

This funding partially fulfills commitments made in the 2010 "Willamette River Basin Memorandum of Agreement Regarding Wildlife Habitat Protection and Enhancement between the State of Oregon and the Bonneville Power Administration". Placing this property in a conservation easement will provide long-lasting wildlife benefits as part of a growing network of conservation lands in the Willamette Valley by preventing the conversion of fish and wildlife habitat to other land uses.

The property contains habitat that will provide BPA with credits for partial mitigation of wildlife habitat losses due to the construction and operation of the federal flood-control facilities on the Willamette River. It will allow wildlife access to native upland prairie, oak woodland and Douglas fir habitats. Specifically, it is considered important habitat due to its inclusion of the forested Coyote Creek riparian corridor and other wetland habitats, and because it provides an excellent opportunity for native wet prairie restoration and water fowl foraging. The project also provides connectivity between the ODFW-managed Fern Ridge Wildlife Management Area COA and the City of Eugene's Coyote Prairie mitigation bank. Together, the West Eugene Wetlands/Spencer Creek and Fern Ridge Wildlife Management Area COAs encompass 64,000-acres of habitat that supports valley bottom wetland, grassland, and riparian habitats with the highest remaining concentration of rare Willamette

Valley at-risk endemic species, including the federally Endangered Bradshaw's lomatium (*Lomatium bradshawii*), Willamette daisy (*Erigeron decumbens* var. *decumbens*) and Fender's blue butterfly (*Icaricia icarioides fenderi*), and the federally Threatened Kincaid's lupine (*Lupinus sulphureus* ssp. *kincaidii*).

Once the property has been acquired by ODFW, they will develop a management plan for long-term stewardship of the land. The management plan will be developed in coordination with and approved by BPA prior to implementation. 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, 76 FR 63764, Nov. 14, 2011). 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, has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion, 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, (iv) have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources, or (v) involve genetically engineered organisms, synthetic biology, governmentally designated noxious weeds, or invasive species, unless the proposed activity would be contained or confined in a manner designed and operated to prevent unauthorized release into the environment and conducted in accordance with applicable requirements.

/s/ Israel Duran

Israel Duran

Environmental Protection Specialist – KEC-4

Concur:

/s/ Katherine S. Pierce

Katherine S. Pierce

NEPA Compliance Officer – KEC-4

Date: January 23, 2013

Attachment:

Environmental Checklist for Categorical Exclusions

Environmental Checklist for Categorical Exclusions

Name of Proposed Project: Willamette Wildlife Fund: Coyote Creek Property Funding

Work Order #: Project 2011-003-00, Contract # BPA-006468

This project does not have the potential to cause significant impacts on the following environmentally sensitive resources. See 10 CFR 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B for complete descriptions of the resources. This checklist is to be used as a summary – further discussion may be included in the Categorical Exclusion Memorandum.

<u>Environmental Resources</u>	<u>No Potential for Significance</u>	<u>No Potential, with Conditions (describe)</u>
1. Historic Properties and Cultural Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. T & E Species, or their habitat(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Floodplains or wetlands	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Areas of special designation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Health & safety	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Prime or unique farmlands	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Special sources of water	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Other (describe)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Signed: /s/ Israel Duan

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