

United States Government

Department of Energy
Bonneville Power Administration

memorandum

DATE: May 20, 2003

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEC-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Wildlife Mitigation Program EIS (DOE/EIS-0246/SA-32)

TO: Joe DeHerrera, KECU-4
Fish and Wildlife Project Manager

Proposed Action: Zumwalt Prairie Preserve Conservation Easement

Project No: 2001-043-00

Wildlife Management Techniques or Actions Addressed Under This Supplement Analysis (See App. A of the Wildlife Mitigation Program EIS): Resource Acquisition Techniques-1.2 Easement Acquisition.

Location: Wallowa County, Oregon

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) and The Nature Conservancy

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA proposes to purchase a conservation easement on the Zumwalt Prairie Preserve, which is currently owned by The Nature Conservancy. The Zumwalt Prairie Preserve encompasses 27,000 acres in Wallowa County, Oregon and is the largest and most intact palouse bunchgrass prairie in North America. The conservation easement will guarantee that the wildlife and fishery values of this property are permanently maintained. The goal of the easement is to protect the ecological condition and natural function of the Preserve's aquatic and terrestrial habitats and the species it supports by protecting its natural resources, maintaining or enhancing its air and water quality, and preserving its underlying archaeological and cultural aspects in perpetuity.

Analysis: The compliance checklist for this project was completed by Steven C. Buttrick with The Nature Conservancy and meets the standards and guidelines for the Wildlife Mitigation Program Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Record of Decision (ROD).

No plant or animal species listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) will be affected by the proposed acquisition of the conservation easement. Through contact with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Oregon Natural Heritage Program, staff from The Nature Conservancy identified a number of federal and state listed species that have the potential to occur at the project site (see compliance checklist item 1.B). ESA Section 7 consultation will be conducted by BPA and The Nature Conservancy, as necessary, prior to the implementation of any restoration or enhancement activities on the site.

A cultural resource survey was not required for the Zumwalt Prairie Preserve Conservation Easement project. BPA's involvement in the project is limited to the acquisition of a conservation easement. Cultural resources located on the Preserve will remain the responsibility

of The Nature Conservancy and/or subsequent property owners. In the unlikely event that archaeological material is encountered during developments that may occur on the site, an archeologist should be notified immediately and work halted in the vicinity of the finds until they can be inspected and assessed.

A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment was conducted on the Zumwalt Prairie Preserve by Hahn and Associates, Inc. A full report dated November 12, 2000, was submitted to The Nature Conservancy. The assessment revealed no evidence of significant recognized environmental concerns associated with the property. Fred Walasavage an Environmental Specialist with BPA reviewed the Phase I assessment and reported on October 3, 2001, that he concurred with these findings.

Public involvement associated with this project has included written notification and solicitation of comments to interested parties, adjacent landowners, local tribes, government agencies, and non-governmental organizations (letter dated February 11, 2002). Comments were addressed in the conservation easement to the extent practicable. The Nature Conservancy will develop a management plan for the Zumwalt Prairie Preserve. Additional public involvement will occur as part of that process. The Nature Conservancy has also formed a local advisory board to assist in the development of the management plan.

Findings: The project is generally consistent with the Northwest Power Planning Council's Fish and Wildlife Program, as well as BPA's Wildlife Mitigation Program EIS (DOE/EIS-0246) and ROD. This Supplement Analysis finds that: 1) implementing the proposed action will not result in any substantial changes to the Wildlife Mitigation Program that are relevant to environmental concerns; and 2) there are no significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns and bearing on the Wildlife Mitigation Program or its impacts. Therefore, no further NEPA documentation is required.

/s/ Shannon Stewart 5-20-03

Shannon C. Stewart
Environmental Specialist

CONCUR:

/s/ Thomas McKinney DATE: 5-20-03

Thomas C. McKinney
NEPA Compliance Officer

Attachments:

NEPA Compliance Checklist
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Species List Letter, January 17, 2002
Review of Phase I Assessment Letter, October 3, 2001