

United States Government

Department of Energy  
Bonneville Power Administration

# memorandum

DATE: October 4, 2010

REPLY TO  
ATTN OF: Israel Duran - KEC-4

SUBJECT: Environmental Clearance Memorandum

TO: Dorie Welch  
Project Manager – KEWM-4

**Proposed Action:** Provision of funds to acquire a conservation easement of the 1310-acre Trappist Abbey 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 3 South, Range 3 West, Sections 19-21, 28-33 of the Dundee Quad, in Yamhill County, Oregon (near Lafayette, Oregon).

**Proposed by:** Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), Our Lady of Guadalupe Trappist Abbey (Trappist Abbey).

**Description of the Proposed Action:** BPA proposes to acquire a conservation easement of the 1310-acre Trappist Abbey property. BPA will be granted a perpetual conservation easement over the entire property. The Trappist Abbey tract being considered for purchase is located near Lafayette, Oregon and is currently a working forest (1,025 acres) consisting of native conifer woodlands, upland prairie, oak savanna, oak woodlands, grasslands and wet prairies, an area of agricultural use designated as “Farmland” (247 acres), and an area of agricultural use that shall change to working forest after the farming lease expires in September, 2010—designated as “Transition Zone” (38 acres). The property has been identified as a high priority conservation area for oak woodlands and provides habitat for imperiled wildlife and plant species such as the Acorn woodpecker (*Melanerpes formicivorus*), Streaked-horned lark (*Eremophila alpestris strigata*), and White-breasted nuthatch (*Sitta carolinensis*). The property contains high quality native upland prairie habitat and oak woodlands; both habitats are considered rare plant communities in the Willamette Valley and identified in the Oregon Wildlife Conservation Strategy adopted by the ODFW.

The property proposed for acquisition contains habitat that will provide BPA with credits for partial mitigation of wildlife habitat losses due to the construction and operation of the Willamette Basin projects of the FCRPS (i.e., Detroit, Big Cliff, Green Peter, Foster, Cougar, Hills Creek, Lookout Point, and Dexter Dams and their associated reservoirs). BPA will apply the wildlife mitigation credit accrued by this conservation easement against the Green Peter wildlife habitat losses. 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 forested wetland habitat. Additionally it will allow BPA to preserve and protect, in perpetuity, the conservation values of the property and to allow the enhancement of the conservation values of the property through active and natural restoration processes.

The Trappist Abbey 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 Trappist Abbey and the perpetual conservation easement to be held by BPA will ensure that the open space values created by the working landscape and the plant and wildlife associated with the forest and farm environment of the property will be conserved and sustained in perpetuity, and that uses of the land that diminish the conservation values will be prevented or corrected.

BPA is funding the purchase of 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/ Katherine S. Pierce

Katherine S. Pierce

NEPA Compliance Officer – KEC-4

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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"/>

Signed: /s/ Israel Duran

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