

## DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

### Bonneville Power Administration

#### Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for Burlington Bottoms Wildlife Mitigation Project

**SUMMARY:** BPA proposes to fund wildlife management and enhancement activities for the Burlington Bottoms wetlands mitigation site. Acquired by BPA in 1991, wildlife habitat at Burlington Bottoms would contribute toward the goal of mitigation for wildlife losses and inundation of wildlife habitat due to the construction of Federal dams in the lower Columbia and Willamette River Basins. BPA has prepared an environmental assessment (DOE/EA-0928) evaluating the potential environmental effects of the proposed project. Alternative 1 (Proposed Action) evaluated maintenance and enhancement of the property with limited public access; Alternative 2 evaluated maintenance and enhancement of the property with no public access; and Alternative 3 evaluated the No-Action Alternative. Maintenance and enhancement under Alternative 1 would not cause significant environmental impact because: (1) there would be no adverse impacts on soils, air quality, water quality, wildlife (including no effect on endangered species), vegetation, fish, and land use; and (2) there would be no effect on cultural resources. Based on the analysis in the environmental assessment (EA), BPA has determined that the proposed action is not a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment, within the meaning of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969. Therefore, the preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS) is not required and BPA is issuing this FONSI.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION AND COPIES OF THE EA, CONTACT:** John Taves, Bonneville Power Administration - EC-5, P.O. Box 3621, Portland, Oregon 97208-3621, phone number 503-230-4995. Or Charles Craig, Bonneville Power Administration - EWP/State, P.O. Box 3621, Portland, Oregon 97208-3621, phone number 503-231-6964; or the Public Involvement and Information office voice TTY 503-230-3478 in Portland, or toll free 1-800-622-4519.

**Public Availability:** This FONSI will be distributed to all persons and agencies known to be interested in or affected by the proposed action or alternatives.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Under provisions of the Pacific Northwest Electric Power Planning and Conservation Act of 1980 (Northwest Power Act), BPA has the authority and obligation to fund wildlife mitigation activities approved by the Northwest Power Planning Council (Council) and included in the Council's Fish and Wildlife Program (Program). The initial phase of mitigation planning for wildlife habitat losses was submitted to the Council for amendment into the Program in 1989. The Program includes a process for review of habitat losses and design of mitigation plans for each Federal hydro project in the Willamette and Columbia River Basins (Section 1002). In 1989, the Council amended the Program to include wildlife habitat losses resulting from construction and operation of Bonneville, The Dalles, John Day, and McNary Dams. Consistent with Section 1003(7) of the Program's Wildlife Mitigation Rule, BPA proposes to fund projects that are intended to help reach the Council's mitigation goals. BPA

funding would provide management of habitat management, recreation, hydrology, cultural resources, and public access to the area.

Under Alternative 1, the proposed action, control or eradication of non-native invasive plant species and re-establishment or enhancement of native plants would be beneficial to fish and wildlife and would not significantly impact other environmental resources.

Control of non-native fish and wildlife populations through trapping and netting would be beneficial by reducing competition with native species for resources.

Control of non-native invasive plant species at Burlington Bottoms may include the burning of vegetation (Reed canary grass) in certain areas (pasture habitat) and at certain times of the year. This may cause, for the short term, an increase in carbon monoxide and smoke particulates. Burning would be coordinated with the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality to ensure that impacts to air quality would be minimal.

To avoid adverse impacts to fish and wildlife habitat, management of public access will include the use of interpretive signs to educate visitors on the need to stay in designated areas, using vegetation as a natural barrier to prevent off-trail use, and/or having seasonal restrictions on visitor access.

Timing and location of management activities (burning of Reed canary grass, mechanical removal of blackberries, and trapping of bullfrogs) would occur in such a manner as to minimize disturbance to native fish and wildlife, especially during such critical periods as the breeding season for waterfowl.

A cultural resource survey was performed on the Burlington Bottoms site in September of 1994. No prehistoric materials were observed, possibly due to twentieth century fill material and dense vegetation which obscure the ground surface, hindering recognition of these resources. Any ground-disturbing activities (e.g., excavations or surface leveling) related to the construction of the trail and wildlife viewing areas and the placement of interpretive signs will be monitored by an archaeologist since it is possible that unrecorded prehistoric sites exist beneath the ground surface.

Determination: Based on the information in the EA, summarized here, BPA determines that the proposed action is not a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment within the meaning of NEPA, 42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.* Therefore, an EIS will not be prepared and BPA is issuing this FONSI.

Issued in Portland, Oregon, on December 28, 1994.

/s/ Randall W. Hardy

---

Randall W. Hardy  
Administrator and Chief Executive Officer