



## Department of Energy

Bonneville Power Administration  
P.O. Box 3621  
Portland, Oregon 97208-3621

ENVIRONMENT, FISH AND WILDLIFE

December 27, 2023

In reply refer to: EC-4

### **To: People Interested in the Uma-Birch Floodplain Reconnection Project**

The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) has finalized the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Uma-Birch Floodplain Reconnection Project. Based on the final EA, BPA is issuing a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and has made a decision to proceed with the project. This letter describes BPA's decision, the construction schedule, and how to obtain additional information.

**Background:** BPA will provide funding to the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) to complete the Uma-Birch Floodplain Reconnection Project. The project will restore natural hydrology and reconnect the historic floodplain located at the confluence of the Umatilla River and Birch Creek to enhance habitat for fish and wildlife including Endangered Species Act-listed Middle Columbia River steelhead. In addition, the project helps BPA meet its commitments to CTUIR under the Columbia River Fish Accord.

BPA prepared an EA to help the agency determine if the project would cause significant impacts that would warrant preparing an environmental impact statement under the National Environmental Policy Act. BPA released the draft EA for public review and comment in April 2023 and received comments from two individuals and two entities. The final EA provides responses to those comments and minor revisions to the EA. Based on the EA analysis and mitigation measures included in the EA and mitigation action plan to help lessen impacts, BPA has found that the project will not cause any significant impacts and, therefore, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared.

**Decision:** BPA has decided to fund CTUIR for construction of the Uma-Birch Floodplain Reconnection Project. Project construction is expected to begin in Summer 2024 and continue for two calendar years, with breaks in construction during seasonal restrictions.

**Copies Available:** The final EA, FONSI, and mitigation action plan are available on BPA's website at <http://www.bpa.gov/nepa/uma-birch>. If you previously requested a copy of the documents, they are enclosed. If you would like to obtain paper copies of these documents, please call our toll-free document request line at 1-800-622-4520; leave a request naming this project and giving your name and complete mailing address.

**For More Information:** If you have questions regarding the environmental process, please contact me at 503-230-3928, or by e-mail at [jjmaslow@bpa.gov](mailto:jjmaslow@bpa.gov). You can also reach me toll free at 1-800-622-4519.

Thank you for your interest in our work.

Sincerely,

/s/ Jeff Maslow

Jeff Maslow

Senior Environmental Protection Specialist

**Enclosures (if requested):**

Final EA

FONSI and Mitigation Action Plan