

memorandum

DATE: August 13, 2012

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEC-4

SUBJECT: Environmental Clearance Memorandum

TO: Dorie Welch
Project Manager – KEWM-4

Proposed Action: Rattlesnake Butte Property Funding.

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: Monroe Quadrangle, in Lane County, Oregon (near Junction City, Oregon).

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA)

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA is proposing to fund the Nature Conservancy (the Conservancy) to acquire 47 acres of land adjacent to a 50-acre parcel to create a total 97-acre parcel that will be known as Rattlesnake Butte. The Conservancy will provide BPA a conservation easement over the entire 97-acre property that will prevent habitat conversion and secure rights to restore and maintain fish and wildlife habitat conservation. The property will be granted to the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde (the Tribe) who will own and manage the property.

The acquisition will provide long-lasting benefits as part of a growing network of conservation lands in the Willamette Valley by allowing wildlife access to native upland prairie, oak woodland and Douglas fir habitats. Rattlesnake Butte is part of a northwest-southeast oriented basalt ridge. The extremely shallow soil over basalt bedrock supports a good example of Lemmon's needlegrass/ silver moss plant community. The site also contains examples of two other high-ranking plant communities once widespread in the Willamette Valley and now restricted to a very few areas: the Roemer's fescue dry grassland and Oregon white oak savanna. Uncommon plant species for the Willamette Valley include Hall's violet, prairie lupine, and turkey mullein, along with a host of other typical Willamette Valley prairie and savanna wildflowers. The south facing rocky slopes harbor populations of every reptile native to the Willamette Valley including one of very few remnant populations of the western rattlesnake known from the Willamette Valley. Funding this acquisition provides Willamette Biological Opinion wildlife mitigation credit for habitat losses due to the construction and operation of the federal hydroelectric facilities in the Willamette Valley.

The Tribe will develop a management plan for Rattlesnake Butte as part of the conservation easement process that will allow for restoration and wildlife enhancements and provide long-term stewardship of the land. The management plan will be developed in coordination with and

approved by BPA and its Willamette MOA partners, (Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife). 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: August 13, 2012

Attachment:

Environmental Checklist for Categorical Exclusions

Environmental Checklist for Categorical Exclusions

Name of Proposed Project: Rattlesnake Butte

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.

Environmental Resources	No Potential for Significance	No Potential, with Conditions (describe)
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"/>

List supporting documentation attached (if needed):

Signed: /s/ Israel Duran

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