

memorandum

DATE: May 10, 2013

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEC-4

SUBJECT: Environmental Clearance Memorandum

TO: Dorie Welch
Project Manager – KEWM-4

Proposed Action: Bald Hill Farms property funding

Fish and Wildlife Project No.: 2011-003-00, BPA-007071

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: Corvallis quadrangle, in Benton County, Oregon (near Corvallis, Oregon).

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA)

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA is proposing to fund the Greenbelt Land Trust's purchase of the Bald Hill Farms property (Property), a 483-acre parcel of land located just west of the City of Corvallis in Benton County Oregon. Bald Hill Farm is adjacent to three protected natural areas (Bald Hill Natural Area, Fitton Green Natural Area, and Lupine Meadows Natural Area) and several other properties with conservation easements. The combination of all these protected properties will create an upland and wet prairie, and mixed oak/conifer conservation zone of over 1400 acres.

This funding partially fulfills commitments made in the 2010 "Willamette River Basin Memorandum of Agreement Regarding Wildlife Habitat Protection and Enhancement between the State of Oregon and the Bonneville Power Administration". This is part of BPA's ongoing efforts to mitigate for the impacts to fish and wildlife of the construction and operation of federal flood control facilities in the Willamette River Basin. Placing this property in a conservation easement will provide long-lasting wildlife benefits as part of a growing network of conservation lands in the Willamette Valley by preventing the conversion of fish and wildlife habitat to other land uses. The ability to focus this large landscape on prairie restoration and protection will provide considerable opportunities for implementation of the Conservation Measures described in Benton County's Habitat Conservation Plan and directly contribute to recovery measures described in the USFWS Recovery Plan.

The Property contains habitat that will provide BPA with credits for partial mitigation of wildlife habitat losses due to the construction and operation of the federal flood-control facilities on the Willamette River. As part of a growing network of conservation lands in the Willamette Valley this acquisition will provide long-lasting benefits by allowing wildlife access to native Willamette Valley upland and wetland prairie, oak savanna, oak woodland, riparian forest and shrubland. The Property's wet areas are biologically and structurally diverse and include a mix of shrubland and open meadows. The Property contains approximately 1 mile of Mulkey Creek and unnamed tributaries to Newton Creek. The Property also contains more than 100 acres of mixed-quality oak woodland and oak savanna habitats, including multi-species stands of mixed-age Oregon white oak (*Quercus garryanna*) with large legacy trees more than 100 years old, and 70-80 year-old Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesi*) and grand fir (*Abies grandis*) trees. Riparian forest and shrubland habitats surround and buffer many of the stream reaches on the Property. Existing habitats support a diverse assemblage of native species, including three federally-

listed plant species: Willamette daisy (*Erigeron decumbens* var. *decumbens*), Nelson's checkermallow (*Sidalcea nelsoniana*) and Kincaid's lupine (*Lupinus sulphureus* ssp. *kincaidii*). Other species include, but are not limited to, acorn woodpecker (*Melanerpes formicivorus*), Oregon vesper sparrow (*Pooecetes gramineus affinis*), white-breasted nuthatch (*Sitta carolinensis aculeate*), western bluebird (*Sialia Mexicana*), western gray squirrel (*Sciurus griseus*). The combination of all these protected properties will create an upland and wet prairie, and mixed oak/conifer conservation zone of over 1400 acres. In addition, the property has nearly 6km of managed (publically accessible) hiking trails that connect to a nearly 15km trail network on Fitton Green and Bald Hill Natural Areas. The Property's diverse habitat types and species, its large size, and its location near other conservation properties are Conservation Values of landscape-scale importance.

Once the property has been acquired by Greenbelt Land Trust, they will develop a management plan for long-term stewardship of the land. The management plan will be developed in coordination with and approved by BPA and ODFW prior to implementation. Prior to funding any management activities on the property, 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/ Stacy Mason

Stacy Mason

NEPA Compliance Officer – KEC-4

Date: May 10, 2013

Attachment:

Environmental Checklist for Categorical Exclusions

Environmental Checklist for Categorical Exclusions

Name of Proposed Project: Willamette Wildlife Fund: Bald Hill Farm Property Funding

Work Order #: Project 2011-003-00, Contract # BPA-007071

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.

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

Signed: /s/ Israel Duran

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