

KLICKITAT BASIN KEY HABITAT ACQUISITION

Project #23026

Yakama Nation Response to Independent Scientific Review Panel

for the Northwest Power Planning Council

February 2001

Independent Scientific Review Panel Ranking and Comments:

ProjectID: 23026

Klickitat Basin Key Habitat Acquisition

Province: Columbia Gorge

Subbasin: Klickitat

Sponsor: YN

Funding Request: \$3,000,000

Short Description: Purchase high priority lands for preservation of refugia habitat. Protection of stream channel and riparian habitats and associated uplands, which influence immediate riparian function and channel processes.

ISRP Rank: B*

Comments: Objectives 1 - 3A appear to meet the High Priority criteria and critical areas appear to be targeted, however 3b, 3c and 4 do not meet the criteria and appear to be primarily developing infrastructure for the future. A major part of the project is “prioritization” of future purchases. There is little indication that the purchases are time sensitive.

Yakama Nation Response

ISRP comment: “Objectives 1 - 3A appear to meet the High Priority criteria and critical areas appear to be targeted, however 3b, 3c and 4 do not meet the criteria and appear to be primarily developing infrastructure for the future. A major part of the project is “prioritization” of future purchases”

Project #23026 was developed by the Yakama Nation (YN) in conjunction with Columbia Land Trust (CLT) to address immediate land development pressures within the Klickitat Basin. As outlined in Objectives 1-3 of the proposal, two important parcels were

identified for immediate acquisition. Subsequent the Washington State Salmon Recovery Board (SRFB) has agreed to purchase of the Dillacort Canyon parcel, which secures 579 acres of quality spawning and rearing habitat for threatened Klickitat steelhead for \$333,175.

As stated in the original proposal, the YN believes that land acquisition is a cost effective means to preserve critical habitat in perpetuity thus preventing costly habitat restoration. To successfully preserve these habitats, an administrative infrastructure, which uses a prioritized approach and trust fund account to expedite implementation, should be a fundamental part of any strategy. However, the YN agrees with the ISRP comments that, for the intent of the “High Priority” solicitation, the administrative infrastructure and trust accounts should be eliminated. The YN will work in collaboration with CLT to develop the administrative/infrastructure component in an alternative forum.

Therefore, modifications to the existing proposal are as follows:

- Elimination of the Dillacort Canyon property acquisition of \$333, 175.
- Elimination of the FTE at \$50,568.
- Elimination of the trust account for future acquisition at \$1,716,257.

The revised proposal includes the following elements:

- Purchase of the Logging Camp Creek property for \$900,000.
- Cost-share of \$135,000 through property owner land donation.
- Cost-share of \$1,500 with CLT for administrative support.
- Cost-share of \$800 with YN for monitoring and evaluation activities.

See revised project #23026 budget form.

ISRP comment: “There is little indication that the purchases are time sensitive”.

The YN concurs with the ISRP that the proposal inadequately described the time sensitivity specific to each parcel. While the YN adequately described the overarching development pressures, lack of County ordinances, and biological and ESA rationale, specific

issues relating to each parcel were not presented. The following is a summary of the time sensitive issues affecting the Logging Camp Creek parcel.

Major land developers in Klickitat County have actively solicited the Logging Camp Creek owner who is getting out of the ranching business and actively divesting his land holdings. The owner has expressed a strong desire to preserve the natural resource value of Logging Camp Creek. The property was on the market in 1999 and contracted with a major land developer. No sale was negotiated during that time because of the landowners desire to protect the natural resource value. Currently the property owner is under no contract, but has indicated his strong desire to sell the property. The landowner is very aware that adjacent properties have recently sold for \$4,000/acre for 20-acre parcels. The Logging Camp Creek property will be sold in the very near future.

Excerpt from Original Proposal, Describing Logging Camp Creek Acquisition and Project Linkage:

Logging Camp Canyon land acquisition proposal is the fee simple purchase of 380 acres of land, which provides 4,620 linear feet of stream frontage. Logging Camp Canyon is a west bank tributary that enters the Klickitat River at River Mile 9.5 in Klickitat County. The Canyon creek has 2.5 miles of quality spawning and rearing habitat accessible to anadromous fish. Logging Camp Canyon provides one of the last best vestiges of quality habitat. It has a dense forest canopy and suitable water temperatures. Purchase of this property will ensure that steelhead spawning and rearing habitat will be protected from development and degradation. Wild Klickitat River steelhead (summer and winter run) are ESA “threatened” stocks that have limited tributary spawning and rearing opportunities in this portion of the basin. This project will complement the following habitat restoration activities currently underway within Logging Camp Canyon: 1) Klickitat County-sponsored Logging Camp Canyon Passage Improvement Grant (Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) funded 1999), 2) Yakama Nation/Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) projects (#97-BI-61835 and #9506800). The BPA/Yakama Nation projects will conduct riparian plantings in conjunction with the SRFB Passage Project and project monitoring via Timber Fish & Wildlife (1994 TFW Ambient Monitoring Manual) habitat inventory methodology, spawner surveys and snorkel counts. The willing seller would like to complete this land sale during 2001.

Excerpt from Original Proposal, Identifying Project Need:

As identified in the Northwest Power Planning Council's (Council) 2000 Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program Report this proposal addresses the action to "preserve habitats that are intact and restorable".

This project will benefit ESA "threatened" Klickitat River summer and winter steelhead. Additionally, rearing and migratory habitat will be protected for spring and fall chinook, coho and resident fishes, by securing these lands through acquisition. Upland wildlife species will benefit from preservation of oak woodlands, which are identified by Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW) as a high priority habitat for preservation.

Land acquisition for conservation eliminates the need for restoration "triage" forever. The Columbia Land Trust (CLT) and Yakama Nation Fisheries Program (YNFP) goal is to manage this land for habitat and conservation in perpetuity. This project will allow us to acquire these lands containing important salmon habitat at a 30% reduced cost. Protecting a large single-ownership parcel now is much cheaper than acquiring multiple parcels subsequent to subdivision. If subdivision of this property occurs it will seriously diminish, if not completely extinguish, steelhead re-colonization.

The Logging Camp Creek watershed is located in a portion of the county which is experiencing rapid subdivision and domestic development. Klickitat County's Critical Area Ordinance is currently under appeal. It is being challenged for not adequately protecting riparian and floodplain habitats. This project will secure a large area of land in perpetuity to protect lower basin steelhead habitat.

Recently completed EDT analysis for Klickitat steelhead identifies Reach 3A (Lyle Falls -2.2 to Swale-RM 17.2) as a very high priority for preservation (Fig. 1.). This reach ranked number 2 out of 44 reaches modeled. Reach 3A is the primary migration corridor for all steelhead production within the basin. Additionally, reach 3A provides key summer and winter rearing for progeny from mainstem spawners as well as the progeny from lower basin tributaries. Logging Camp Creek feeds into this reach of the mainstem at river miles 9.5 and 5.5 respectively. It is the contention of YN fisheries professionals that the majority of annual production from lower basin tributaries (Logging Camp, Dillacort, Wheeler, Swale Creeks) emigrates to rear in this portion of the mainstem. A smaller portion of the steelhead juveniles do remain in the upper and middle reaches of these lower basin tributaries if they can find adequate rearing habitat. Preservation of this portion of the Klickitat mainstem and these lower basin tributaries must be of the highest priority.