

## **Project Proponent's Response To ISRP Comments: Project ID # 29009 Response Document**

**Project ID: 29009**

**Proposed Project: Acquire Dole-Beebe Property and Associated Water Rights**

**Project Sponsor: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)**

**Province: Columbia Cascade**

**Subbasin: Columbia Upper Middle**

**General WDFW Response:** The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) appreciates the opportunity to respond to the Independent Scientific Review Panel's (ISRP) comments regarding the proposed purchase of the Dole-Beebe property along the Columbia River within Chelan County Washington (Project ID #29009).

As referenced in our project proposal and narrative (see section b. Technical and/or scientific background) and as discussed during the ISRP's field tour last fall, this unique property is currently being threatened by development, presently includes over 227 acres of important riparian and shrub steppe habitat both adjacent to and uplands of the Columbia River, and provides valuable breeding and nesting areas, escape cover, resting zones and forage for a variety of important wildlife including big game (mule deer), furbearers, upland gamebirds, waterfowl, shorebirds, raptors (including the federally threatened bald eagle), and numerous small mammals, songbirds and other wildlife.

Both riparian and shrub steppe are classified as "Priority Habitats" within WDFW's Priority Habitat and Species (PHS) program (WDFW 1999). Specific wildlife species classified as "Priority Species" within WDFW's PHS program either personally observed on-site by WDFW personnel or assumed to inhabit the property (or adjacent Columbia River) during some time of the year would include at a minimum: mule deer, mink, western gray squirrel (a "state threatened" specie and federal species of concern), Great blue heron (a state monitor species), common loon (a state sensitive species inhabiting the adjacent Columbia River), western bluebird (a state monitor species), Lewis woodpecker (a state candidate species), and both golden ( a state candidate species) & bald eagle (a state and federally threatened species).

Several important aquatic habitats (including "critical habitat" for Upper Columbia River summer steelhead and spring chinook salmon as designated by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), are also found within the project's boundaries including a watercress lined, 10 to 12 cfs spring tributary to the Columbia River, and the Columbia River proper.

Several important fish species classified within WDFW's PHS program as "Priority Species" that are known to inhabit the spring system and/or adjacent Columbia River include: summer steelhead (federally listed as "endangered" and known to spawn and rear in the spring tributary), spring chinook salmon (also federally listed as "endangered"

and observed within the spring tributary), with an adult female captured, identified and released by WDFW last year, bull trout (federally listed as “threatened” known to inhabit the mouth of the spring system and adjacent mainstem Columbia), coho salmon (comprised of adult strays presumably from the Yakama Indian Nation’s coho reintroduction program observed spawning within the spring system over the last three years), summer chinook salmon (found around the mouth of the spring system and migrating through the Dole property within the mainstem Columbia), and sockeye salmon (again migrating by the mouth of the spring system and within the adjacent mainstem Columbia River). Resident rainbow trout and mountain sucker (a state candidate species), are also thought to use both the spring system and adjacent Columbia River upon the Dole-Beebe property, as do many other native Columbia River fishes.

Thus, with ever burgeoning population growth, and with the intense development pressure from both local and outside land developers being increasingly exerted on the Columbia River and its attendant shorelines zone within both Chelan and Douglas Counties, rare, valuable and extremely important fish and wildlife habitats such as that found upon the Dole-Beebe property and other remnant natural areas along the Columbia River within these counties, are disappearing at an alarming rate and WDFW sees no end in sight.

Therefore WDFW strongly agrees with the ISRP’s supposition (as outlined on page 8 of this year’s ISRP Report No. 2002-2), that the best long term strategy for protecting fish and wildlife habitat and restoring viable populations is to purchase lands, conservation easements and water rights, in the hopes of protecting these fish and wildlife populations, their habitats & needs, AND the natural processes that are essential to their long term survival and proliferation through time.

**ISRP Comment No. 1:** “The objectives, tasks and methods section is too brief and has no M&E component.”

**WDFW response:** We agree that the objectives, tasks and methods section of this proposal is brief, but purposely so, as WDFW’s main goal is to immediately acquire and protect this unique, fragile but extremely valuable upper Columbia River ecosystem for the citizens of the State of Washington, and for the many important fish and wildlife species (including several ESA species) that either inhabit it, migrate through it and/or that are dependent upon it during some time of the year.

Therefore, Objective 1. (Protect Columbia River mainstem frontage riparian habitat) will proceed pretty much as already outlined within Task’s 1a. thru 1g. of the project narrative, and mainly consists of acquiring any & all necessary permits, conducting a hazardous waste assessment, having an appraisal done, obtaining title insurance and finally purchasing the property. Again professionals from WDFW’s Lands Program will conduct the property purchase and all related real estate activities, while the hazardous waste or other assessments that cannot be handled in-house through WDFW’s Lands or other Department programs, will be contracted out.

However, purchase of the property will not only protect a beautiful section of Columbia River riverine shorelines area (and its attendant riparian zone), but will also protect two (2) high quality, water cress lined spring systems running through the mid & lower property, several small wetlands areas, and a fairly extensive (160 acre) uplands shrub steppe zone, also with a small spring system running through it.

Objective 2. (Restore and enhance Columbia River mainstem frontage riparian habitat) will also take place as outlined in the project narrative, and will include the planting of 5000 lineal feet of Columbia River shorelines with native trees, shrubs and grasses, the installation of a drip irrigation system to aid in the establishment of the riparian plants, and the control of noxious weeds through a professional spot spray or other WDFW weed control program. Again, these activities will be conducted by WDFW professionals (i.e. local WDFW Biologists, Wildlife Area Managers and/or others) familiar with standard native vegetation planting techniques, and who have conducted these types of activities before, in order to ensure greater planting success throughout the project area.

Weed control and irrigation maintenance will also be handled by WDFW professionals such as our local Wildlife Area Managers who routinely deal with irrigation systems and weed control problems on WDFW wildlife lands, and who are licensed spray applicators.

Objective 3 (Maintain enhancements to Columbia River mainstem frontage riparian) will again be conducted as per our narrative, with WDFW professionals monitoring plantings, and replacing plants as necessary for at least the first two years, to ensure a “minimum” Eighty percent (80%) survival rate by the beginning of the third growing season.

A typical WDFW Columbia River “native” shorelines/riparian planting prescription (trees & shrubs) appropriate for the Dole-Beebe property that would likely be used would include: Black cottonwood (*Populus trichocarpa*), Red-osier dogwood (*Cornus stolonifera*), Coyote willow (*Salix exigua*), Scouler’s willow (*Salix scouleriana*), Pacific willow (*Salix lasiandra*), Water birch (*Betula occidentalis*), Mountain alder (*Alnus tenuifolia*), Douglas hawthorn (*Crataegus douglasii*) Douglas maple (*Acer glabrum*), Ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*), Blue elderberry (*Sambucus cerulea*), Serviceberry (*Amelanchier alnifolia*), Mock orange (*Philadelphus lewisii*), Woods rose (*Rosa woodsii*), Nootka rose (*Rosa nutkana*) and snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*).

Native grasses appropriate for the site would include: Tufted hairgrass (*Deschampsia caespitosa*), Fowl mannagrass (*Glyceia striata*), Western mannagrass (*Glyceria occidentalis*), Bluebunch wheatgrass (*Agropyron spicatum*), Thickspike wheatgrass (*Agropyron dasystachyum*), Streambank wheatgrass (*Agropyron riparium*), Big bluegrass (*Poa ampla*), Idaho fescue (*Festuca idahoensis*), and Great basin wildrye (*Elymus cinereus*).

Regarding the Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) plan, since the property came up rather suddenly for sale, and since the property has recently been sold to a land developer (see ISRP comment No. 2 and WDFW’s response), and since WDFW already had a general or at least rudimentary knowledge of the habitat cover types and species of fish & wildlife

found upon the property (i.e. through our local biologists and other personnel's personal knowledge), because of time constraints WDFW did not develop a M&E plan (nor conduct an HEP analysis) at the outset. However, WDFW will put together an "Interdisciplinary Team" composed of WDFW professional fish, wildlife, habitat & wetlands biologists to formulate a quality M&E plan, prior to any actual baseline data collection OR restoration activities, as recommended in the ISRP's review of the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribe's Acquisition & Restoration Plan (ISRP 2001-4).

Again, M&E protocols and the M&E plan will be developed by an interdisciplinary team of WDFW biologists, headed up by Paul Ashley (WDFW's senior HEP specialist), who is working closely with Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Managers (CBFWA) to modify existing M&E protocols outlined in the Draft Monitoring and Evaluation Plan for the Albeni Falls Wildlife Mitigation Project (Albeni Falls Interagency Work Group 2001), in order to strive for consistency within the greater Columbia Basin Region. WDFW has reviewed all of the M&E and Acquisition documents suggested by ISRP, found them very helpful, and will incorporate all appropriate M&E protocols in future M&E plans.

**ISRP Comment No. 2:** "A decision on the project is urgent, because it faces extreme pressure for development." "Has the property been recently sold to a developer?"

**WDFW response:** Yes, unfortunately it has. The new landowner is Mr. Joseph Leininger of RLF, Columbia Land Holdings LLC, located in Colorado Springs Colorado. However, according to our Lands Agent, the new owner is still willing to sell the property to WDFW if the agency can come up with the funds to purchase the property in a timely fashion and within a reasonable time frame (though nothing is guaranteed, as we hear through the grapevine that there are several other local developers also interested in purchasing the property for either a truck stop, an RV park or a new residential housing development).

**ISRP Comment No. 3:** "The author needs to work with the game division of the WDFW to include a HEP analysis for value to wildlife, and identification of mitigation credits to BPA." "Also see the other proposals for acquisition or protection of wildlife habitat."

**WDFW response:** Again, WDFW has not yet conducted an HEP analysis for the project area, but will conduct a thorough HEP study (lead by our senior HEP specialist Paul Ashley) according to sound scientific methods & protocols established for HEP analysis (USFWS 1980), after our multi-disciplinary team develops a sound M&E plan for the project. Until then see enclosed internal memos written by our Area Habitat Biologist and local Wildlife Biologist describing the values to fish & wildlife of the Dole-Beebe property.

WDFW has also read all other proposals for acquisition or protection of wildlife habitat suggested by ISRP including the Salish & Kootenai Tribe's "Habitat Acquisition and Restoration Plan" (Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes 2000), which WDFW found

particularly helpful. In fact we rated the Dole-Beebe land purchase via the “Acquisition Ranking Criteria” as contained on page 9 of this document and found that the Dole-Beebe property rated very high for acquisition when using this method, which again encourages WDFW to strongly continue pursuing the purchase of this important piece of fish & wildlife property.

**ISRP Comment No. 4:** “The technical background, relationship to other projects, etc. is well written and includes much detail.” The author should fill in the detail for methods to establish baseline data and long-term monitoring and evaluation (M&E).”

**WDFW response:** Again, baseline data collection will not start until WDFW has a sound, solid M&E plan in place, and an HEP analysis has been planned and/or scheduled by our HEP expert Paul Ashley and our local Interdisciplinary Fish & Wildlife Team (which will take place some time in the near future).

**ISRP Comment No. 5:** “The response should describe the plans and methods for their planned stream restoration work.” “The property has potential for benefits to fish and wildlife but some restoration work is warranted.”

**WDFW response:** Besides the initial riparian restoration and enhancement work, no other restoration projects are proposed at this time.

As was described in the original proposal WDFW has deliberately not proposed specific restoration/enhancement activities with this proposal. Our sole intent is to protect the property from development. Once protected we want to work with a diverse stakeholder group to develop a habitat and use plan for this property. We fully anticipate this plan will include numerous habitat restoration/enhancement activities. Once a plan is agreed on for the property we will seek other funding sources to design, engineer, construct and monitor the projects that are identified in the plan.

Each restoration/enhancement proposal will be submitted for review by management agencies in the region.

However some potential future restoration projects (including stream restoration work) that WDFW would like to conduct in the future would include the following:

- 1) Restore and enhance all previous and/or existing shrub steppe areas of the property (i.e. bring back high quality native shrub steppe areas where possible).
- 2) Restore and enhance all previous and/or existing riparian areas of the property (i.e. bring back high quality native riparian areas and replace non-native plants with natives such as replacing non-native Lombardy poplars with native black cottonwoods and using Lombardy’s as instream or terrestrial habitat features or Large Woody Debris (LWD) complexes).

3) Create new “high quality” off-channel salmonid rearing habitat (and perhaps spawning habitat as well), by creating (excavating) a large log & gravel filled off-channel area (i.e. a complete “new” artificially created stream system) paralleling the highway east of US 97, and then diverting metered Columbia River water through it.

4) Restore (i.e. re-meander the old channelized spring channel and establish a high quality native riparian zone on both banks), enhance (create rearing pools, runs, riffles and graveled spawning areas and “high quality” complex woody debris zones and other instream habitat features), and extend the length of the existing spring system by having it enter the Columbia River some ½ mile or more further downstream from where it now enters the Columbia (thus having both a new artificially created Columbia River off-channel area **AND** a more sinuous, completely separated, elongated spring system realigned upon the lower floodplain area of the Dole property along US 97).

5) Create new wetlands areas including connected oxbow wetlands channels or independent wetlands ponds on selected areas of the property.

6) Enhance existing and create new high quality western gray squirrel habitat on the property.

7) Enhance and create new winter bald eagle habitat on the property (especially through riparian restoration and the proposed black cottonwood and ponderosa pine plantings).

8) Create “viewable” fish & wildlife viewing areas upon the property (where people could at prescribed locations view certain fish & wildlife species within their native habitats, including “selected” areas where people could observe fish spawning).

9) Create interpretive areas that point out not only certain species of fish and wildlife, but also the habitat types, features and/or plant species or food supplies that support them, **AND**,

10) Many, many more potential restoration & enhancement projects per WDFW management recommendations for priority habitat & species (WDFW 1991) and other WDFW fish & wildlife management plans, that is if WDFW is lucky enough to obtain the property before it is lost to development.

ISRP Comment #5: Identification of mitigation credit to BPA.

WDFW, CBAFW, and USFW are currently in discussion with NWPPC and BPA regarding wildlife mitigation credits. WDFW has been informed by BPA that once the current projects we have identified for BPA wildlife credits are completed we will have exhausted available credits for wildlife impacts associated with the federal hydro projects on the mid-upper Columbia. Although WDFW disagrees with the premise that wildlife impacts have been fully mitigated we are reluctant at this time to move forward with credit calculations on future projects until we resolve our differences with BPA on the issue.

## **REFERENCES:**

Albeni Falls Interagency Work Group. 2001. Monitoring & Evaluation plan for the Albeni Falls wildlife mitigation project. Albeni Falls Interagency Work Group. Kalispell Tribe. Usk, WA. 33p.

Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. 2000. Habitat Acquisition and Restoration Plan (FWIS Appendix D). Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, Division of Fish, Wildlife, Recreation and Conservation., Pablo, MT 43pp.

[ISRP] Independent Scientific Review Panel. 2002. Preliminary Review of Fiscal Year 2003 Proposals for the Upper and Middle Snake, Columbia Cascade, and Lower Columbia and Estuary Provinces. ISRP Report No. 2002-2. Northwest Power Planning Council., Portland, OR 132pp.

Knutson, K.L., and V.L. Naef. 1997. Management Recommendations for Washington's Priority Habitats: Riparian. Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife., Olympia, WA 181pp.

[USFWS] U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 1980. Habitat evaluation procedures. Ecological Services Manual 102. U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D.C.

[WDFW] Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. 1991. Management Recommendations for Washington's Priority Habitats and Species. Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. Olympia, WA .

[WDFW] Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. 1999. Priority Habitats and Species List. Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. Olympia, WA. 32p.

Attachment 1.

March 14, 2002

TO: Bob Steele  
Habitat Biologist

FROM: Tom McCall  
Wildlife Biologist

**SUBJECT: Dole Property – Wildlife Values**

I appreciated the opportunity to view the Dole Property this week. This area contains a diverse complex of wildlife habitats and species. Such areas are becoming less common along the Columbia River in Chelan and Douglas counties, making this parcel critical to protect for future generations. The area's location along highway 97-A provides a great opportunity to showcase Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's and Bonneville Power Administration's work.

In its present condition, this former agricultural area has both a high species richness and diversity. But the potential for this area, following a variety of habitat enhancements, is tremendous. Big game, furbearers, upland birds, waterfowl, raptors, passerine species, and small mammals are common to the area.

The riparian area along the Columbia currently supports an active beaver colony as well as mink, otter, raccoons, and great blue herons (state monitor species). This property is within the historic range of sharp-tailed grouse (state threatened species and federal candidate species). The waterbirch found in the area comprise a major winter food source for sharptails, making this area a possible future release site for the birds.

The area is within an active golden eagle (state candidate species) territory, one of the nine found in Chelan and Douglas counties. The rocky outcrops and cliffs support chukar, which is one of the primary prey species of golden eagles. This area is also frequented by wintering bald eagles (state and federally threatened species) and common loons (state and federally threatened species). Lewis woodpeckers (state candidate species) make use of the many snags along the river.

The Dole property is along the eastern edge of the distribution of both western gray squirrels (state threatened species and federal species of concern) and California bighorn sheep in Chelan County. The area also affords high-quality shrub-steppe winter range for mule deer, which is being lost at a rapid rate in the area.

Overall, I highly endorse WDFW's acquisition of this site. Your hard work and foresight towards protecting this site is commendable.