

BY ELECTRONIC FILING

December 10, 2021

Kimberly D. Bose, Secretary
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
Mail Code: DHAC, PJ-12
888 First Street, N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20426

RE: Priest Rapids Hydroelectric Project No. 2114-204 License Compliance Filing – Article 410 – Wildlife Habitat Monitoring, Information, and Education Plan – 2021 Annual Report

Dear Secretary Bose:

Please find enclosed Public Utility District No. 2 of Grant County, Washington's (Grant PUD's) 2020 Wildlife Habitat Monitoring, Information, and Education annual report consistent with the requirements of Article 410 of the Priest Rapids Hydroelectric Project License.

On October 12, 2009, Grant PUD filed its Wildlife Habitat Monitoring, Information, and Education Plan (Plan) pursuant to Priest Rapids Project (P-2114) License Article 410¹, which was modified and approved by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) on September 8, 2010². As identified in the Plan, Grant PUD is to: 1) monitor recreation effects on wildlife and sensitive wildlife habitats; 2) provide signage, educational outreach, etc. to educate the public about the potential adverse effects of dispersed recreation on sensitive habitats; and 3) identify and implement corrective actions to control recreation impacts and to rehabilitate wildlife habitats. The Plan also requires Grant PUD to file with FERC an annual report that describes the results of the habitat monitoring efforts and status of the information and education program by December 31 of each year following FERC approval of the Plan.

Grant PUD continued its Information and Education (I&E) Program in 2021 through maintenance and enhancement of its website and signage content. Grant PUD strives to help educate the public about responsible recreation practices and the potential adverse effects of irresponsible dispersed recreation on sensitive habitats. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the 2021 Archaeology Days celebration was canceled, however, Grant PUD biological staff plans to attend Archaeology Days in 2022 where they will be on site to illustrate the importance of responsible recreation. The Wanapum Dam Visitors Center, located in the Hydro Operations Building (HOB), remained closed to the public in 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Grant PUD plans to reopen the visitors center to the public as soon as Covid-19 restrictions are lifted, and

¹ 123 FERC ¶ 61,049 (2008)

² 132 FERC ¶ 62,154 (2010)

visitors will again be able to experience the interactive wildlife and wildlife habitat related displays aimed at educating the public on the importance of maintaining a healthy ecosystem throughout the Project. Finally, in 2021 Grant PUD continued to review and select appropriate I&E Program media to be used, such as signs and kiosks (roadside and at key sites), brochures, pamphlets, audio tours, nature trails, newsletters, etc., as well as prioritizing sites where the media will be located, and review services to be provided, such as interpretive talks, and field trips.

FERC staff with questions or comments, please contact Tom Dresser, Grant PUD Fish, Wildlife and Water Quality Manager, at 509-754-5088, ext. 2312.

Sincerely,



Shannon Lowry
License Compliance and Lands Services Manager

Cc: Patrick Verhey – Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Steve Lewis – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Chris Parsons – Washington State Parks
Todd Welker - Washington Department of Natural Resources
Rebecca Doolittle – U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Rex Buck Jr. – Wanapum
Diane Priebe – U.S. Bureau of Land Management
Myra Barker – Washington Recreation and Conservation Office
LeRoy Adams, Jr. – Yakama Nation

Priest Rapids Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 2114)

**Wildlife Habitat Monitoring and Information and
Education Program**

2021 Annual Report

License Article 410

Public Utility District No. 2 of Grant County, Washington

December 2021

Executive Summary

On October 12, 2009, Public Utility District No. 2 of Grant County, Washington (Grant PUD) filed its Wildlife Habitat Monitoring, Information, and Education Plan (WHMIEP) pursuant to License Article 410, which was modified and approved by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) on September 8, 2010. Grant PUD began implementation of the WHMIEP in 2011, which included: 1) monitoring recreation effects on wildlife and sensitive wildlife habitats; 2) providing signage, educational outreach, etc. to help educate the public about responsible recreation practices and to help minimize potentially adverse effects of dispersed recreation on sensitive habitats; and 3) identifying and implementing corrective actions to help reduce recreation impacts and to rehabilitate wildlife habitats. The WHMIEP also requires Grant PUD to file with FERC an annual report that describes the results of the habitat monitoring efforts and status of the information and education program by December 31 of each year following FERC approval.

Five habitat areas within the Priest Rapids Project (Project) were surveyed in the spring and fall of 2021 identifying potential dispersed recreation effects on wildlife and sensitive wildlife habitats. These locations were selected in 2011 because they were identified by the Washington Natural Heritage Program (WNHP 2010) to contain one or more state and/or federally listed plant species or were identified as priority habitat by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Priority Habitats and Species (PHS) database (WDFW 2008). In addition to the condition of the habitat at the site, the proximity of the site to public access, recreation occurring at or near the site, and the potential for recreation impacts at the site in the future was also considered during the selection of the monitoring locations. In total, approximately 12 miles of Wanapum Reservoir shoreline and 3 miles of Priest Rapids Reservoir shoreline were surveyed in 2021.

Grant PUD continued its Information and Education (I&E) Program in 2021 through maintenance and enhancement of its website content. Grant PUD strives to help educate the public about responsible recreation practices and the potential adverse effects of irresponsible dispersed recreation on sensitive habitats. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the 2021 Archaeology Days celebration was canceled, however, Grant PUD biological staff plans to attend Archaeology Days in 2022 where they will be on site to illustrate the importance of responsible recreation. The Wanapum Dam Visitors Center located in the Hydro Operations Building (HOB) remained closed to the public in 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Grant PUD plans to reopen the visitors center to the public when Grant PUD's Covid-19 restrictions are lifted, and visitors will again be able to experience the interactive wildlife and wildlife habitat related displays aimed at educating the public on the importance of maintaining a healthy ecosystem throughout the Project. Finally, in 2021 Grant PUD continued to review and select appropriate I&E Program media to be used, such as signs and kiosks (roadside and at key sites), brochures, pamphlets, audio tours, nature trails, newsletters, etc., as well as prioritizing sites where the media will be located, and review services to be provided, such as interpretive talks, and field trips.

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1.0 Introduction

On October 12, 2009, Public Utility District No. 2 of Grant County, Washington (Grant PUD) filed its Wildlife Habitat Monitoring, Information, and Education Plan (WHMIEP) pursuant to Article 410, which was modified and approved by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) on September 8, 2010. Grant PUD began implementation of the WHMIEP in 2011, which includes: 1) monitoring recreation effects on wildlife and sensitive wildlife habitats; 2) providing signage, educational outreach, etc. to help educate the public about responsible recreation practices to help minimize potentially adverse effects of dispersed recreation on sensitive habitats; and 3) identifying and implementing corrective actions to help reduce recreation impacts and to rehabilitate wildlife habitats. The WHMIEP also requires Grant PUD to file with FERC an annual report that describes the results of the habitat monitoring efforts and status of the information and education program by December 31 of each year following FERC approval of the WHMIEP.

2.0 Monitoring Recreation Effects on Wildlife and Sensitive Wildlife Habitats

In Year 1 of the WHMIEP, Grant PUD identified five habitat areas to be monitored bi-annually (three on Wanapum Reservoir and two on Priest Rapids Reservoir). These five locations were monitored in 2021 and included: 1) West Bar (7 miles); 2) Babcock Bench (3 miles); 3) Quilomene Bar (2 miles); 4) North of Lake Geneva (2 miles); and 5) South of Lake Geneva (1 mile). Selected habitat areas that were monitored are illustrated in Figure 1 and Figure 2. Provisions and criteria for identifying and implementing corrective actions to control impacts and to rehabilitate habitats were identified in the WHMIEP.

These sites were selected because they contain one or more state and/or federally listed plant species or were identified as priority habitat by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Priority Habitats and Species (PHS) database (WDFW 2008); in addition to the condition of the habitat at the site, the proximity of the site to public access, recreation occurring at or near the site, and the potential for recreation impacts at the site in the future was also considered during the selection of the monitoring locations.



Grant County Public Utility District No. 2
Priest Rapids Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 2114), Habitat Monitoring Areas
Wanapum Reservoir, Columbia River, WA

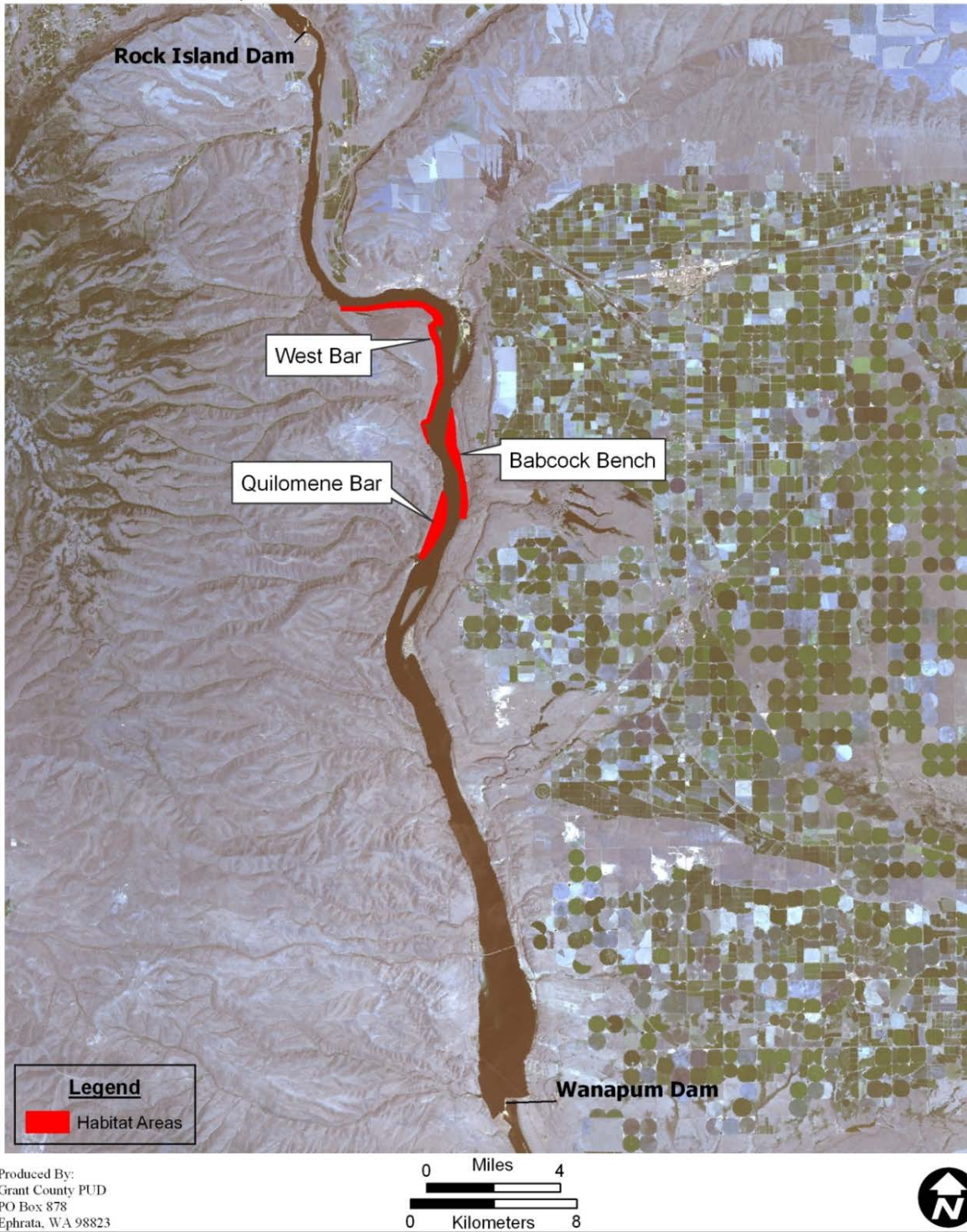
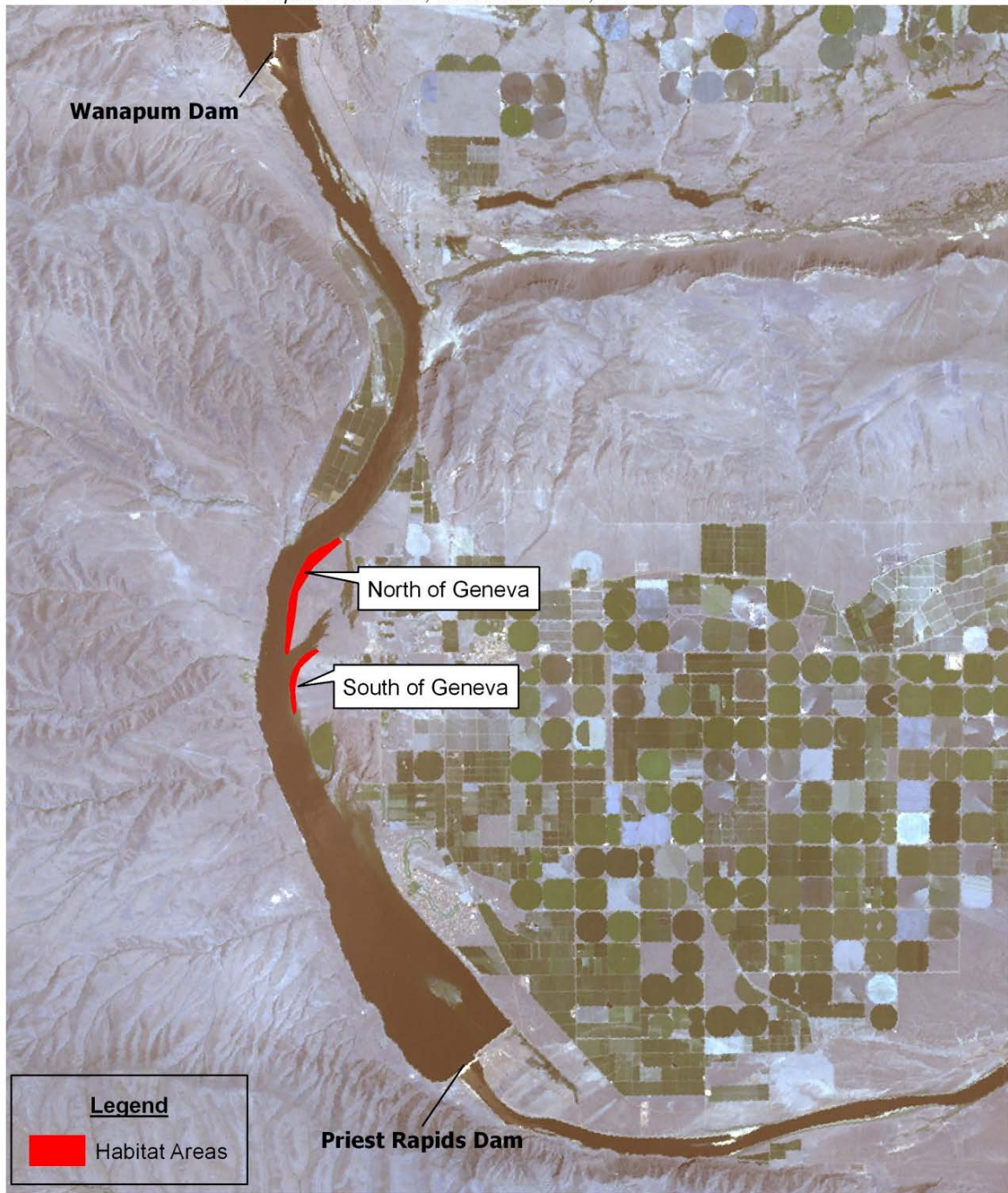


Figure 1 Habitat monitoring areas for the Wanapum Reservoir.



Produced By:
Grant County PUD
PO Box 878
Ephrata, WA 98823

0 Miles 2
0 Kilometers 4



Figure 2 Habitat monitoring areas for the Priest Rapids Reservoir.

2.1 West Bar

West Bar is located on Wanapum Reservoir directly across the river from Crescent Bar, a popular recreation area. This site was selected for monitoring because (1) it is listed as priority habitat for mule deer and elk in WDFW's PHS database (WDFW 2008), (2) it is readily accessible to the public, (3) it is located near Crescent Bar, a known and established recreation site, and (4) the habitat at the site is currently in good condition.

2.2 Babcock Bench

Babcock Bench is located on the east bank south of Crescent Bar and is readily accessible by boat from both Crescent Bar and Sunland boat launches. This site was selected for monitoring because (1) it is listed as priority habitat for chukar in WDFW's PHS database (WDFW 2008), (2) it is readily accessible to the public, (3) it is located near Quilomene Dune, Crescent Bar, and Sunland, all known and established recreation sites, and (4) the habitat at the site is currently in good condition.

2.3 Quilomene Bar

Quilomene Bar is located on the west bank just north of Quilomene Dune. Quilomene Bar is readily accessible by boat from both Crescent Bar and Sunland boat launches. This site was selected for monitoring because (1) it is listed as priority habitat for mule deer and elk in WDFW's PHS database (WDFW 2008), (2) it is readily accessible to the public, (3) it is located near Quilomene Dune, Crescent Bar, and Sunland, all known and established recreation sites, and (4) the habitat at the site is currently in good condition.

2.4 North of Geneva Lake

Lake Geneva is a large cove located on the east bank of Priest Rapids Reservoir. North of Lake Geneva is a popular area for hunting and fishing. This site was selected for monitoring because (1) it is listed as priority habitat for urban natural open space in WDFW's PHS database (WDFW 2008), (2) it is readily accessible to the public, (3) it is commonly used by both hunters and fishermen, and (4) the habitat at the site is currently in good condition.

2.5 South of Lake Geneva

Lake Geneva is a large cove located on the east bank of Priest Rapids Reservoir. South of Lake Geneva is a popular area for hunting and fishing. This site was selected for monitoring because (1) it is listed as priority habitat for urban natural open space in WDFW's PHS database (WDFW 2008), (2) it is readily accessible to the public, (3) it is commonly used by both hunters and fishermen, and (4) the habitat at the site is currently in good condition.

3.0 Results

In total, approximately 12 miles of Wanapum Reservoir shoreline and 3 miles of Priest Rapids Reservoir shoreline were surveyed twice in 2021. Monitoring occurred prior to the peak recreation season in June and again following the recreation season in September. Monitoring methods, impact ratings, action triggers, and corrective action options are described in the WHMIEP and were implemented in 2021.

3.1 West Bar

West Bar was surveyed for dispersed recreation on June 9th, 2021. Litter was found at multiple locations and removed. In addition, two fire pits were found and dispersed at separate locations.

Fall surveys were performed on September 8, 2021 that found one large fire pit that was removed as well as a small amount of trash. There was no evidence of tree disturbance on either survey.

3.2 Babcock Bench

Babcock Bench was surveyed for dispersed recreational effects on June 9, 2021 and was found to have one small fire pit that was subsequently dispersed. Previous seeding efforts continue to be successful throughout the site and there was no noticeable damage to trees or human caused trails. The fall survey was conducted on September 8, 2021 and found a small amount of trash that was subsequently removed. No other dispersed recreation impacts were found.

3.3 Quilomene Bar

Quilomene Bar was surveyed for dispersed recreational effects on June 9, 2021. One fire pit was removed, and litter was picked up during the survey. The fall survey was conducted on September 8, 2021. One large fire pit was discovered and removed along with trash. There were areas of slight trampling that led inland, but it is believed to be from native wildlife, as a number of wild turkeys, mule deer, and elk were present during the surveys. No signs of disturbed human usage were present beyond the shoreline area.

3.4 North of Lake Geneva

North of Lake Geneva was surveyed for dispersed recreational effects on June 9, 2021 and September 8, 2021, and no dispersed recreation sites or any signs of dispersed recreation impacts were found on either survey.

3.5 South of Lake Geneva

South of Lake Geneva was surveyed for dispersed recreational effects on June 9, 2021 and September 8, 2021, and no dispersed recreation sites or any signs of dispersed recreation impacts were found on either survey.

4.0 Information and Education

In 2021, Grant PUD continued to enhance, implement, and maintain the Information and Education (I&E) Program via a combination of website, signage, and visitor center information intended to educate the public about responsible recreation practices and the potential adverse effects of irresponsible dispersed recreation on sensitive habitats, as well as provide information that will help educate the public about the types of wildlife, and their importance to the environment in the Project area.

4.1 Website

The I&E website was activated in 2013 and has been coordinated with I&E provisions of Article 409, 410, and 418. Grant PUD has been providing long-term internal web development support for the program and has funded annual operation and updating as new information is collected. The recreation and wildlife information and education website was maintained throughout 2021 and includes imagery and text regarding a number of wildlife species and ecosystems within the Project area (<https://www.grantpud.org/environment>). Grant PUD will continue to maintain the website and explore ways to expand content in the future.

4.2 Signage

In addition to the website, Grant PUD's Environmental Affairs department has collaboratively developed posters and signage to educate the public on the importance of responsible recreation throughout the Project. There have been numerous conspicuous kiosks and wildlife-specific signage installed and maintained in 2021 at Grant PUD recreation sites and boat launches throughout the Project (Figure 3). In 2022, Grant PUD looks to continue development and installation of additional signs and kiosks within the Project for educational purposes.



Figure 3 Informational signage at Ellensburg Boat Club boat launch site.

4.3 Public Education and Outreach

Due to Covid-19 concerns throughout the region the 2021 Archaeology Days celebration was canceled. Grant PUD biological staff always have historically staffed a booth with posters and literature that highlight the importance of responsible recreation practices at this event (Appendix A). Grant PUD plans to once again participate in the Archaeology Days if they can be safely held in 2022.

Grant PUD's Wanapum Dam Visitors Center, located in the Hydro Operations Building (HOB), was closed throughout 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Prior to Covid-19 restrictions, since its opening on December 1, 2015, the center has been visited annually by thousands of people. Visitors can experience diverse wildlife and wildlife habitat interpretative elements on display

throughout the exhibit illustrating the importance of maintaining a healthy ecosystem as well as promoting responsible recreation practices (Figure 4). Visitors can also learn where each of the recreation sites are located throughout the Project and what amenities are present (Figure 5). This facility will be opened to the public as soon as the Covid-19 restrictions are lifted.

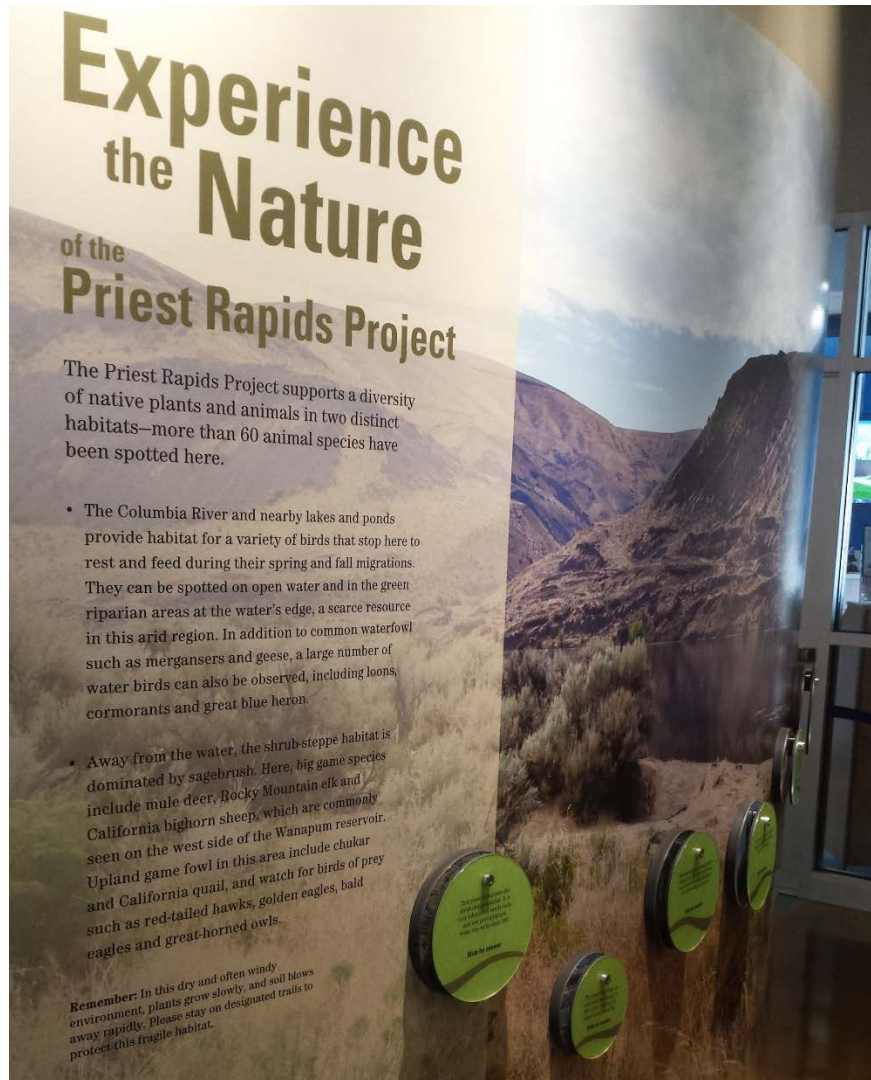


Figure 4 Habitat Information at the Visitor Center.



Figure 5 Display at the visitor center illustrating recreational sites throughout the Project.

5.0 Summary

Grant PUD completed its eleventh full year of monitoring for the WHMIEP in 2021, which included:

- 1). surveying five habitat areas for dispersed recreational effects on sensitive wildlife habitat areas,
- 2). website development, maintenance, and expansion,
- 3). signage maintenance and installation,
- 4). public education and outreach

In 2022, Grant PUD will continue to monitor the five habitat areas bi-annually for dispersed recreational effects on sensitive habitat areas, once prior to recreation season and once following recreation season. Grant PUD will continue to maintain and develop its website, interpretive signage, education and outreach programs, and the Wanapum Dam Visitor's Center and report accordingly. An annual report will be submitted in December 2022.

Literature Cited

FERC (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission). 2008. Order Issuing New License for Public Utility District No. 2 of Grant County, 123 FERC ¶ 61,049, Washington D.C.

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. 2008. Priority Habitat and Species List. Olympia, Washington. 172 pp.

Washington Natural Heritage Program (WNHP). 2010. Geographical Information Systems Data Set. Olympia, Washington. Updated 2010.

Appendix A Preserve Sensitive Habitat Poster



Preserve Sensitive Habitat – Recreate Responsibly



Off-Road Vehicle Use

Stay on Designated Trails – Irresponsible off-road vehicle (ORV) use inflicts long term, if not permanent, damage on fish and wildlife habitat. Protect the environment and natural resources by remembering to keep ORVs in designated parks for their use. Ride only on trails designated for your type of off-road vehicle.



Riding Or Walking Off Designated Trails

Tread Lightly. Riding mountain bikes, dirt bikes or just plain walking on trails is an enjoyable and popular form of recreation. It is important to stay on designated trails, or trails specific for recreation to ensure that habitat damage is kept to a minimum. Sensitive habitat is damaged when people go off the trails and trample plants and other vegetation. **Stay on Trails.**



Leaving Trash And Garbage Behind

One of the most obvious ways sensitive habitat can be damaged is by leaving trash behind after you have recreated. It is important to always pack out your trash. Not only does garbage damage sensitive habitat visually, but it can damage sensitive habitat functionally as well. Remember **“Pack It In...Pack It Out”**.



Careless Campfire Practices

Never Leave a Fire Unattended. Millions of acres of wildlife habitat are burned by fires every year in the United States. Fires are often started by campers who neglect their campfires. It is important to always keep an eye on your campfire. It only takes one spark to start a fire. Remember, only burn during designated seasons and keep an eye on it.

