

BY ELECTRONIC FILING

December 9, 2016

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 – 2016 Annual Report

Dear Secretary Bose:

Please find enclosed Public Utility District No. 2 of Grant County, Washington's (Grant PUD's) 2016 Wildlife Habitat Monitoring, Information, and Education annual report consistent with the requirements of Article 410 of the Priest Rapids Hydroelectric Project License.

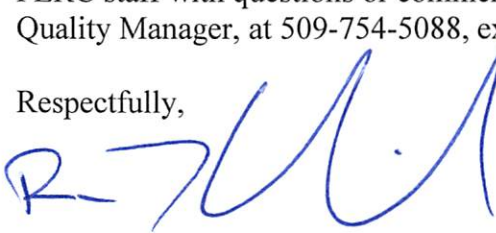
On October 12, 2009, Grant PUD filed its Wildlife Habitat Monitoring, Information, and Education Plan (Plan) pursuant to Priest Rapids Project (P-2114) License Article 410, which was modified and approved by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) on September 8, 2010. As identified in the Plan, 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.

In 2016, Grant PUD continued to expand the development of an Information and Education (I&E) Program in 2016 through additions to the website content and the Visitor Center. Grant PUD strives to help educate the public about responsible recreation practices and the potential adverse effects of irresponsible dispersed recreation on sensitive habitats. On October 5 and 6, 2016 a poster titled *Preserve Sensitive Habitat – Recreate Responsibly* was presented at Grant PUD's annual Archaeology Days and was accompanied by staff to help promote responsible practices. Grant PUD printed and dispersed 500 educational calendars at a number of locations throughout Grant County. Each calendar illustrated key wildlife and habitat found throughout the Project and provided an educational summary. In addition to the I&E Program efforts, Grant PUD had nearly 5,300 visitors come through the Visitor Center located in the Wanapum Hydro Operation Building (HOB). Visitors are treated to a number of 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 2016 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, field trips, reservoir clean-up events and in-school education lectures.

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

Respectfully,



Ross R. Hendrick
License Compliance 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
Mike Beckwith – U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Rex Buck Jr. – Wanapum
Diane Priebe – U.S. Bureau of Land Management
Jim Eychner – 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**

2016 Annual Report

License Article 410

Public Utility District No. 2 of Grant County, Washington

December 2016

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) monitor recreation effects on wildlife and sensitive wildlife habitats; 2) provide 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) identify and implement 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 2016 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 shoreline were surveyed in 2016.

Grant PUD is continuing to expand the development of an Information and Education (I&E) Program in 2016 through additions to the website content and the Visitor's Center. Grant PUD strives to help educate the public about responsible recreation practices and the potential adverse effects of irresponsible dispersed recreation on sensitive habitats. On October 5 and 6, 2016 a poster titled *Preserve Sensitive Habitat – Recreate Responsibly* was presented at Grant PUD's annual Archaeology Days and was accompanied by staff to help promote responsible practices. Grant PUD printed and dispersed 500 educational calendars at a number of locations throughout Grant County. Each calendar illustrated key wildlife and habitat found throughout the Project and provided an educational summary. In addition to the I&E Program efforts, Grant PUD had nearly 5,300 visitors come through the Visitor Center located in the Wanapum Hydro Operation Building (HOB). Visitors are treated to a number of 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 2016 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, field trips, reservoir clean-up events and in-school education lectures.

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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) monitor recreation effects on wildlife and sensitive wildlife habitats; 2) provide 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) identify and implement 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). The five locations monitored in 2016 include: 1) West Bar (7 miles); 2) Quilomene Bar (2 miles); 3) Babcock Bench (3 miles); 4) North of Lake Geneva (2 miles); and 5) South of Lake Geneva (1 mile). Selected habitat areas to be 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.

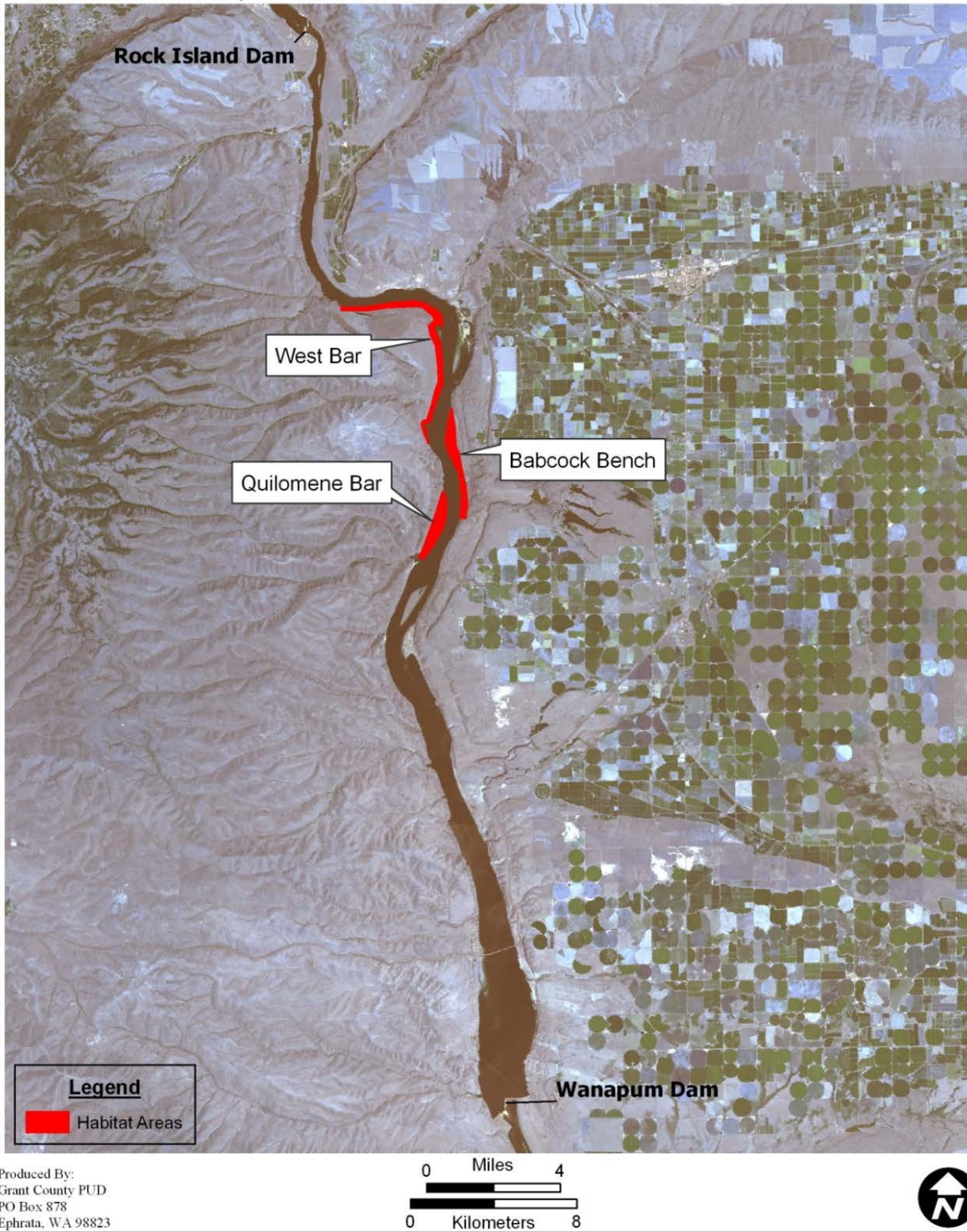


Figure 1 Habitat monitoring areas for the Wanapum Reservoir.

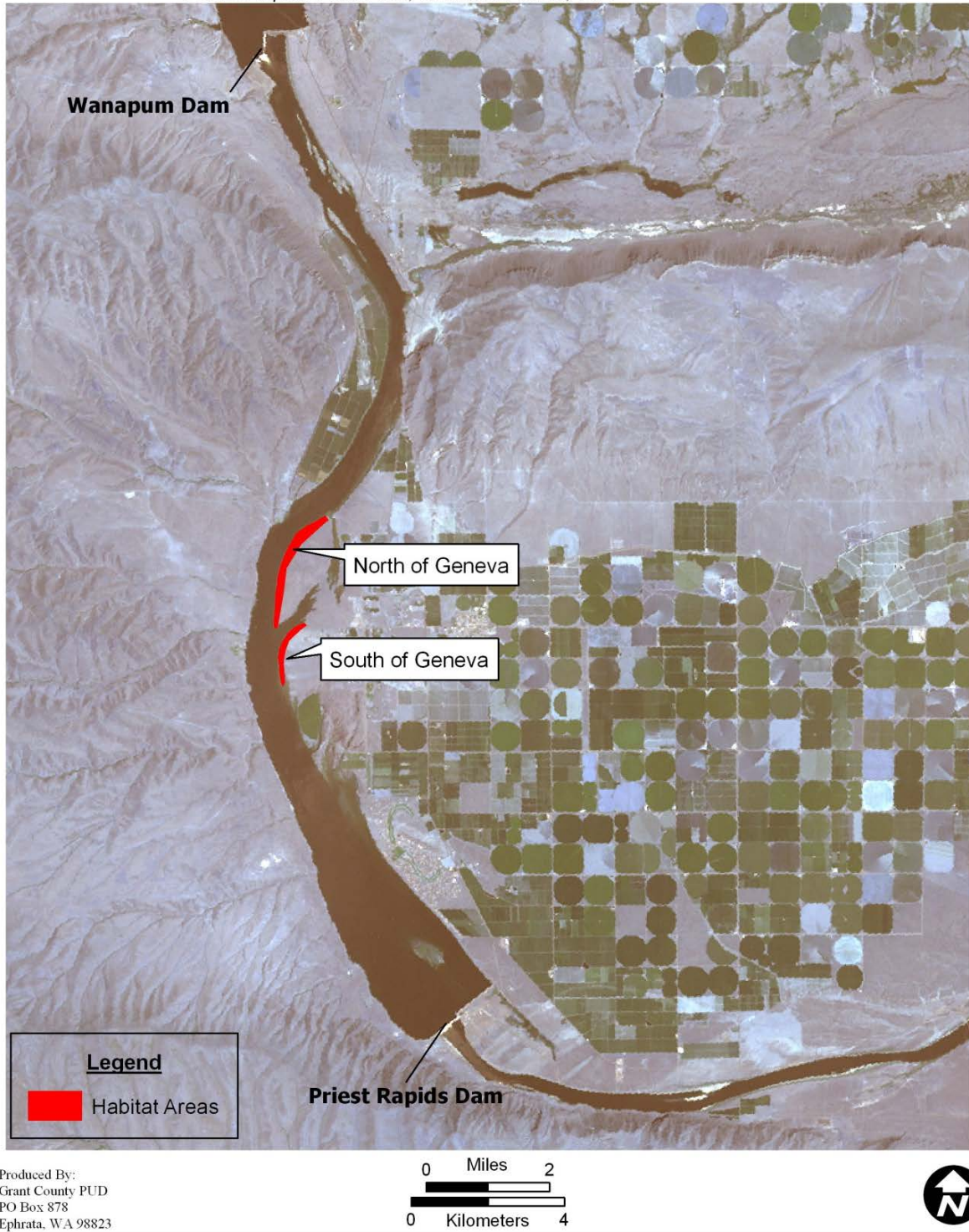


Figure 2 Habitat monitoring areas for the Priest Rapids Reservoir.

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 in 2016. Monitoring occurred prior to the recreation season in May and again following the recreation season in November. Monitoring methods, impact ratings, action triggers, and corrective action options are described in the WHMIEP and were implemented in 2016.

All exposed soils found during fall and spring surveys due to disturbance (fire pits, trampling, and trails) were reseeded on November 8, 2016. The seed mix used was 18.8% Thickspike wheatgrass (*Asropyron dasystachyum*), 18.8% Streambank Wheatgrass (*Asropyron riparium*),

18.8% Idaho Fescue (*Festuca idahoensis*), 23.5% Big Bluegrass (*Poa ampla*), 18.8% Great Basin Wildrye (*Elymus cinereus*), 0.7% Rabbitbrush (*Chrysothamnus nauseosus*), and 0.5% Big Sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*).

3.1 West Bar

West Bar was surveyed for dispersed recreation on May 18, 2016. ORV disturbance was found at one site along with litter that was removed. Fall surveys were performed on November 8, 2016 that found ORV disturbances at two sites. There were no fire pits present or evidence of tree disturbance on either survey.

3.2 Babcock Bench

Babcock Bench was surveyed for dispersed recreational effects on May 18, 2016 and was found to have trampled grasses and shrubs and areas of soil exposure. Areas of soil exposure were treated with a native seed mix. The fall survey was conducted on November 8, 2016, and found minimal trampled grasses and shrubs. Previous seeding efforts were successful in securing areas of soil disturbance. No other dispersed recreation impacts were found.

3.3 Quilomene Bar

Quilomene Bar was surveyed for dispersed recreational effects on May 18, 2016. Litter was present during the survey, however there were no other indicators of dispersed recreation and it was noted that previous restoration efforts have been successful in promoting native grasses on disturbed sites. The fall survey was conducted on November 8, 2016. A single fire pit was discovered and removed. No other signs of dispersed recreation were present.

3.4 North of Lake Geneva

North of Lake Geneva was surveyed for dispersed recreational effects on May 11, 2016 and November 7, 2016, 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 May 11, 2016 and November 7, 2016, and no dispersed recreation sites or any signs of dispersed recreation impacts were found on either survey.

4.0 Information and Education

In 2016, Grant PUD continued to enhance and implement the Information and Education (I&E) Program that features a combination of website, signage and a visitor center 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 expanded in 2016 to include imagery and text regarding a number of wildlife species and ecosystems within the Project area.

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 Fish Wildlife and Water Quality (FWWQ) department and Lands and Recreation department have collaboratively developed posters and signage to educate the public on the importance of responsible recreation throughout the Project. There have been numerous kiosks and wildlife-specific signage installed and maintained in 2016 at Grant PUD recreation sites and boat launches throughout the Project. In 2017 Grant PUD looks to continue development and installation of additional signs and kiosks within the Project.

4.3 Public Education and Outreach

On October 5 and 6, 2016 a poster titled *Preserve Sensitive Habitat – Recreate Responsibly* was presented at Grant PUD's annual Archaeology Days (see Appendix A). The poster highlighted the adverse impacts irresponsible recreation practices can have on sensitive wildlife habitat, focusing on off-road vehicles in undesignated areas, leaving trash and garbage behind, riding or walking off designated trails, and irresponsible campfire practices. The poster was accompanied by Grant PUD biological staff that answered any questions that attendees had.

As of October of 2016, nearly 5,300 people came through the Visitor Center located in the Hydro Operations Building (HOB) at Wanapum Dam. Visitors are able to experience a number of wildlife and wildlife habitat interpretative elements on display throughout the exhibit that illustrate the importance of maintaining a healthy ecosystem and promotes responsible recreation practices. Visitors can also learn where each of the recreation sites are located throughout the Project and what amenities are present.

In 2016, Grant PUD printed 500 calendars that illustrated key wildlife species and habitat found throughout the Project. Each month included an educational summary on the wildlife or habitat that was featured and included proximate dates for growing seasons, migration, mating seasons, etc. These calendars were distributed free of charge at:

- Ephrata Customer Service Desk
- Moses Lake Customer Service Front Desk
- Quincy Customer Service Front Desk
- Wanapum Visitor's Center
- Ephrata Walmart- Sportsman's Customer Service Counter
- Moses Lake Walmart- Sportsman's Customer Service Counter

5.0 Summary

Grant PUD completed its sixth full year of monitoring for the WHMIEP in 2016, which included:

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

5). visitor center

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 our web site, interpretive signage, education and outreach programs, and the Visitor's Center and report accordingly. An annual report will be submitted with results after monitoring has occurred in December of 2017.

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.

