



Striking a Balance Between Energy and the Environment in the Columbia River Basin

Wind Power: From Niche to Mainstream



Wind energy has been used by humans since the earliest civilizations to power everything from sailboats to sail-type windmills.

Today, the wind is converted into electricity through wind turbine generators—electric generators driven by rotating blades, whose shape and orientation catch the wind in much the same way sails capture the wind to produce lift.

In the Northwest, the market for wind power has continued to grow, driven by retail green power options, utility efforts to diversify and “green up” resource portfolios, green power acquisition mandates imposed by public utility commissions as a condition of utility acquisitions, system benefits funds established in conjunction with industry restructuring, and the simple desire to gain some experience with a rapidly evolving

energy technology. The Council’s workshop on wind energy in December drew nearly 50 people from utilities and energy organizations in the region, underscoring the interest in this renewable source of power. Also critical for wind development, was the federal production tax incentive, which lowers the cost of wind power for potential investors. With the expiration of the tax credit, and a general surplus of generation reducing power prices, growth in wind development is expected to level off in 2004. If the production tax credit is reinstated, and there appears to be strong Congressional support for renewing it, this, along with Oregon’s system benefit charge, may continue the trend of utilities adding wind to their resource mix, though at a more moderate pace. In the last few years, however, a real shift has occurred in how the utility industry views wind power. For a number of utilities,

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Notes from the CHAIR

Judi Danielson



With 2004 already well underway, the Council will be addressing some important energy and fish and wildlife issues in the coming months.

The Council’s Fifth Power Plan, expected to be completed in draft form in late spring, will include analysis and forecasting on a range of topics, including electricity demand, conservation, resource development, and risk. The Council looks forward to focusing the region’s debate on how best to meet our energy needs. Related to this is what role the Bonneville Power Administration should play in supplying electricity, a major priority for

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Council Decisions

Transmission Paper

December 2003

The Council released for public comment an issue paper on transmission of high-voltage electricity in the Northwest. The paper, which will become part of the Fifth Northwest Power Plan, discusses how the system operates and explains why it is not working well at the present time. The paper describes key characteristics of a transmission system, such as reliability and economy, and a process for planning for future expansions. The paper, Document 2003-23, is posted on the Council’s website, www.nwcouncil.org.

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both private and public, adding renewables like wind makes good business sense.

Scoping Out Wind Power

Puget Sound Energy is looking to acquire, through a request for proposals, 150 megawatts of wind power to add new resources to its generation portfolio and has targeted to supply at least 10 percent of its customers' total electricity supply by 2013 from new renewable energy sources like wind. The decision to acquire wind power is the result of PSE's comprehensive Least Cost Plan, which outlines the utility's goal of providing its growing customer base with a diversified mix of stable and reliable energy resources.

"A wind resource is going to play an important role in our strategy to ensure an environmentally responsible approach in securing stable energy supplies and reasonable prices for our customers," says Eric Markell, PSE senior vice president of energy resources.

Last summer, Portland General Electric announced a request for proposals for new energy that looked at all sources. The 100 proposals that were submitted included a substantial amount of proposed wind development—1,500 megawatts—which the company considered in its evaluation process. Since then, PGE, working with

"Wind energy as a generating resource has moved from being in a somewhat special category, to being a mainstream option."

Mike Mikolaitis
Portland General Electric

the Energy Trust of Oregon, has been evaluating a short list of wind projects. Oregon's Senate Bill 1149, passed in 1999, reserves three percent of PGE's and Pacific Power's customer's bills for investment in conservation and renewable resources. The funds, which are administered by the Trust, are used to promote conservation programs and the development of renewable resources by buying down the above-market costs of the energy.

"Wind energy as a generating resource has moved from being in a somewhat special category, to being a mainstream option," says Mike Mikolaitis, general manager of resource strategy and development for PGE.

According to Mikolaitis, the company expects to structure the purchase of energy that will include the output from new wind projects. "I'm fairly optimistic about wind because it adds fuel diversity to our resource portfolio so we're not so dependent on gas and gas prices which can be volatile. Gas supplies have not been increasing, while demand continues to increase, and prices reflect that disparity."

"In the past, renewables and wind were set apart and considered a special category of power, but it's now moved into the mainstream," he says. "Costs have come down, the technology has been improving, and those changes, along with the federal production tax credit, have combined to make wind competitive with other resources."

On the retail side, Thor Hinckley, manager of PGE's renewable power program, cites the strong customer demand for renewables in Oregon, particularly in the residential and small business sectors. "Although it's still a premium product," says Hinckley, "we've had support from residential customers, and we're beginning to see a trend toward larger businesses, such as Intel, signing up for renewables to serve at least a small portion of their load."

He goes on to add, "Even a small portion of a large business load translates to a significant amount of energy."

Windpower Capacity Development in the Northwest

Capacity (MW)



Northwest Wind Projects

Project	Owner	Capacity (MW)	Energy (aMW)	Location (County, State)	Completed	Output
Combine Hills	Eurus Energy America, Inc.	41.0	14.0	Umatilla, OR	2003	PacifiCorp
Condon	SeaWest Power Systems	49.8	12.0	Gilliam, OR	2001- 02	Bonneville
Foote Creek Rim *	Seawest, PacifiCorp; EWEB	60.0	25.0	Carbon, WY	1999 - 2000	PacifiCorp, Bonneville, EWEB
Klondike	Northwestern Wind Power	24.0	7.4	Sherman, OR	2001	Bonneville
Nine Canyon	Energy Northwest	63.7	20.8	Benton, WA	2002 - 03	Okanogan Co PUD, Douglas Co. PUD, Chelan Co. PUD, Mason Co. PUD No. 3, Grays Harbor Co. PUD, Benton Co. PUD, Grant Co. PUD, Lewis Co. PUD
Rock River I *	Shell WindEnergy, Inc.	50.0	18.7	Carbon, WY	2001	PacifiCorp
Staseline	FPL Energy	300.0	104.0	Walla Walla, WA/ Umatilla, OR	2000 - 01	PPM Energy
Vansycle	ESI Vansycle Partners	24.9	8.5	Umatilla, OR	1998	Portland General Electric

* Wyoming projects owned by or with output contracted to Northwest utilities.

Ultimately, Hinckley believes that business will mimic the residential sector, and he expects to see mid-sized businesses continuing to sign up for renewable power through 2004. In the U.S. Department of Energy's National Renewable Energy Labs nationwide ranking, PGE is fifth in the number of residential customers participating in its green power program. PacifiCorp ranks number six.

The future of wind as a viable and growing energy option is promising, but some key challenges remain. According to Mikolaitis, the nature of wind, because it is an intermittent resource, produces unique operating difficulties and with that, added costs. Transmission costs tend to be higher in order to accommodate the variability of wind. Although wind may be strong during some periods, it may not blow during others; yet the transmission grid must be built to the wind's maximum capacity and be able to adjust and compensate for these changes.

Nonetheless, Mikolaitis is optimistic about its development and says, "The economics are challenging, and the issue of adequate transmission is something that the entire region will have to solve. The Bonneville Power Administration has been developing policies to address these problems."

In January, the Bonneville Power Administration introduced a new service to help the region's publicly owned utilities bring wind-generated power to their customers. To address the fact that wind produces a variable supply of energy, Bonneville will provide a back-up energy source to cover the times when the turbines don't turn. Bonneville agreed to take the wind energy

into its system, deliver the power as it is available and provide the back up. The service is enabling the Cowlitz County Public Utility District in Longview, Washington to purchase two megawatts of power from the Nine Canyon wind project operated by Energy Northwest near Kennewick, Washington. Eight other public utilities are also purchasing power from the project.

"I think Bonneville's efforts to integrate wind with hydro resources will continue to help the expansion of wind, at least in the public arena," says Hugh Owen of Chelan PUD.

The Nine Canyon Project, and its recently completed 16 megawatt expansion, reflects an interest on the part of public utilities to support renewables while diversifying their energy mix.

"Looking at national and state political trends that appear to be moving to a goal or mandate that a certain percentage of your energy should be renewables, we saw [the Nine Canyon Project] as an opportunity to get in front of that," adds Owen.

Larry Felton of Okanogan County PUD, another purchaser of Nine Canyon power, says "We're very pro-wind. It's a good fit for our resource stack; it gives us energy in the winter when we're short."

As a Bonneville slice customer, Okanogan had to plan how it would augment its resources during dry winters. The resource of choice was wind since it tends to have more energy in the winter. "Wind complements our traditional resources and gives us a physical hedge, helping us to diversify our energy portfolio. Wind turns out to be a good resource if you can handle it," says Felton.

For entities other than Bonneville's requirements customers, the agency is offering a storage and shaping service to manage the hour-to-hour variability associated with the output of wind. The service integrates the hourly output of new wind projects and stores the energy in the federal hydrosystem, delivering it a week later in flat peak and off-peak blocks to the power purchasing customer. Bonneville will also cap returns at 50 percent of the participant's share of project capacity to lower the cost of transmission.

Perhaps the single most important industry signal came when PacifiCorp, after concluding its 10-year integrated resource plan and an extensive public process, decided to add 1,400 megawatts of new wind and geothermal resources to its plan. PacifiCorp operates as Pacific Power in Oregon, Wyoming, Washington, and California; and as Utah Power in Utah and Idaho.

"Growing load is one of our biggest issues," says Virinder Singh, analyst for environmental policy for PacifiCorp. "We are looking to add 4,000 megawatts of resources by 2013."

According to Singh, the ability to model a variety of factors—including the cost of integrating wind into the power system—and to arrive at credible cost estimates, was a critical aspect to PacifiCorp's planning decisions. For the first time, values were assigned to nitrogen oxide and sulfur dioxide emissions in order to quantify the costs of complying with environmental regulations. The company also quantified future carbon

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emissions limits, recognizing the potential regulatory risks of carbon emissions. By including these considerations into their analysis, zero-emission sources like wind become more viable.

The plan's public process also included the work of key experts at utilities and leaders in modeling. The result, Singh believes, is research that gives an accurate picture of wind as a resource.

"We chose wind because, in comparison to gas prices that can be volatile, wind provides a steady fuel price; and it's the cheapest renewable in the nation today," he says. The plan established the cost of including an intermittent resource like wind and the cost of accommodating its variability: \$5.50 per megawatt hour.

Another example of the intersection between private and public interests is the recent opening of the 41-megawatt Combine Hills I wind farm that began operation in northeast Oregon, near Milton-Freewater in December. The facility was made possible through a public/private partnership between PacifiCorp, the Energy Trust of Oregon, and Eurus Energy America, the builder of the facility. It is the first wind farm funded in part by the Energy Trust of Oregon.

Equally important to the development was PacifiCorp's agreement to purchase the entire energy produced by the wind plant during a 20-year term. The new facility connects with PacifiCorp's transmission system in order to serve Pacific Power customers, and will produce enough energy to power nearly 12,000 homes.

The project, besides bringing more renewable energy online, has also provided a significant economic boost to the local economy. Sited in Umatilla County, it has brought economic development dollars to a rural area. The

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Virinder Singh, PacifiCorp

construction phase generated an estimated 180 construction jobs and will permanently employ up to six full-time skilled positions. The local area benefits from the construction dollars spent, from the ongoing operations expenses, and from the project itself, which will infuse several hundred thousand dollars annually in property taxes. Wind Energy Constructors estimates that it spent up to \$4 million in the local area during construction. It's an aspect of wind development, usually sited in rural counties, that has sparked bipartisan support, observes Singh.

And while PacifiCorp is proud of its U.S Department of Energy ranking—number six

in the nation—for the number of customers who participate in its green power programs, it is system investments and renewable portfolio requirements, says Singh, that will ultimately drive the progress toward bringing resources like wind online.

Clint Kalich, manager of resource planning and analysis for Avista Corp. said his company is studying the integration of wind energy into their resource portfolio and will soon be completing a request for proposals for 25 - 50 megawatts of wind energy.

"The RFP is essentially a 'test drive' to see how wind affects our system directly." Avista currently has 3 megawatts of wind from contract to serve the green energy state mandates. A larger share of wind energy will give the company a better indication of the accuracy of forecasts and the variability of wind generation, said Kalich.

Like others in the utility business, he notes that federal subsidies for developing wind are a critical factor in its viability. The production tax credit provides a 35 - 40 percent reduction in its cost according to Kalich. Unlike PacifiCorp's and PGE's experience, efforts to market green power to customers has not resulted in a strong demand for its green power.

Nonetheless, other qualities make wind an attractive option. Investing in wind provides a hedge against fuel costs, potentially helping to bring greater stability to electricity rates. And according to Kalich, Avista likes the fact that wind is a renewable resource.

He believes the shift in thinking with regard to wind is significant. "A lot of people are getting on board, and I'm cautiously optimistic about the future of wind. We're hopeful of bringing wind energy into the system at a reasonable cost." 



Combine Hills 1 Wind Farm

Fisheries Society Honors Nez Perce and Forest Service for Habitat Restoration Projects

The Western Division of the American Fisheries Society has honored two fish habitat restoration projects that are being implemented through the Council's Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program. The association of fisheries scientists will present its 2004 Awards of Excellence in Riparian Management in Salt Lake City in March. Three awards are being presented — one to the Nez Perce Tribe, one to the U.S. Forest Service and one to the U.S. Bureau of Land Management.

The Nez Perce Tribe will be honored for the McComas Meadows/Meadow Creek Watershed habitat restoration project. Meadow Creek is a tributary of the South Fork Clearwater River about seven miles east of Grangeville. The project manager for the tribe is Heidi McRoberts.

Meadow Creek suffers from high water temperatures, excessive sediment and degraded spawning habitat for salmon. More than 40 culverts disrupt fish passage. Through the project, meadow and stream-side vegetation is being restored, fish passage will be improved and sediment will be controlled by reducing runoff into the creek from the site of an old placer mine. Species that will benefit from the project include

This is the first year that competition for the riparian management award was open to entities other than the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management.

steelhead, spring chinook salmon, West-slope cutthroat trout and bull trout.

The U.S. Forest Service is being honored for a project on the Wind River, which flows through the Gifford Pinchot National Forest of Washington and empties into the Columbia in the Columbia River Gorge. The Mining Reach Restoration Project is part of an effort to accelerate the recovery of watershed processes and threatened summer steelhead habitat in the river, which was affected by mining and log-

ging in the early 1900s. Three river miles of steelhead spawning and rearing habitat were treated in 1999 and 2000. Approximately 80 acres of riparian stands were thinned, and 1,700 full-length trees from this thinning were used at 79 sites within the stream channel and flood plain to protect riparian vegetation and help reconnect flood plains. Later, more than 260 riparian acres were planted with 43,000 native conifers. The project manager for the Forest Service is Brian Bair.

The Bureau of Land Management is being honored for a project in the Truckee River Basin in Nevada. This is the first year that competition for the riparian management award was open to entities other than the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management. The Nez Perce project was selected from among seven entries in the new category. [CC](#)



Fish habitat at McComas Meadows, pictured here in 2001, is being improved for salmon, steelhead, and trout.

The Walla Walla Subbasin: A Community Plans for the Future

*"Hear the other side."
- Roman law principle*

This spring, many months of hard work on the part of communities throughout the Columbia River Basin will culminate in the completion of plans to help fish and wildlife in their respective subbasins.

In its 2000 Fish and Wildlife Program, the Northwest Power and Conservation Council called for the development of local recovery plans to bring fish and wildlife funding decisions to local communities. On May 28, 2004, the Council's submission deadline, 58 subbasins are expected to present their plans for review and approval by the Council. Approved plans will then guide the Council in its funding recommendations for fish and wildlife projects to the Bonneville Power Administration.

While the goal of subbasin planning is simple—to give local communities a greater voice in plans that affect their watersheds—the process is actually complex and daunting. For the Walla Walla Subbasin, the challenges are especially knotty because of the multiple jurisdictions that make up the area. The subbasin includes land in two states, northeastern Oregon and southeastern Washington; and includes all or part of five counties: Walla Walla and Columbia counties in Washington; and Umatilla, Union, and Wallowa counties in Oregon. Differences in cultures, planning efforts, and priorities can make progress toward consensus difficult, if not impossible. And yet, the need to work together to find common ground is what drives a diverse group of community representatives to attend meetings to debate, and negotiate, a path toward understanding, and ultimately, agreement.

The watershed is fed by precipitation that falls in the Blue Mountains and flows into the subbasin's three major river systems: the Touchet River, the Mill Creek/ Yellowhawk Creek, and the Walla Walla River. Precipitation is sparse so the need for watershed planning is keen. At the same time, the soils are fertile and farming has been part of the basin since settlers arrived in the 1800s. In recent years, the area around the city of Walla Walla has also become a popular region for vintners, and its reputation for growing exceptional

"I feel very positive about the work being done, because it's pretty complex."

Victoria Leuba, Washington Department of Ecology

grapes and producing world class wines has steadily grown.

At a meeting in late January, nearly 40 members of the Walla Walla Watershed Planning Unit met to share a potluck dinner and wordsmith a vision statement for their group. The planning unit represents the central planning organization for the Washington portion of the Walla Walla Subbasin. Along with Oregon citizens representing the Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council, these two groups will help draft the plan for the Walla Walla Subbasin. Members represent a variety of interests and entities in the subbasin: tribal government; farmers; irrigation districts; conservation districts; city, state, county, and federal government; and other stakeholder groups.

Cathy LaRoque, the watershed planning director for Walla Walla County, is acutely aware that the timeline is pressing and it's evident in her reminder to members of the importance of attending the upcoming meetings.

"We're trying to complete a plan for the whole subbasin," she explains. The meetings in February and March will be lengthy, from 4:00 to 9:00 p.m., but LaRoque stresses how critical it is to have everyone's feedback on the detailed assessments—biological data—that will help the group determine a management plan for the subbasin.

"If you can't make the whole meeting, come for a couple of hours if you can," she urges.

Bob Hutchens is an upland farmer from Columbia County, one of many in the area to embrace progressive agricultural practices that have reduced erosion and sedi-

mentation from farming in the foothills of the Blue Mountains.

During the discussion on wording in the vision statement, Hutchens points out that his problem is not with fish but with wildlife; specifically, deer and elk. "What can we do to motivate help when we have all these animals that are causing problems, damaging crops?" he asks, clearly frustrated.

Kat Brigham of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation has come to the meeting to give a presentation on the tribes and their fish and wildlife projects in the subbasin. Brigham responds by saying the tribes will bring the issue up at their regular meetings with fish and wildlife representatives. Hutchens thanks her, and a moment of understanding, like an undercurrent, quietly passes. Differences come up during the discussion about the vision statement and it's clear that, depending on the person's perspective, words like "sustainable" and "natural ecosystem" are open to multiple interpretations. The conversation reflects the careful, and at times tense, balancing act that constitutes watershed planning.

The journey to crafting a mutual vision actually began much earlier when bull trout became listed under the Endangered Species Act in 1998, followed in 1999 by steelhead. The Walla Walla Basin was poised to become the next battleground between environmental groups, preparing to sue, and basin leaders. But the community chose a different path, avoiding the fate of the Methow Valley and Klamath Basin, working together to address flow problems and fish recovery in the basin. Since then, the three irrigation districts on the mainstem of the Walla Walla River which were the initial ESA targets, agreed to take dramatic action to conserve water and achieve specific instream flows. Other accomplishments include the creation of 110 miles of stream buffers; the installation of 150 fish screens; the removal of 10 fish passage barriers; and improvements in upland farming practices affecting over 220,000 acres.

Victoria Leuba, with the Washington Department of Ecology, has played a key role in bringing together agency staff and local citizens. Reflecting on how the process has been going she says, "I feel very positive about the work being done, because it's

pretty complex. You have federal, state, and local activities; tribal government; and five counties engaged to varying degrees.”

“The usual issue is one of boundaries: How can we talk to each other? What piece of land are we talking about? What activities are at issue? Who has the final authority and responsibility?” What is encouraging, she adds, is that, “A lot of people are willing to take responsibility without understanding where the responsibility lies.”

Describing the benefits of simply sitting down with others to hear their side, she says, “What I hear from farmers is that they are trying to grow the food that people will eat; it was when I heard tribal members say, ‘but fish is our food,’ that I understood that we’re sharing the landscape.”

“The respect is there and understanding is developing. I would rather develop real cooperation, not just grudging capitulation,” she adds.

The wildlife problem Bob Hutchens described in the meeting is an example, says Leuba, of how watershed planning creates a forum for people to bring issues to the table. “Sometimes it’s an issue that is within our scope of responsibility, sometimes it isn’t. But it brings it out in the open, it puts it on the list and sometimes elevates it, and that helps,” she says.

Hutchens’ problem also illustrates how interwoven our world is; how one change

can affect a different part of the whole, effecting unintended consequences. The big game issue is the result, in part, of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife’s decision to stop cattle grazing in the upper watershed. Elk herds that used to reside deep in the Blue Mountains of Washington and Oregon have moved more and more to the lower elevations, causing damage to farms and eating crops. Explaining the situation, Hutchens says, “The presence of cattle in the backcountry made it a good environment for elk. They had salt, water, and young plant re-growth after the cattle had grazed on the older brush and grasses. That’s no longer the case.”

He is worried about the wildlife component of the plan, and says, “Of great concern to me is what appears to be a serious lack of examination of the terrestrial species management plan...I don’t think, given the timeline, we will be able to have a thorough examination of the terrestrial part of the plan.”

Despite his frustration, however, Hutchens won’t walk away. “I would be lying if I said the thought had not crossed my mind, but what good would that do? I plan to stay with the process as long as possible. Too many people have given their best.”

Yancey Reser, a retired judge, has family roots in the basin that go back to 1863. For him, the planning process has been disappointing. He is dismayed that small streams are allowed to dry up. The irrigation district

settlement agreement with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, while increasing Walla Walla River stream levels, also caused the spring-fed creeks around the west branch of the Walla Walla River to go dry.

“We’re talking about streams that were historically perennial, providing habitat for fish, all kinds of small mammals, birds, and for irrigation. It’s had a seriously negative impact,” says Reser.

His family has farmed for generations in the area of the Little Walla Walla River, one of the many spring-fed creeks in the braided system near the stateline. He would like to see his son continue to farm on his family’s land, but sees little chance of that happening as things exist now. “Putting water in one stream with the attitude that whatever happens in another stream doesn’t matter, is wrong,” he says.

Reser says he is pessimistic, but adds that he will continue to participate in the planning process, noting, “A long, drawn-out lawsuit is expensive.” But he says, “There comes a point when something has to be done.”

For Kat Brigham of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, the process is a long-term commitment. “I think it’s more complicated because of the different states—both Oregon and Washington are developing the plan—but it’s important to have a plan that local people can support.”

While she acknowledges the concern about the time constraint and the difficulty in trying to address the variety of issues in the subbasin, Brigham says, “The time is short, but we need to recognize that sub-basin planning is not the only avenue to address issues.”

As promised during the watershed meeting, Brigham brought up Hutchens’ concern to Washington Fish and Game representatives, and she observes, “Not all problems can be solved, but if they are brought up, we can try to come up with a solution—it’s an ongoing process.”

Brigham also stresses the value in getting to know one another. “Even though



McKay Grade Saddle: Wheat fields and Blue Mountains, east of Walla Walla

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Focus on the Walla Walla Subbasin

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the Umatilla tribes are located in Oregon, we have tribal rights in both Oregon and Washington, and I felt it was important to explain who we are, what we're doing, and why we are part of this effort," she says.

Brigham accepts that subbasin planning is a beginning, "It's getting us started; what will make it work is partnerships."

Dick Ducharme, a longtime citizen participant in watershed planning efforts, both on the Walla Walla Watershed Alliance and now on the planning unit, feels that their planning process is going as well as can be expected. "We have a consensus approach, and so far we've been able to reach consensus; it can be tortuous at times, but we get there," he says.

After his many years working as a lobbyist and attorney in Washington, Ducharme's belief in local planning is stronger than ever. "I'm more convinced now, that the only

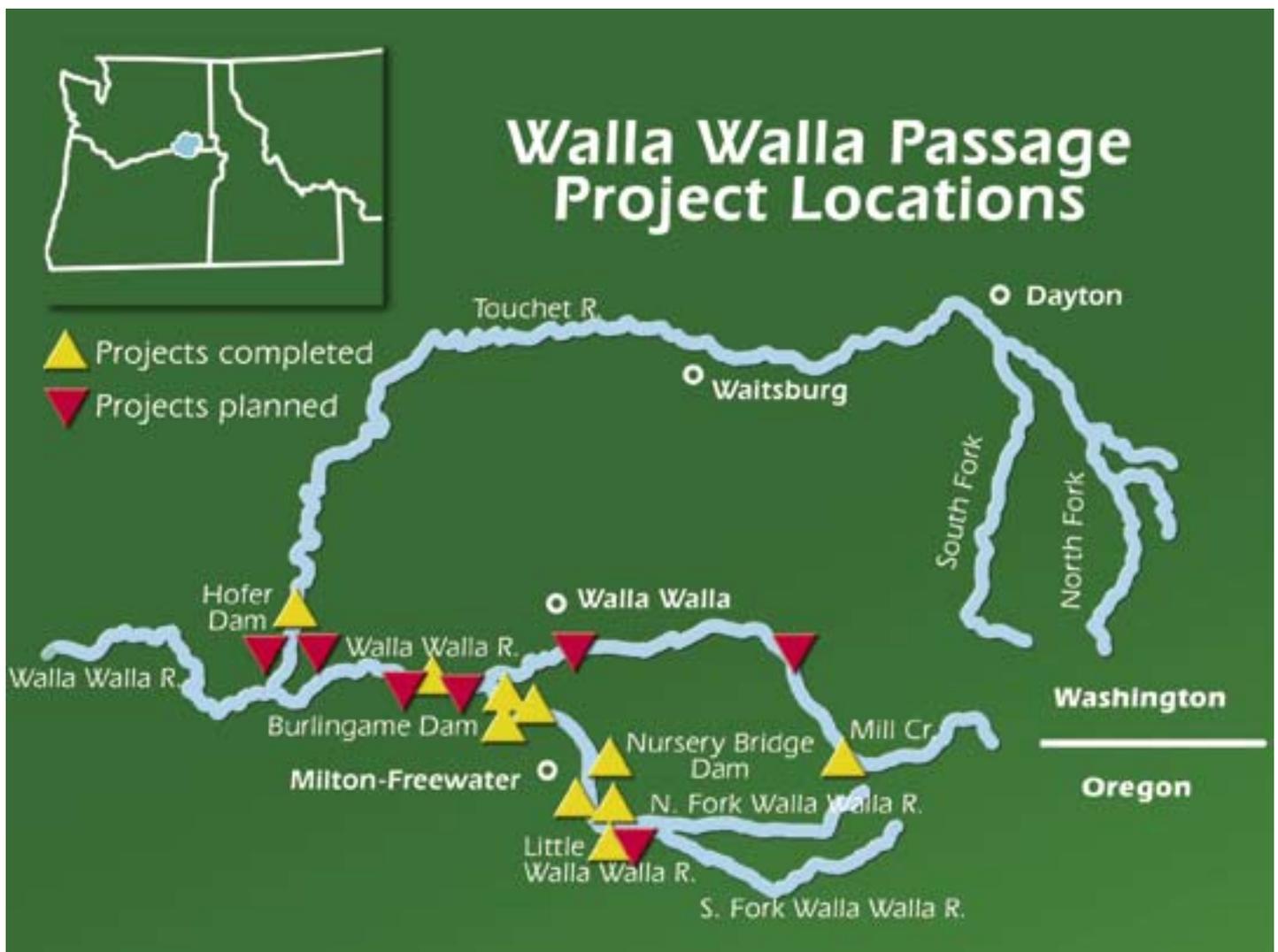
"I think it's more complicated because of the different states—both Oregon and Washington are developing the plan—but it's important to have a plan that local people can support."

Kat Brigham, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation

way we are going to achieve results in these watersheds, is through local processes."

In the Walla Walla Subbasin, he explains, there are numerous ecosystem planning efforts going on. In 2001, the Washington Legislature passed House Bill 2514 to fund watershed planning; the Walla Walla Watershed Planning Unit is funded through that bill. But prior to that, work to address habitat and instream recovery was already being done through conservation districts, irrigation districts, local non-profit conservation groups, and the Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council. The challenge has been to bring the necessary people together and make sure that all the planning processes work together.

"We have a bi-state Habitat Conservation Plan, a Washington Department of Agriculture irrigation district planning process, a salmon recovery board planning process,



and subbasin planning sponsored by the Council going on," he says.

"What we've been able to do—because of the people involved—is integrate all these processes to create one plan that won't conflict. The biggest challenge has been to ensure that this plan will be accepted by all the different players, and so far, we've been able to do it," says Ducharme.

He credits the work of stakeholders and governments as having been critical to their success. "The plan reflects the work of a lot of citizen input over the past three years. A lot of people and a lot of interest groups are being represented," says Ducharme.

"I am convinced you have to have local people who live in the community come up with solutions to their problems; that's how you get to compromise."

Brian Wolcott, director of the Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council based in Milton-Freewater, Oregon, believes the planning

effort this time has brought public input to the forefront. "This current planning process is bringing local knowledge and concerns to the table to inform the assessment and will hopefully develop a plan that is acceptable to landowners and be more likely to get implemented," he says.

"Over 80 percent of our subbasin is owned and managed by private landowners, so they need to be informing this planning process. The timeline is shorter than I would like for incorporating all the new science and landowner input," but he adds, "opportunities to amend it will exist down the road."

Kevin Scribner, with the Walla Walla Watershed Alliance representing stakeholders in Washington and Oregon, echoes a sentiment similar to Leuba's when he says that their work shows what can be accomplished with incentives, "people wanting to do it rather than being forced to legally."

Scribner describes the differences in the two state groups as a reflection of planning efforts at different stages of development. "The Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council has been in existence for 10 years; from the get-go the watershed council has emphasized action on the ground, not just planning. Washington is three years into its planning effort, so they haven't yet focused on the implementation aspect," explains Scribner.

The subbasin plan will be the creation of both groups, he says, and should be a living document. "We're creating these civic patterns as we go, and we're doing our best. I think everyone is clear that there is a definite incentive to make it successful, and one way to do that is to have a plan that continues to evolve." [CQ](#)

Winter Subbasin Planning Update

As the May 28 deadline approaches, a myriad of questions continue to be asked by local planners about the process and timeline for plan submission.

The most frequently asked questions focus on issues regarding the process and timeline, and are being addressed through the Regional Coordination Group, composed of representatives from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, NOAA Fisheries, the

tribes, the Bonneville Power Administration, and other coordination groups.

With regard to funding, Bonneville's current funding commitment defines what is available in 2005 and 2006. The Council is still resolving the remaining flexibility within those budgets to complete its current funding recommendations and develop any process to prioritize funding for implementing subbasin plans. Beyond

that time, the Council is discussing with Bonneville the principles for defining a funding commitment for the next rate case that begins in 2007.

Two subbasins, the Flathead and the Kootenai, will be submitting their plans before the May deadline; they are expected to present their subbasin plans to the Council in March. [CQ](#)

Notes from the Chair

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the Council. We are working with the region to reach consensus on this issue, and we expect to complete our final recommendations for Bonneville in April.

Also in the spring, the deadline for submitting subbasin plans is set for May 28. These plans represent a local, integrated approach to fish and wildlife recovery, and include the participation of citizens, municipal, state, and federal government, tribes, watershed groups, and many others. It is

a milestone in the effort to promote grass-roots planning, and we are looking forward to reviewing the 58 subbasin plans expected for submission.

Finally, we are continuing to work with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Bonneville, and NOAA Fisheries to implement reservoir tests at Libby and Hungry Horse dams in Montana and spill tests in the lower Snake and Columbia rivers. These tests, included in the Council's recommendations for hydro-

system operations on the mainstem Columbia and Snake rivers, will help to determine if there are ways to operate the hydrosystem that are cost effective while also benefiting fish and wildlife.

The months ahead will offer opportunities for citizens to comment on these, and other, regional issues. We look forward to hearing from you. [CQ](#)

Success Stories — Crims and Walker Islands

Lower Columbia River habitat will be restored for salmon, deer

Marshes, swamps, sloughs and shoreline forests are being restored on several islands in the lower Columbia River for the benefit of fish and wildlife, particularly juvenile salmon and Columbian white-tailed deer.

Through the Council's Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program, the Columbia Land Trust is acquiring 426 acres on Crims Island and 109 acres on Walker Island. Both islands are near Longview, Washington. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will acquire an additional 90 acres on Crims Island. The project is partially funded with \$500,000 provided by the Bonneville Power Administration in 2003.

The project calls for enhancing 75 acres of tidal marsh by excavating canary grass wetland and connecting channels to the mainstem Columbia. In addition, tidal flow will be re-established to 100 acres of wooded swamp by excavating a man-made plug in a channel, and 100 acres of riparian forest will be re-established on upland areas of the island to improve deer habitat. Invasive plants like purple loosestrife and reed canarygrass will be controlled on about 150 acres of marsh on the two islands to improve fish habitat.

Columbian white-tailed deer, an endangered species, will be reintroduced to these and nearby islands to assist in a reintroduction effort that began in 1999. The deer are native to the lower Columbia area. Successful reintroduction of the deer to all the islands would create a new subpopulation for at least 50 animals on secure habitat. If successful, recovery goals for the deer would be met, and the species could be considered for delisting.

Estuary wetlands like those on Crims and Walker islands provide habitat for all Columbia basin salmon stocks at some period in their life cycle. Over time, some 20,000 acres of tidal swamps, 10,000 acres of tidal marshes, and 3,000 acres of tidal



Access to marshes like the one pictured will be improved. They provide resting and feeding habitat for juvenile salmon and steelhead.

flats in the lower Columbia River have been lost by diking, dredging, and filling. The original extent of tidal marsh and swamp in the Columbia River estuary has been reduced by more than half.

The islands project will address several actions to improve wetland habitat identified in the 2000 Biological Opinion issued by NOAA Fisheries on behalf of threatened and endangered species of salmon and steelhead.



Calendar

Calendar of Council Meetings and Other Events:

- March 17-24 North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference, Spokane, Washington.
Information at www.nwcouncil.org.
- April 6-8 Northwest Power and Conservation Council Meeting - Portland, Oregon.
Information at www.nwcouncil.org.
- May 11-13 Northwest Power and Conservation Council Meeting - Walla Walla, Washington.
Information at www.nwcouncil.org.

Council Decisions

(continued from front page)

ISAB and ISRP

December 2003

The Council appointed Dr. John Epifanio to the Independent Scientific Review Panel. Dr. Epifanio is director and associate professional scientist for Aquatic Ecology at the Illinois Natural History Survey. He replaces Dr. Robert Bilby, who also serves on

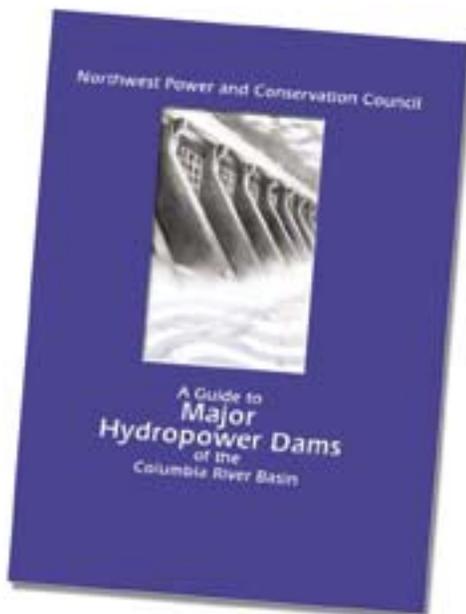
the Independent Scientific Advisory Board and decided to limit his work to that panel. The Council also extended the terms of service for all ISRP members through May 2005 and directed Council staff to initiate a process in conjunction with the National Research Council, NOAA Fisheries and Columbia Basin Indian tribes to rebuild the pool of potential members of the two panels for future appointments.

Officers for 2004

January 2004

The Council re-elected Chair Judi Danielson, an Idaho member, to serve as chair in 2004. Melinda Eden, an Oregon member, was elected vice chair.

TWO NEW FULL COLOR PUBLICATIONS NOW AVAILABLE!



A Guide to Major Hydropower Dams of the Columbia River Basin.

Updated information on each dam, including a glossary and detailed map.

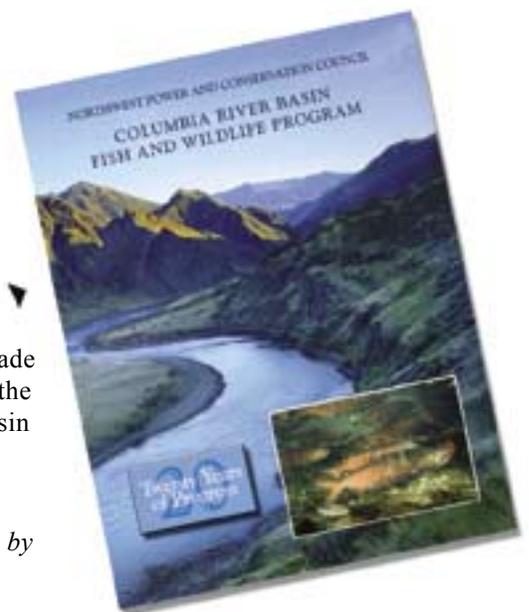
Council Document 2004-1

The Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program, Twenty Years of Progress.

A summary of the progress made over the first twenty years of the Council's Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program.

Council Document 2003-20

Available at info@nwcouncil.org or by calling 800-452-5161.



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Council Quarterly

is produced four times a year by
the Public Affairs Division
of the Northwest Power and
Conservation Council.



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