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Cusick Meadow Management Unit
Site Specific Management Plan Schutte Add-on

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Executive Summary

The Kalispel Natural Resource Department (KNRD) continues to mitigate the wildlife habitat losses as part of the Albeni Falls Wildlife Mitigation Project. Utilizing the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) funds, the Kalispel Tribe of Indians (Tribe) was able to purchase the Schutte property totaling 26 acres. A Cultural Resource survey was conducted to identify any issues and none were found (Philmon. 2015). This property will be managed as part of the ongoing collection of properties called Cusick Meadow Management Unit that partially mitigate wildlife losses from Albeni Falls Hydropower facility (Martin, et, al. 1988).

This document is meant to serve as a site specific Wildlife Management Plan for the former Schutte property and become an appendix to the existing Habitat Management Plan: Kalispel Tribe Wildlife Management Area (Plan) for mitigation lands within Washington. This plan represents the management activities that will take place to protect, operate and maintain, and in some areas enhance wildlife habitat on Kalispel acquired lands in Washington State (Merker and Scholz. 1990).

Habitat Evaluation Procedures (HEP) have been used in the past to estimate baseline habitat conditions. These procedures were the standard loss estimator in all hydroelectric loss statements submitted to the Northwest Power Planning Council (NPPC). Bonneville Power Administration required the use of HEP on a project-specific basis for increased detail and accuracy. As part of the Tribe's mitigation effort this property will be included in the Upper Columbia Wildlife Monitoring and Evaluation Project (UWMEP) for routine monitoring towards meeting its desired future condition. As part of that project, a series of data will be collected at permanent grid plots within each of the proposed habitat management types. This data will provide baseline composition and abundance information for avian, small mammal, and amphibian populations as well as additional vegetative composition detail for specific habitat types. These data will also serve as the means for evaluating the success and/or failure of management activities. The majority of the property is the grassland cover type and was evaluated for current and desired future conditions.

The acquisition of the Schutte property will provide BPA with an estimated 65 Habitat Units (HUs) for the 26 acres involved. This estimate of 2.25 HUs per acre is based on the average of past acquisitions and will be used as full credited value of the property as agreed to in the 2012 Kalispel Fish Accord (Accord).

These lands acquired by the Kalispel Tribe with BPA funding, will be managed to benefit wildlife habitat with associated species, populations, and guilds.

INTRODUCTION

This plan addresses the management actions that will be conducted on the former Schutte acquisition (26 acres) which provides protection, mitigation, and enhancement for wildlife species affected by the construction and operation of the Federal hydroelectric facilities on the Columbia River System. The properties would be used for wildlife habitat and would provide BPA with credits for partial mitigation of wildlife losses due to the construction of Albeni Falls Dam.

The Kalispel Tribe of Indians, supported by BPA funding will manage this land under this document for restoration, protection, and management of wildlife habitat and species and be included in the Tribes' Plan for acquired lands located in Washington State (Figure 1 Calispell Creek Wildlife Area see map below).

The purpose of this site-specific plan is to outline baseline habitat conditions and management strategies that would be employed in the management of these Kalispel mitigation lands over time. This plan after review and acceptance will be added as an Appendix in Habitat Conservation Plan for the Kalispel Tribe Wildlife Management Area (WMA) (Stovall, 2006).

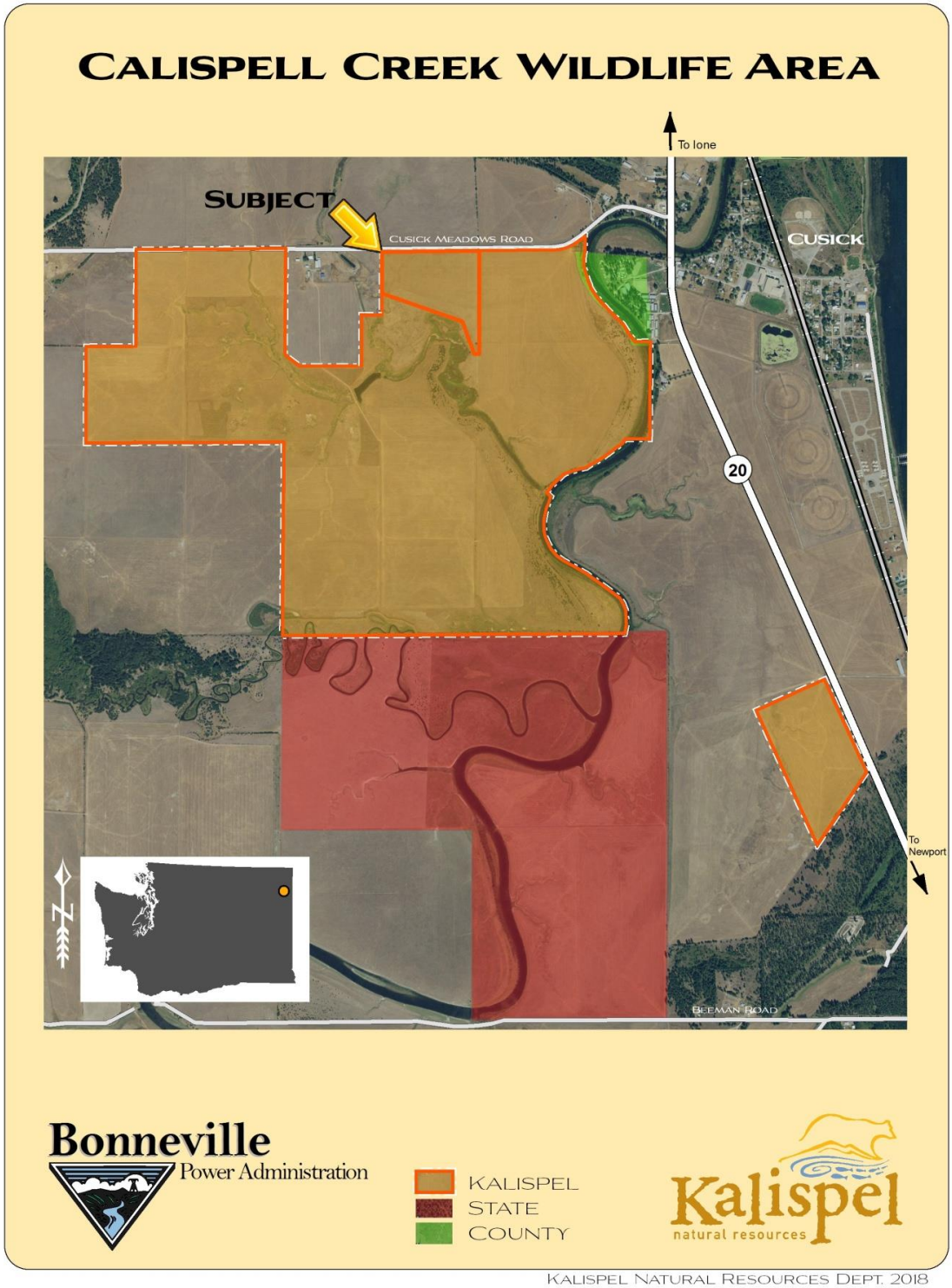

Figure 1. Map of the Calispell Creek Wildlife Management area

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The former Randle property now part of the Cusick Meadow property is a 26 acre parcel of pastureland near the incorporated town of Cusick, Washington and the unincorporated town of Usk, WA. The property is generally level and fronts along the South side of Cusick Meadow road. The legal description of the property is as follows:
Beginning at a point on the existing southern right of way fence of "Meadow Road", said point being West 1470 feet, more or less, South 79 feet more or less, and the South 89 degrees 14 minutes 35 seconds West1160.0 feet from the Northeast corner of said Section 25;
Thence South 0 degrees 12 minutes 40 seconds East 1415.97 feet; Thence South 89degrees 14 minutes 35 seconds West 65.22 feet to an existing fence; Thence North 19 degrees 57minutes 1 second West along an existing fence, 476.11 feet; Thence North 70 degrees 44 minutes 40 seconds West along an existing fence, 1161.64 feet to its intersection with an existing fence; Thence North 0 degrees 12 minutes 40 seconds West along said existing fence 568.75 feet to said existing southerly right of way fence of "Meadow Road"; Thence North 89 degrees 14 minutes 35 seconds East along said right of way fence 1321.31 feet to the point of beginning.

The Cusick Meadow Project Area in Pend Oreille County provides habitat to various species. Calispell Creek to the west provides habitat for waterfowl and furbearing animals such as muskrat, beaver, skunk, weasel, mink, and otter. Moose, elk, mule and white-tailed deer, and black bears are all native to the area and will utilize the forested areas for part of their life requirements. Upland areas of hardwoods contain ruffed grouse as well as numerous species of resident and neo-tropical migrant birds. Raptors that nest in or near the Cusick Meadow area include bald eagles, Osprey, red-tailed and marsh hawks, and owls. Amphibians and reptiles are also present in the area but not yet assessed.

Over time, enhancement activities designed to improve winter browse availability and habitat conditions for reproductive life requisites are expected to increase the prey base of listed predator species. The opportunity to enhance protected areas that are better suited for maintaining or increasing specific habitat values could provide additional long-term benefits for all listed species.

MITIGATION OBJECTIVE

This property was acquired to protect, enhance, and restore the wildlife values in the Cusick Meadow area and prevent human encroachment and development. Large blocks of intact habitat will provide travel corridors between cover types, space to expand populations, create and maintain diversity, and buffer/guard against environmental and climatic changes. The entire Cusick Meadow Management Unit including the former Schutte acquisition provides this need for wildlife.

GENERAL SITE DESCRIPTION

The somewhat rectangular parcel contains 26 acres that is composed mostly of Timothy and Meadow grasses with some noxious weeds. This area was hayed annually before acquisition to the mitigation program and will be managed as native grassland habitat. The parcel lies in the valley floor of the Cusick floodplain so the terrain is near level with slight undulations. The elevation is about 2,054 feet above

sea level and does not vary more than plus or minus three feet. The area is subject to seasonal flooding depending on the amount and timing of snow run-off.

The soil data for this area of the county consists of Cusick silty clay loams over heavy clay and/or sandy clay sub-soils.

COVER TYPES

The cover type on this property is grassland. The appraisal for the property determined that Historic vegetation patterns were largely influenced by farming and livestock. The property is entirely covered by pasture hay. Local farmers cleared the land to raise hay or use the area for pasture. These changes from historic conditions lead to further changes in distribution and sucessional processes plus the invasion of noxious weeds make it difficult to provide for a sustainable native ecosystem.

METHODS

This property lies within a huge meadow with a high water table and has many small intermittent cross channels. The National Wetlands Inventory shows most of this parcel in some sort of wetlands classification (USFWS, 1980). The area is classified as an emergent seasonal wetland with pasture grasses (see map figure 2.).

Figure 2. Schutte property.

DISCUSSION

This property will be added to the current Cusick Meadow holdings and managed as part of that Project Area. The evaluation of current habitat quality and quantity as well as the potential for restoration and/or enhancement required the use of multiple tools. Baseline conditions for both the vegetative and

animal communities were assessed through the use of plot and transect data collection to describe community composition and distribution across the Project Area Enhancement recommendations were derived by the use of comparative analysis. Remote sensing imagery (aerial photography) was compared to detect former vegetation and hydrologic composition prior to habitat alteration. Although completely undisturbed reference sites are virtually non-existent for comparison of composition and function, a limited number of predominantly undisturbed sites served as additional references toward which Tribal management actions should strive to achieve.

Objectives for the project area are: 1. Continue haying the property. 2. Increase the native vegetation where possible to restore the area to native grassland (Swenson. 1988).

Management Goal and Objectives

Goal

The goal of habitat conservation is to conserve the full range of species, natural communities, habitats, and ecological processes that are characteristic of an area. The initial goal of habitat management within each management area is to ensure continued and/or enhanced use by targeted wildlife species.

***Objective 1*.** Determine baseline plant and animal community composition, abundance and distribution.

***Objective 2*. Operation and Maintenance**

Operate and Maintenance of former Randle property as part of the Cusick Meadow plan for Albeni Falls Wildlife Mitigation Program.

***Strategy 2.1*.** Reduce human-induced wildlife disturbance through access management.

- Hunting, fishing, and trapping would be allowed on the property with permission only from the KNRD. Bag limits and season lengths follow Washington State regulations and are enforced by the Washington Department of Fish and Game. Hunters and trappers are required to take whatever precautions are available to them to ensure public safety. Hunters may access the property only by foot, even for the purpose of retrieving harvested game.

- Cross-country skiing and snow-shoeing would be subject to seasonal restrictions and allowed by permission only.

- Horses would not be allowed access on the property. Dogs would be allowed throughout the Cusick Meadow Area as long as they are leashed and/or under the owners control at all times.

- Overnight camping, camp fires, and outdoor barbeques are prohibited on the property without a KNRD permit.

- Commercial berry gathering and harvesting is prohibited on the property.

***Objective 3.* Perimeter Fencing**

Maintain, repair and replace entry gates and perimeter fencing on an as needed basis.

Objective 4. **Control Noxious Weeds**

Weed species, life cycles, abundance, and dispersion will dictate the mechanism(s) for elimination. An inventory was done on the Cusick Meadow property to map abundance and distribution of noxious weeds. Since then ten percent or more of the total acreage has been addressed to control noxious weeds. Methods include chemical applications, burning, mechanical, and hand removal. This property will be added to list and receive treatment as necessary to control noxious weeds.

Strategy 4.1 Chemical Applications

Chemical applications to noxious weeds will cover at least 10% of the property for the next five years

Strategy 4.2 Implement Haying.

Haying will be used to promote native vegetation renewal and decrease fire hazards. It will be used as a management tool to remove vegetation. Currently there is no hay plan developed for this property and we will not conduct any other method for vegetation removal such as controlled burns for the next five (5) years. If vegetation removal is conducted the resulting bales will be used to feed the Tribal Bison herd or stored for future use.

Objective 5. **Wetland Restoration**

Management actions for restoring plant communities on wetland areas will preserve the unique assemblage of plants and animals (Kusler and Kentula. 1990). Management objectives will target the management activities needed to maintain species numbers and density over the next five years.

Objective 6**. Monitoring and Evaluation**

Several methods will be employed to determine the baseline condition of wildlife guilds and vegetation. Baseline conditions for small mammals, neo-tropical migratory birds, migratory waterfowl, and vegetative characteristics for each representative habitat will also be collected. This data will be compared to the reference sites in order to provide the managers with information crucial to the function of each habitat type. In future years, comparisons will be made to determine habitat progress toward meeting the goals and objectives for the project. The Upper Columbia united Tribe's (UCUT) Wildlife Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (M&E Plan), a modified monitoring plan from the Albeni Falls Wildlife Monitoring and Evaluation Plan which is contained in the Conservation Plan for Washington mitigation projects (Stovall, 2006). This comprehensive M&E Plan was developed in response to the Independent Scientific Review Panel (ISRP) questions regarding project monitoring and adaptive management. The M&E Plan was revised and implemented in order to determine project success as compared to reference site conditions for the various habitats types under modification. This M&E Plan was also expanded regionally to include all wildlife mitigation projects for the five member tribes of UCUT.

Budget

Below is the budget for this addition of this property to the Calispell Creek Wildlife Management Unit showing the management activities that will be performed on the unit. Actual cost may be reduced as this property is now part of the overall complex where similar practices will occur.

Table 1. Phase III Annual Budget

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	TOTAL
Program Manager	.1 FTE	$6,800
Biologist	.25 FTE	$15,100
Bio-technician	.5 FTE	$15,200
benefits	45%	$16,695
Materials & supplies	O&M needs	$2,000
Indirect	16.32%	$10,177
O&M Activities		
Objective 1.	Baseline inventory	$500
Objective 2.	O &M	$500
Objective 3.	Fencing 1 mile	$5,000
Objective 4.	Weed Control 4 ac	$1,690
Restoration/enh.		
Objective 5.	Wet Restoration	$1,000
M&E	UMEP	$0
Total Annual Costs		$74,662

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