

# factsheet

March 2009

## Jocko River Watershed conservation easement protects trout habitat in Montana

The Bonneville Power Administration is proposing to fund a 16.25 acre habitat acquisition in Montana's Jocko River Watershed for fish habitat mitigation (see map). Located in Lake County in northwestern Montana, this property was selected for several reasons.

First, this property is along Valley Creek, a tributary to the Jocko River. It is part of the Jocko River Watershed, which is designated as critical habitat for bull trout, resident fish that are listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. The watershed also supports local populations of migratory westslope cutthroat trout, a subspecies that is considered at risk by local tribes and the state of Montana.

Over the years, various land-use disturbances have degraded stream channel conditions, elevated temperatures and increased sediment levels in the river, causing fish populations to decline in the area. The Jocko River Watershed was selected as a focus for restoration efforts because the high rate of development there increases the risk that more habitat resources will be damaged in the future.

Additionally, this land is within the boundaries of the Flathead Indian Reservation. It is significant to the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes and evidence of traditional use goes back hundreds of years.

Acquiring this property would provide BPA with credits for partial mitigation of resident fish habitat losses due to the construction and inundation of

Hungry Horse Dam, a federal dam located on the South Fork of the Flathead River. Other agencies involved with this project include Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

### Land to get management plan

Once this property has been acquired, which is expected in spring 2009, a conservation easement would be placed on the property to ensure that the fisheries values and habitat are protected in perpetuity. The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes would provide long-term stewardship for the land and develop a management plan to guide the protection and enhancement of habitat resources on the property.

Pending BPA's approval of the management plan, any activities that could damage habitat (such as harvesting of wood products, grazing of livestock or construction of buildings) would be prohibited from occurring on this land.

### For more information

If you have any questions about this proposal or would like additional information, please contact Cecilia Brown, BPA, at (503) 230-3462, toll-free at (800) 282-3713 or e-mail at [ckbrown@bpa.gov](mailto:ckbrown@bpa.gov). You may also contact Lynn DuCharme of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes at (406) 883-2888 or e-mail at [lynnd@cskt.org](mailto:lynnd@cskt.org).



# Jocko River Conservation Easement

## Lake County, Montana

