

**BY ELECTRONIC FILING**

December 18, 2019

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 – 2019 Annual Report**

Dear Secretary Bose:

Please find enclosed Public Utility District No. 2 of Grant County, Washington's (Grant PUD's) 2019 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<sup>1</sup>, which was modified and approved by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) on September 8, 2010<sup>2</sup>. 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 is continuing its Information and Education (I&E) Program in 2019 through maintenance of its website content and Grant PUD 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 15-16, 2019, 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. In addition to the I&E Program efforts, over 2,500 people visited Grant PUD's Visitor Center located in the Wanapum Hydro Operation Building (HOB), where visitors can view a number of interactive wildlife and wildlife habitat related displays aimed at educating the public on

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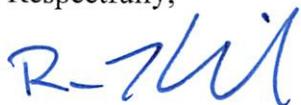
<sup>1</sup> 123 FERC ¶ 61,049 (2008)

<sup>2</sup> 132 FERC ¶ 62,154 (2010)

the importance of maintaining a healthy ecosystem throughout the Project. Finally, in 2019 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.

Respectfully,



Ross Hendrick  
Senior Manager – Environmental Affairs

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**

**2019 Annual Report**

**License Article 410**

Public Utility District No. 2 of Grant County, Washington

**December 2019**

## 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 and 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 2019 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 2019.

Grant PUD is continuing its Information and Education (I&E) Program in 2019 through maintenance of its website content and Grant PUD 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 15-16, 2019, 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. In addition to the I&E Program efforts, over 2,500 people visited Grant PUD's Visitor Center located in the Wanapum Hydro Operation Building (HOB), where visitors can view 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 2019 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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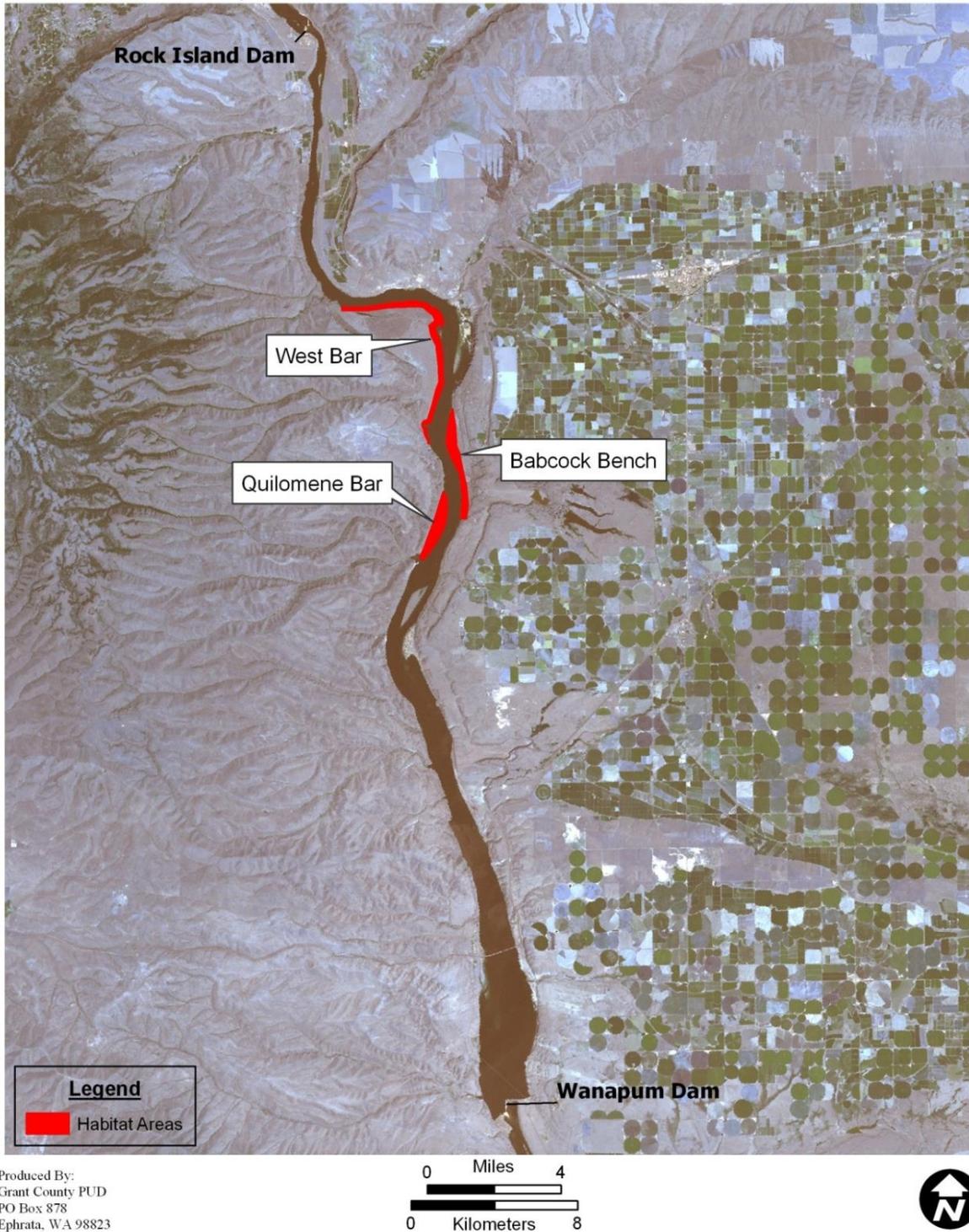
## **1.0 Introduction**

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) 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.

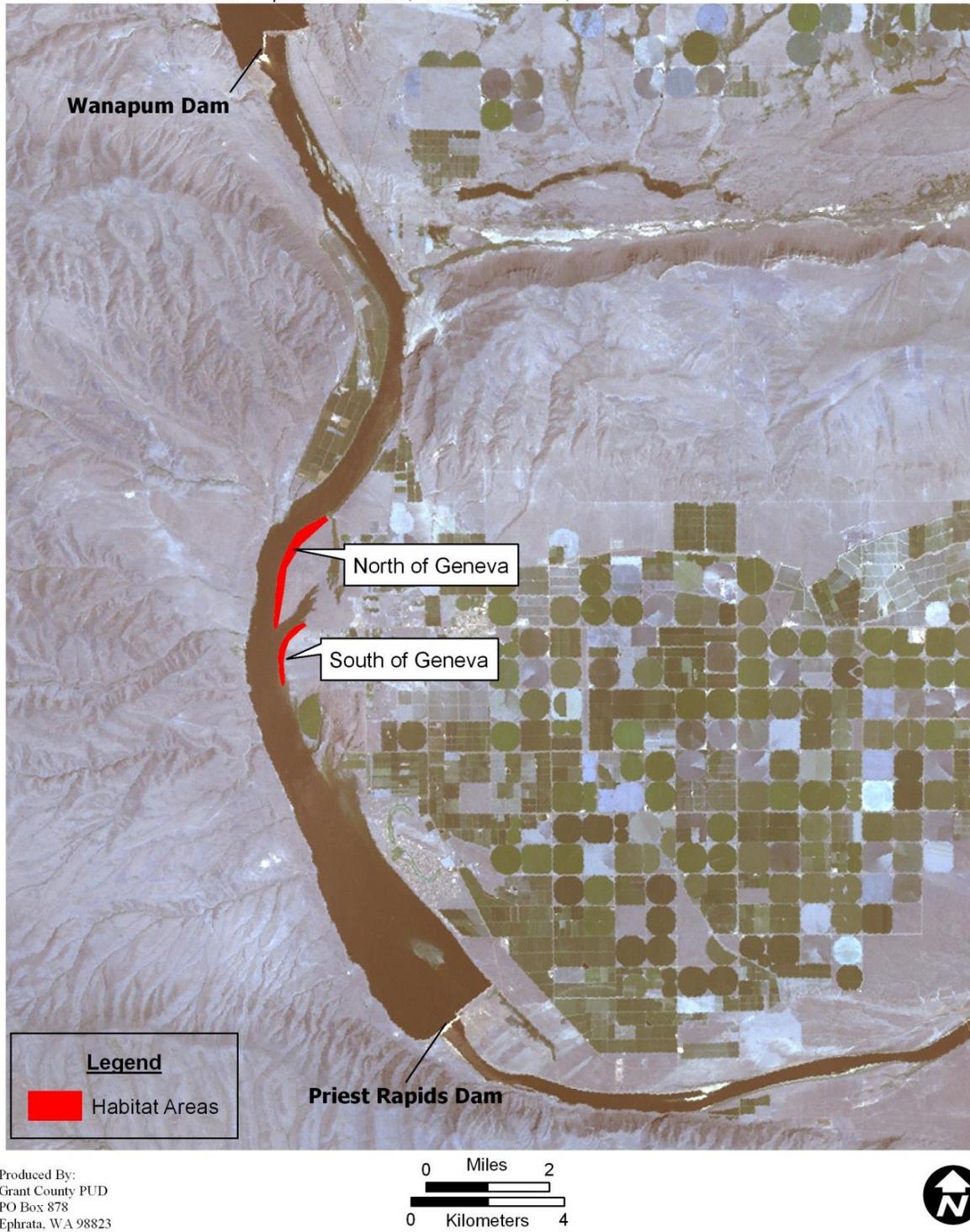
## **2.0 Monitoring Recreation Effects on Wildlife and Sensitive Wildlife Habitats**

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). These five locations were monitored in 2019 and included: 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 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.



**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 twice in 2019. Monitoring occurred prior to the peak recreation season in July 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 2019.

### **3.1 West Bar**

West Bar was surveyed for dispersed recreation on July 11, 2019. 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 3, 2019 that found one large fire pit that was removed. There was no evidence of tree disturbance on either survey.

### **3.2 Babcock Bench**

Babcock Bench was surveyed for dispersed recreational effects on July 11, 2019 and was found to have one fire pit that was subsequently dispersed. Previous seeding efforts continue to be successful throughout the site and there was no noticeable damage to trees, litter or human caused trails. The fall survey was conducted on September 3, 2019 and did not find any human caused disturbance to the site. Minimal trampled grasses and shrubs were present, but believed to be the result of native wildlife. No other dispersed recreation impacts were found.

### **3.3 Quilomene Bar**

Quilomene Bar was surveyed for dispersed recreational effects on July 11, 2019. One fire pit was removed and litter was picked up during the survey. The fall survey was conducted on September 3, 2019. Two fire pits were discovered and removed along with a large amount of trash. There were areas of slight trampling that lead inland, but it is believed to be from native wildlife as a number of wild turkey and mule deer were present during the survey and no signs of 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 July 10, 2019 and September 3, 2019, 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 July 10, 2019 and September 3, 2019, and no dispersed recreation sites or any signs of dispersed recreation impacts were found on either survey.

## **4.0 Information and Education**

In 2019, Grant PUD continued to enhance, implement and maintain 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 maintained throughout 2019 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 kiosks and wildlife-specific signage installed and maintained in 2019 at Grant PUD recreation sites and boat launches throughout the Project (Figure 3). In 2020, Grant PUD looks to continue development and installation of additional signs and kiosks within the Project.

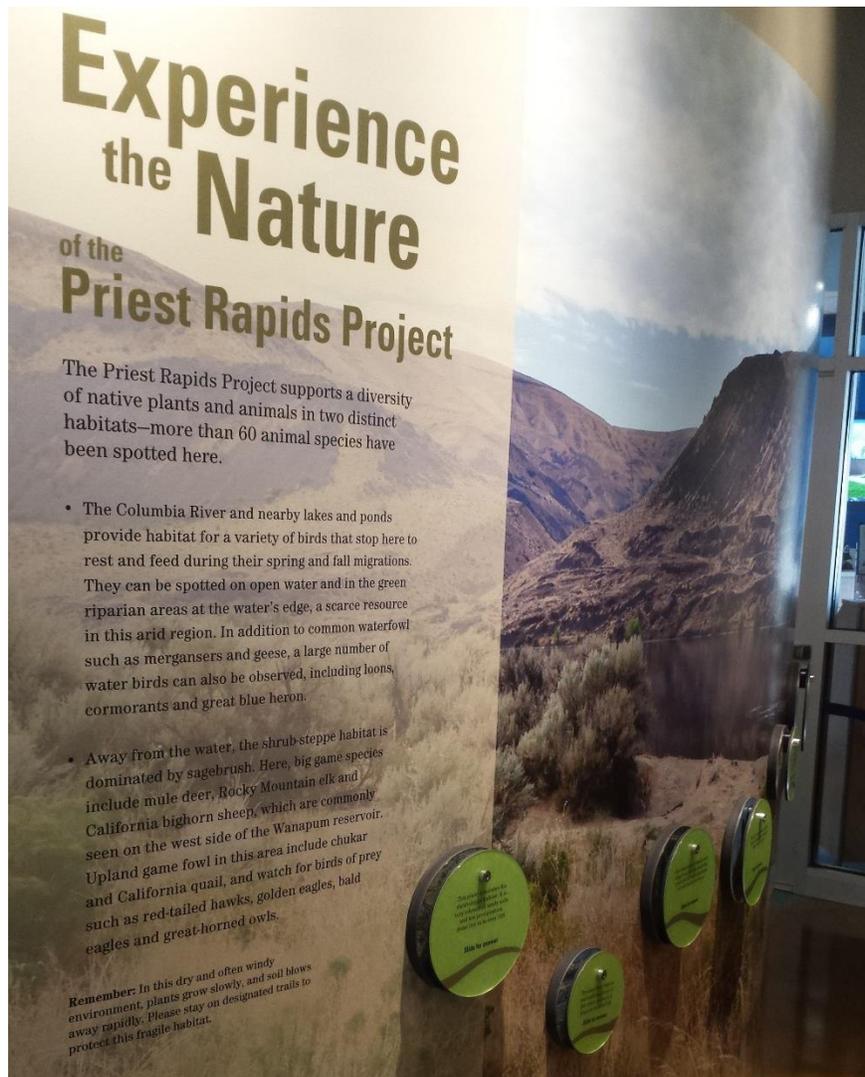


Figure 3 Wildlife informational sign at Crescent Bar Recreation Area.

### 4.3 Public Education and Outreach

On October 15-16, 2019, 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 December 2019, over 2,500 people visited Grant PUD’s Visitor Center located in the Hydro Operations Building (HOB) at Wanapum Dam. Visitors can 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 (Figure 4). Visitors can also learn where each of the recreation sites are located throughout the Project and what amenities are present (Figure 5).



**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 ninth full year of monitoring for the WHMIEP in 2019, 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, and
- 5). visitor center.

In 2020, 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 in December of 2020.

## **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.

