

BY ELECTRONIC FILING

December 20, 2013

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 License Compliance Filing – Article 410 – Wildlife Habitat Monitoring, Information, and Education Plan – 2013 Annual Report

Dear Secretary Bose,

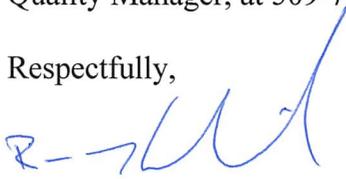
On October 12, 2009, Public Utility District No. 2 of Grant County, Washington (Grant PUD) filed its Wildlife Habitat Monitoring, Information, and Education Plan (Plan) pursuant to Priest Rapids Project (P-2114) License Article 410, which was modified and approved by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (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; attached is such annual report.

In 2013, bi-annual monitoring was completed on the sensitive wildlife habitat areas based on the criteria defined in the Plan. Monitoring occurred prior to the recreation season in March/April and again following the recreation season in September/October. Corrective actions will be taken as necessary as described in the Plan.

Also in 2013, Grant PUD continued with the development of an information and education program, which led to completion of a public website that will help 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 the types of wildlife, and its importance to the environment, that occur within the Priest Rapids Project. On October 23 and 24, 2013 a poster titled *Preserve Sensitive Habitat – Recreate Responsibly* was presented at Grant PUD's annual Archaeology Days.

If you have any questions or comment, 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
Brent Billingsley – 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
Tracy Hames – Yakama

Priest Rapids Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 2114)

**Wildlife Habitat Monitoring and Information and
Education Program**

2013 Progress Report

License Article 410

December 2013

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.

In 2013, five habitat areas within the Priest Rapids Project (Project) were surveyed in the spring and fall of 2013 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 2013.

Grant PUD is continuing the development of an Information and Education (I&E) Program, which began in 2011 with the initial development of a public website designed to help educate the public about responsible recreation practices and the potential adverse effects of irresponsible dispersed recreation on sensitive habitats. On October 23-24, 2013 a poster titled *Preserve Sensitive Habitat – Recreate Responsibly* was presented at Grant PUD's annual Archaeology Days. In addition to the I&E website, Grant PUD continues to explore, review, and select appropriate themes related to educating the public about responsible recreation practices and the potential adverse effects of irresponsible dispersed recreation on sensitive habitats. Finally, in 2013 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 prioritizing sites where the media will be located, and review services to be provided, such as interpretive talks and field trips, reservoir clean-up events, in-school education lectures, etc..

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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 2013 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.

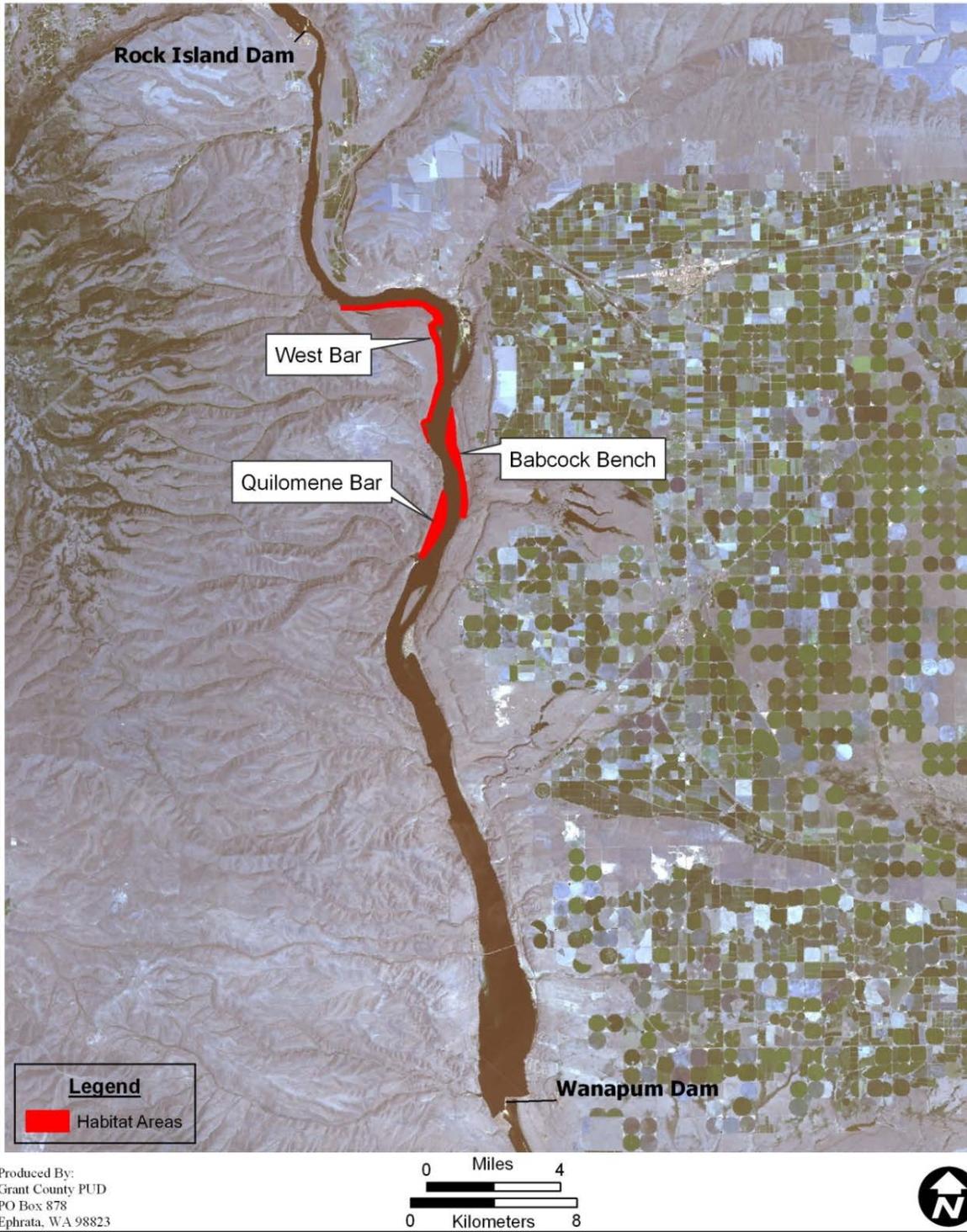


Figure 1. Habitat monitoring areas for Wanapum Reservoir.

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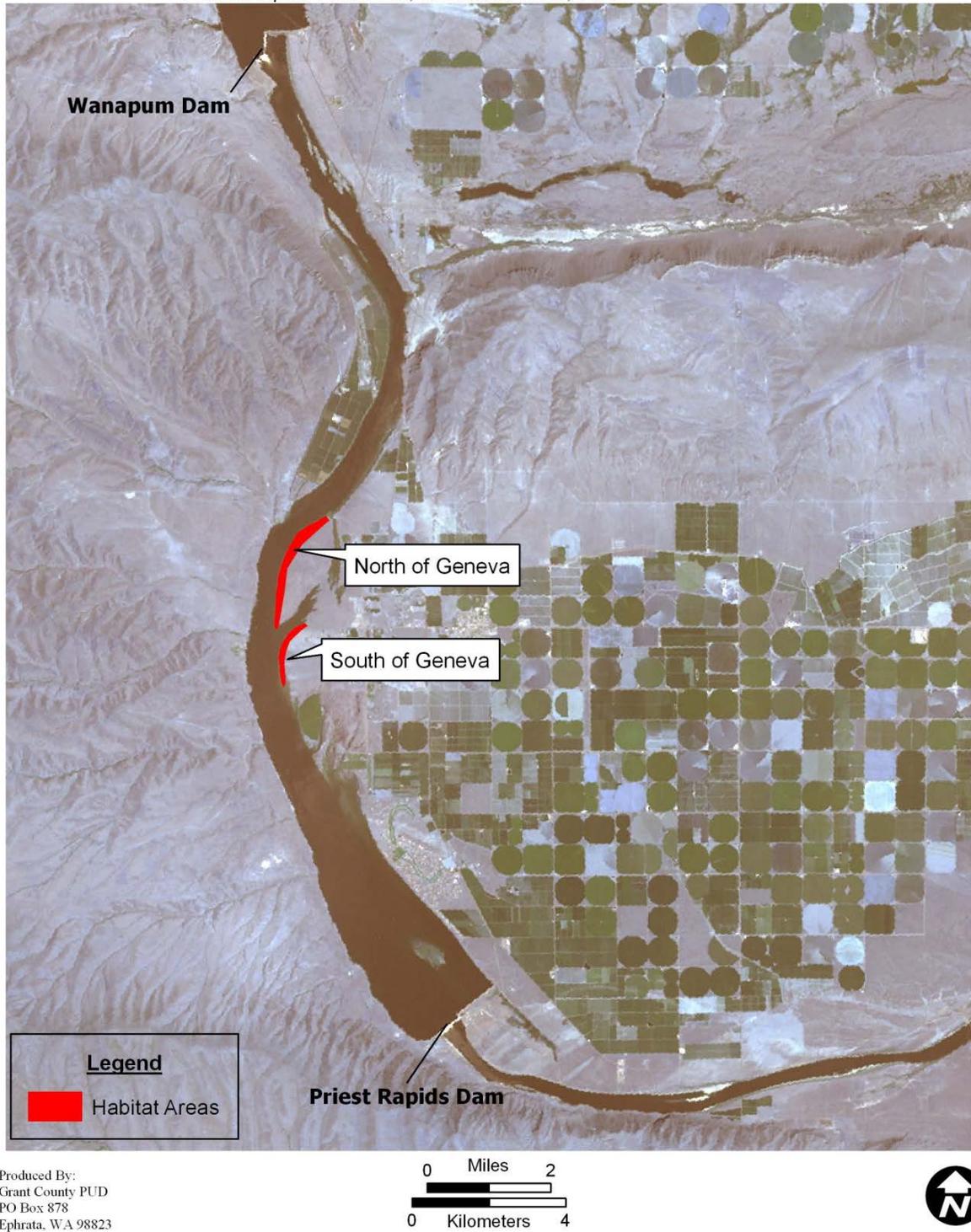


Figure 2. Habitat monitoring areas for Priest Rapids Reservoir.

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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 Lake Geneva

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 2013. 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 2013.

All exposed soils found during fall and spring surveys due to disturbance (fire pits, trampling, and trails) were reseeded on November 13, 2013. 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

One site was found during spring surveys on West Bar on May 23, 2013. The one site had a fire pit including trimming/scarring of existing vegetation. No scarring led to killing of tree/shrub. All fire pits and litter were removed and reseeded in fall 2013. Fall surveys were performed on November 13, 2013 and five fire pits were removed and cleaned along with litter present at the site. Figures 3 and 4 show all sites found on West Bar during spring and fall surveys in 2013.



Figure 3 Spring Survey on West Bar, 2013.



Figure 4 Fall Survey on West Bar, 2013.

3.2 Babcock Bench

Babcock Bench was surveyed for dispersed recreational effects on May 23, 2013 and November 13, 2013, and no dispersed recreation sites or any signs of dispersed recreation impacts were found.

3.3 Quilomene Bar

Quilomene Bar was surveyed for dispersed recreational effects on May 23, 2013 and November 13, 2013. Two sites were found during spring surveys along the southern-most tip of Quilomene Bar which is closest to Quilomene Dune, a popular recreation area. All sites were fire pits with one of them including trimming/scarring of existing vegetation. No scarring led to killing of the tree. Fall surveys found three fire pits that were rebuilt at the same location of the 2012 surveys. All fire pits and litter found during monitoring was removed and bare/trampled areas were reseeded in fall 2013. Figures 5 and 6 show all sites found on Quilomene Bar during spring and fall surveys in 2013.



Figure 5 Spring Survey on Quilomene Bar, 2013



Figure 6 Fall Survey on Quilomene Bar, 2013

3.4 North of Lake Geneva

North of Lake Geneva was surveyed for dispersed recreational effects on May 23, 2013 and November 13, 2013, and no dispersed recreation sites or any signs of dispersed recreation impacts were found.

3.5 South of Lake Geneva

South of Lake Geneva was surveyed for dispersed recreational effects on May 23, 2013 and November 13, 2013, and no dispersed recreation sites or any signs of dispersed recreation impacts were found.

4.0 Information and Education

Grant PUD is currently developing an Information and Education (I&E) Program which will feature a public website 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 its importance to the environment, that occur within the Project area.

In addition to the I&E website, Grant PUD continued to review and select appropriate themes related to educating the public about the potential adverse effects of dispersed recreation on sensitive habitats. In 2013 Grant PUD reviewed and selected appropriate I&E Program media to be used, such as signs (Figure 7) and kiosks (roadside and at key sites), brochures, pamphlets, audio tours, nature trails, newsletters, etc., as well prioritizing sites where the media will be located, and review services to be provided, such as interpretive talks and field trips, reservoir clean-up events, in-school education lectures, etc.

On October 23 and 24, 2013 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 vehicle use in undesignated areas, leaving trash and garbage behind, riding or walking off designated trails, and irresponsible campfire practices.



Figure 7 Sign located at Wanapum State Park

5.0 Summary

Grant PUD began its third full year of monitoring of the WHMIEP in 2013, which included surveying five habitat areas for dispersed recreational effects on sensitive wildlife habitat areas. In total, approximately 12 miles of Wanapum Reservoir shoreline and 3 miles of Priest Rapids shoreline were monitored in 2013 resulting in the finding of 11 disturbance sites during spring and fall surveys. In addition, Grant PUD continued developing its I&E Program, which led to completion of a public website that will help 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 the types of wildlife, and its importance to the environment, that occur within the Project area. Grant PUD will continue to review and select appropriate themes related to educating the public about the potential adverse effects of dispersed recreation on sensitive habitats. On October 23 and 24, 2013 a poster titled *Preserve Sensitive Habitat – Recreate Responsibly* was presented at Grant PUD’s annual Archaeology Days.

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. An annual report will be submitted with results after monitoring has occurred.

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 – 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.

