

## Power of the People

By W. Marc Farmer, General Manager,  
West Oregon Electric Cooperative



Marc Farmer provided the following BPA press release for his column this issue.

### High flows prompt BPA action on power generation

High seasonal river flows and hydroelectric generation led the Bonneville Power Administration to issue an interim decision today to address a potentially imminent need to temporarily limit output from non-hydropower resources early next week. The decision will allow BPA to safeguard protected fish and assure reliable energy delivery without shifting extra costs to BPA electric customers.

BPA finalized its interim Environmental Redispatch policy to help cope with runoff from the largest snowpack in years. The Northwest River Forecast Center predicts this year will bring the highest Columbia Basin runoff volume since 1999. The conditions could temporarily push generation of hydroelectric power beyond the region's limited spring electricity needs. The interim policy gives BPA the tools to match power generation to demand, which is necessary for dependable operation of the power grid.

The interim policy, which will remain in place until March 30, 2012, first limits generation at coal, natural gas and other thermal power plants to keep the supply of power from exceeding demand. As a last resort, BPA's policy could temporarily limit wind energy gener-

ation connected to its power transmission system. Under the policy, BPA will replace any reduced thermal and wind generation with free hydropower from federal dams on the Columbia River system.

"This was an extremely difficult decision for me. Despite months of searching through a robust public process, there was no good choice here," said Steve Wright, BPA administrator. I believe we have adopted the option that best preserves reliability, protects salmon and avoids increased costs on average to Northwest ratepayers."

BPA took several earlier steps to avoid need for the interim policy, including:

- Working with other agencies and utilities to maximize available reservoir space to manage river flows and control hydroelectric generation.
- Adjusting non-essential maintenance on transmission lines so that maximum capacity is available to carry large amounts of electric generation to distant markets from Canada to California.
- Using the plentiful energy to pump water into storage space at Banks Lake, above Grand Coulee Dam, for later use to irrigate crops or generate power.
- Offering low-cost or free hydropower to help create a market incentive for power producers to substitute it for fossil fuel generation.

Reducing hydroelectric generation in high water conditions sends additional water through dam spillways. While some spill of water can help young salmon and steelhead migrate downstream, too much can cause potentially harmful levels of dissolved gases in the river. State water quality standards are geared to provide safe conditions in the river for fish and federal dams are operated with these standards in

mind.

Wind energy producers may lose tax credits and other revenues when their wind turbines do not actively generate power. However, BPA will not reimburse wind energy producers for lost tax credits or other revenues because that would shift costs to Northwest ratepayers who do not receive the wind power.

"We're fortunate in the Northwest to have extraordinary renewable hydropower and wind energy resources, but occasionally we have to adjust when nature gives us too much," said Wright. "Wind remains an important part of our clean energy future and is growing quickly. This is an interim step, which appears unavoidable at this point to keep the power grid in balance while the region develops long-term solutions."

BPA earlier this year sought public comment on a draft policy that provides for temporary limits on wind generation when necessary to protect fish and the reliability of the electrical system.

BPA and other agencies will closely monitor river conditions and will lift any limits on power generation as soon as they are no longer needed.

BPA is a non-profit federal agency that markets renewable hydropower from federal Columbia River dams, operates three-quarters of high-voltage transmission lines in the Northwest and funds one of the largest wildlife protection and restoration programs in the world. Renewable energy is the future, and the Bonneville Power Administration delivers more of it than any other electricity provider in the nation. Meeting the critical need to reduce energy consumption, BPA and its partners have conserved enough electricity to power four large American cities. For more information visit the BPA website at [www.bpa.gov](http://www.bpa.gov).

## \$1 million fish may be caught in Oregon

Two popular Oregon fishing destinations will have an added attraction for anglers over the next two months – the possibility of landing a fish worth \$1 million.

Henry Hagg Lake in Washington County and Detroit Lake in Marion County are among 65 bodies of water nationwide that have been chosen for inclusion in the "Wanna Go Fishing for Millions" contest sponsored by Cabela's, Outdoor Channel, and fish and wildlife agencies from approximately 20 states.

The contest started May 14 and continues through July 14. Participants must register online to be eligible for prizes. Register by going to the Cabela's website at [www.cabelas.com/fishformillions](http://www.cabelas.com/fishformillions).

"We are very excited about Oregon's participation in the Wanna Go Fishing for Millions contest," said Matt Eastman, host of Outdoor Channel's

"Wanna Go Fishing" program. "If \$2.2 million doesn't get your juices going, I don't know what will."

That's the combined value of the prizes, with a grand prize of \$1 million. Participating water bodies have from 10 to 15 fish, each tagged with small "spaghetti" tags with unique numbers. Anglers lucky enough to catch a fish with one of these tags can claim their prize by entering the tag number and other information on the Cabela's website. Prizes include Costa sunglasses, Sterry Top-sider shoes, Abu Garcia reels, Berkley line, AT&T computer routers, and Cabela's gift cards.

In addition to the prizes, anglers will have the benefit of catching some nice fish. At Hagg Lake, for example, ODFW biologists have tagged a total of 15 bass ranging from 2-5 pounds.

"Can you imagine the excitement of catching a five-pound largemouth bass and finding a tag that could be worth a million dollars?" said Gary Galovich, ODFW's Western Oregon warmwater fish biologist.

At Detroit Lake, ODFW's Marion Forks Fish Hatchery tagged and released 12 3-pound rainbow trout for the contest.

"Trout don't hold up like bass, and you could find them just about anywhere in Detroit Lake," said Alex Farrand, assistant district fish biologist for ODFW's South Willamette Watershed.

ODFW opted to participate in the contest in an attempt to encourage people to get out and discover the joy of fishing, according to Rhine Messmer, ODFW's Recreational Fisheries Program manager.

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