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October 30, 2000

Hanford Natural Resource Trustee Council
Thomas F. O'Brien, Chair
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Portland Eastside Federal Complex
911 NE 11th Avenue
Portland, OR 97232-4181

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EDMC

Dear Tom:

Attached for the review and comment by members of the Hanford Natural Resource Trustee Council is the plan for the revegetation effort that we discussed at the September NRTC meeting held in Lowell, Idaho. The Remedial Action Waste Disposal Project has agreed to participate in this effort as a way to provide compensatory mitigation for ERDF cells 1 and 2. The ERDF has provided 1,000 pounds of native Sandberg's bluegrass and approximately 8,000 sagebrush tublings. The two suggested areas to be planted include the Tapteal Greenway, a corridor along the Yakima River adjacent to the Arid Lands Ecology (ALE) Reserve, and the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife Rattlesnake Slope Wildlife Area which borders the ALE Reserve. We are coordinating efforts with Don Larson of the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife to complete a workable plan. We would like to get your comments as soon as possible to enable us to move forward with planning this revegetation effort. We would like to initiate seeding the native Sandberg's bluegrass as soon as the week of November 6, 2000, to ensure the grass seeding is completed by the planned sagebrush installation. It is our expectation that the native seed planting will be completed prior to the NRTC meeting on November 16-17, 2000. Currently, we are planning to begin planting the sagebrush tublings the weekend of December 1-3, 2000. If you are interested in participating with seeding or sagebrush planting, please let us know.

Please send any comments you have on the attached plan to me as soon as possible, but no later than the close of business November 8, 2000.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (509) 372-9633.



D. D. Teel

cc: Bill Burke
Larry Gadbois
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NRTC Administrative File

The Tapteal Greenway was first introduced to the Natural Resource Trustee Council at the September 13 and 14, 2000 meeting held in Lowell, Idaho. The Tapteal Greenway is a corridor along the Yakima River extending from Benton City to Richland. A portion of the Tapteal Greenway was burned in the June 2000 range fire. Bechtel is proposing to reseed 200 acres of the burned area with native Sandberg's bluegrass seed and plant approximately 8,000 sagebrush tublings. This revegetation effort will be seed 1,000 lbs of native grass seed to 100 acres within the Benton County Horn Rapids Park, Tapteal Greenway and 100 acres within the Washington State Rattlesnake Slope Wildlife Area. The seed and tublings were purchased by the Environmental Restoration Disposal Facility (ERDF) project as credit towards compensatory mitigation for the construction of the facility. Seeding the burned area will initiate recovery of the area and stabilize the soils. Only a very small patch of sagebrush remains in the area, therefore planting tublings will provide the area with a needed seed source.

Tapteal Greenway

www.owt.com/tapteal

- The **Tapteal Greenway** is a 30 mile corridor along the Yakima River (Benton City to Richland)
 - Protects wildlife
 - Provides opportunities for public education and exposure to natural Resources
 - Protects archaeological and historical sites
 - Promotes stewardship of natural resources

- Within the Tapteal Greenway, there are two "Natural Areas", one on each side of the Horn Rapids Park
 - The Natural Areas, ~ 550 acres east of Rattlesnake Hills burned in the June 2000 range fire
 - The natural area is between the ALE Reserve's eastern boundary and Yakima River
 - Adjacent to Washington Fish and Wildlife managed Rattlesnake Slope Wildlife Area

- County Parks and Programs Recommendations from the 1982 Comprehensive Plan for Parks and Recreation for the Horn Rapids Park

Location

Horn Rapids Park is located approximately six miles north of Benton City along Horn Road and twelve miles west of Richland along Highway 240. It's 784 acres run adjacent to the Yakima River on the northern bank, through the area historically known as "The Horn". Horn Rapids Dam is located near the eastern end of the park.

History

Up until the 1800's native Americans frequently fished at Wanawish (Horn Rapids) because of the plentiful fish and the ease of access provided for netting. Later in the World Wars era an encampment was built in the northern end of the park. Many of the encampment foundations and trees still exist today. Then in December 1967 six hundred fifty-eight acres were purchased from the General Service Administration by Benton County (½ county funds and ½ I.A.C. grant) and the remaining portions were deeded to the county by the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation for use in perpetuity as park and recreation lands.

Development

Currently no developments have occurred within the park except a single launching ramp and a gravel access road constructed by the Washington State Game Department in the north end of the park. Many undeveloped dirt roads are located throughout the park.

Classification

Because of the park's extensive size, virtual lack of development and natural shoreline setting large portions of the park, 550 acres have been classified as Natural Parklands. These areas are predominantly narrow strips between the road and the river with extensive topographical features and prime wildlife habitats. Also, in preparing for existing and future needs in the area 234 acres located in the northern end of the park have been classified Large Urban/Shorelines. The extensive natural wetlands bordering the river in this area and the river's low water quality prohibit the designation of Waterfront Access for this park.

Recommendations

- Development of Large Urban Park including provisions for camping, fishing, picnicking, recreational facilities and recreational programs.
- Development of Natural Parklands including provisions for interpretive trails, wildlife preservation, primitive camping and educational programs.
- Restrict use of existing dirt roads as necessary.
- Continued awareness of the proposed recreational developments currently planned for the surrounding "Horn" area and how they will affect the development and management of "Horn Rapids Park".

Rattlesnake Slope Wildlife Area

Additionally at the Natural Resource Trustee Council meeting in Lowell, Idaho the State of Washington brought up an additional option for participation by partnering with the project to reseed a portion of their wildlife area that was also burned in the June 2000

range fire. The Rattlesnake Slope Wildlife area borders the Ale Reserve and the Horn Rapids Park.

The **Rattlesnake Slope Wildlife Area** is located seven miles north of Benton City on the lower east slope of Rattlesnake Mountain and adjacent to Hanford's ALE Reserve. Horn Road is the east boundary and the only public access to the unit.

Elevations range from 400 feet near Horn Road to 2,000 feet along the crest of the Rattlesnake Hills. The terrain is gently rolling with abrupt inclines to the west of Horn Road and on the slopes. The area has extensive stands of native bunchgrasses with smaller patches of sagebrush and cheatgrass. A significant portion of the native, "old growth" sagebrush steppe habitat has disappeared from the unit over time due to frequent, uncontrolled wildfire.

Both game and nongame species are limited on this area because of the lack of water. With time and development of the shrub plantings, the area should support significantly higher numbers of all wildlife.

Hanford Native Sandberg's Bluegrass Seed

- 1,000 lbs of Hanford derived seed. \$50.00 /lb x 1,000 = \$ 50,000.00
 - 4 lbs/ac = 250 ac
 - 5 lbs/ac = 200 ac**
 - 6 lbs/ac = 166.7 ac
 - 7 lbs/ac = 142.9 ac

Hanford Native Sagebrush Tublings

- 6,880 excess sagebrush tublings. \$ 5,000.00
- Potentially additional 1,000 tublings.
Assuming 7,880 plants...
 - 400 pl/ac = 19.7ac
 - 300 pl/ac = 26.3ac
 - 200 pl/ac = 39.4ac
 - 100 pl/ac = 78.8ac

Recommendations

Bechtel is recommending to seed 1000 lbs of native Sandberg's bluegrass seed beginning November 6, 2000 within approximately 100 acres of the burned area within the Tapteal Greenway and 100 acres within the Rattlesnake Slope Wildlife Area bordering the ALE Reserve. Following the completion of the native grass seeding, approximately 8,000 sagebrush tublings will be planted in the same areas to provide a seed source to the area. The tublings will be planted by volunteer workers December 1-3, 2000. This revegetation effort will count as credit towards compensatory mitigation for the original construction of ERDF cells 1 and 2. Bechtel is attempting to get experienced, qualified operators to use the seeding equipment for this revegetation project. This restoration effort will expedite succession and provide the area with a valuable seed source. This restoration effort will accelerate recovery from the recent range fire. Following this restoration effort, additional follow up activities can be performed to further restore this area.

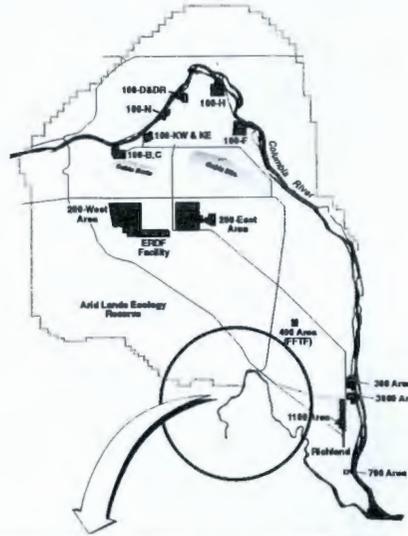
Follow-up activity,

Native Sagebrush Seed Collections and Planting

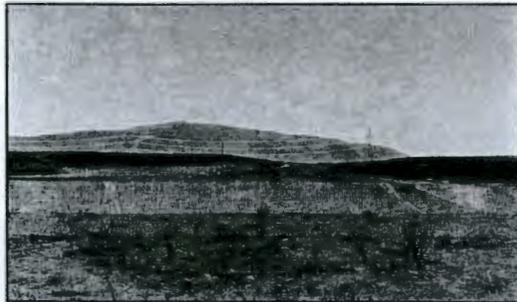
- Sagebrush seed collections from the Horn Rapids Industrial Park
 - Horn Rapids County Park was dominated by *Artemisia tridentata* variety *tridentata*. Variety *tridentata* occupies areas receiving greater precipitation or having higher water tables than *Artemisia tridentata* variety *wyomingensis*. *Wyomingensis* is most commonly found variety on Hanford proper. There is an abundant seed source of *Artemisia tridentata* variety *tridentata* within the Richland City limits near the Horn Rapids Industrial Park. With the approval from the City of Richland, just a few seed collectors for a couple hours would be able to collect sufficient seed to plant a significant area. The sagebrush seed can be hand broadcast planted in the areas near the Yakima River that were burned in the range fire.
- Monitoring
 - At this time, monitoring has not been scheduled and the budget for this activity is not available. This could be a topic of future discussions.

Horn Rapids Park, Tapteal Greenway

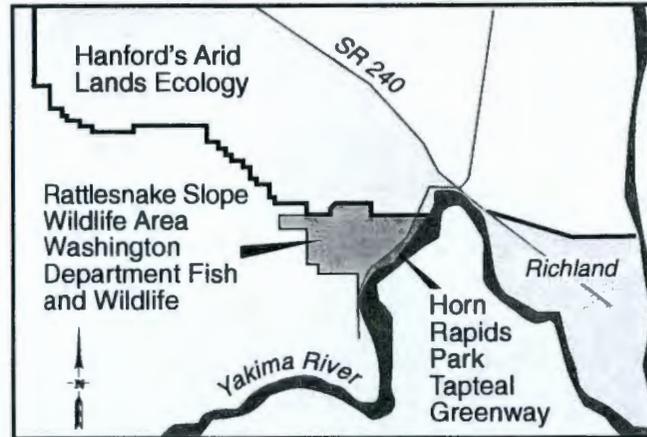
"The Tapteal Greenway is a corridor where wildlife, natural vegetation, and people co-exist; which provides opportunities for non-motorized recreation, education, and habitat protection; and is planned and managed for future generations through community involvement and interjurisdictional cooperation."



Horn Rapids Park newly developed overnight RV parking with hook-ups and restroom facilities. This facility is approximately 1 mile northeast of the ALE Reserve's Eastern boundary.



Within the Horn Rapids Park westward towards Rattlesnake Mountain and Gate 106, the eastern entrance onto the ALE Reserve. The entire shrub-steppe area was burned in the June 2000 range fire.



The fire burned to the edge of the Yakima River consuming most of the riparian vegetation. The riparian vegetation is expected to return on it's own more quickly than the upland areas. The upland areas could take decades to reestablish a functioning shrub-steppe vegetative community.



Most all of the shrubs were lost in the fire. Only a few skeletons remain to remind us of the vegetative community that once provided wildlife habitat for several species.



Only a small patch of sagebrush remains in the area.