

Stewardship of the Hood River Powerdale Corridor

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Abstract:

In 2002, PacifiCorp entered into a FERC License and Settlement Agreement to decommission the Hood River - Powerdale Hydroelectric Facility and to transfer 400 acres (three miles) of the Hood River into permanent conservation ownership. A group known as the “Powerdale Lands Stakeholders” (PLS) group was created as part of the Settlement Agreement, and was charged with selecting an entity to accept ownership of the Powerdale lands. Columbia Land Trust was selected through a proposal process to facilitate the transfer of lands and, if appropriate, to accept ownership of the Powerdale property. Ultimately, the ownership plan that was developed and approved has Hood River County, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Columbia Land Trust dividing corridor ownership according to organizational strengths and interests. The dam was removed in the fall 2010 according to the decommissioning plans.

Future stewardship of the corridor will be a collaborative effort between the landowners, neighbors, the Hood River Watershed Group and the local community. The corridor itself represents a unique resource for fish and wildlife, as well as for recreational users. All future stewardship of the Powerdale Corridor must comply with the goals of the Settlement Agreement: protection and restoration of existing fish and wildlife habitat; retaining the existing recreational uses; providing for expanded recreational and educational opportunities provided these uses do not conflict with habitat goals; and, to preserve the off-reservation fishing rights for tribal members of the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs.

Columbia Land Trust has taken the lead on developing the management plan for the Powerdale corridor to meet the requirements of the Settlement Agreement as well as to address the concerns of the PLS, neighbors, community members and conservation partners. Columbia Land Trust will present its approach to conservation land stewardship with specific reference to the Hood River – Powerdale Corridor lands.