

## RESOLUTION

Audubon Council of Washington

September 10, 2009

Title – Transfer of Department of Energy lands to Hanford Reach National Monument

Contact info: Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society, Rick Leaumont, Conservation Committee Chair, [Leaumont@owt.com](mailto:Leaumont@owt.com), 509-554-3838.

**Issue:** The Department of Energy (DOE) is in the process of reviewing its nationwide landholdings in an effort to divest itself of any property not essential to its mission. The Hanford Reach National Monument is composed of 200,000 acres of DOE lands which are administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. President Clinton issued a letter to the DOE directing the transfer of additional lands to the monument as DOE's use for the property ended. The DOE Comprehensive Land Use Plan of 1999 provides for managing most of the Hanford reservation for preservation and conservation. The plan also provides adequate lands for industrial expansion. We believe the lands designated for preservation and conservation should all be transferred to the monument as DOE's need for this property is completed. We have no objections to environmentally sensitive industrial development in the areas designated for industry with the exception of some enclaves of high habitat value to wildlife and native plants.

No action is needed from Audubon Washington at this time. Resolution from Council will assist our efforts to encourage DOE to move these lands into the monument.

Approval of the resolution is needed now – DOE is in the early stages of this process and we know of no groups who are pressing for development of these lands but that can change quickly.

Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society has worked to protect the Hanford Reach since our formation over 40 years ago and we led the campaign which resulted in Pres Clinton's designation of the Hanford Reach National Monument. Our long range plan is the eventual transfer of all suitable habitats on Hanford to the monument.

The Hanford Reservation is one of the three last remaining large tracts of shrub steppe habitat remaining in Washington; the rest has been converted to agriculture, industry, urban development or broken up into small plots which are of limited value to wildlife.

The primary source of opposition is Congressman Doc Hastings. He has opposed virtually all efforts to protect wildlife habitat and was absolutely opposed to the designation of the monument.

Primary focus of our efforts will be protection of shrub steppe wildlife habitat and native plants. Hanford's fish and riparian resources are already protected by the monument. Our efforts now focus on habitat in the interior of Hanford.

We ask the Council to pass the following resolution:

**Whereas the Hanford Reach National Monument was designated to protect the incredible fish, wildlife and native plant communities of the Hanford Reach of the Columbia River and shrub steppe habitat on adjacent Department of Energy lands. When President Clinton designated the monument in June of 2000, he realized that large tracks of DOE land outside the monument had high wildlife resource value but would be essential to DOE's mission for sometime to come. President Clinton directed the Secretary of Energy to consult with the Secretary of the Interior on managing these lands for wildlife and adding them to the monument in the future.**

**Whereas the Department of Energy is reviewing Hanford lands to determine what lands are no longer mission essential, and can be declared surplus and eligible for transfer or sale.**

**The Audubon Council of Washington calls upon the Secretary of Energy to intensify its partnership with the Secretary of Interior to manage Hanford lands for wildlife. We call for the eventual transfer to the Hanford Reach National Monument of all Hanford lands determined to be managed for preservation or conservation in the Final Hanford Comprehensive Land-Use Plan issued in September 1999. We demand that any Hanford lands under consideration for transfer or sale be reviewed by both the Department of Energy and US Fish and Wildlife Service to determine the suitability of those lands for inclusion in the Hanford Reach National Monument. We further call for the Secretary of Energy to offer any and all Hanford lands determined to be excess or surplus to the Secretary of Interior for transfer to the Hanford Reach National Monument prior to any other agency, government or entity either private or public.**