

# Eagle Bend Preserve and Conservation Easement Management Plan



Prepared by Lisa K. Younger  
for

Kittitas Conservation Trust  
120 West Pennsylvania Avenue  
Roslyn, WA 98941

## **I. Introduction/History**

### **A. Property conservation role and protection history**

The protection of the Eagle Bend Preserve is the result of a lengthy, complicated, but ultimately successful partnership among multiple entities ranging from tribal, federal, and state agencies, to nonprofit conservation entities and private landowners. Understanding the history and steps of this process is important to contextualize the management challenges and actions of this small but important property.

The Yakima River once supported over 200,000 returning spring Chinook salmon every year. With the construction of dams along the Columbia River those numbers dwindled. In the early 1980s, the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) was encouraged to fund the creation and operation of a hatchery. The result was the Cle Elum Supplementation and Research Facility. Today this facility supports the production and rearing of Chinook salmon, research on hatchery operations, and offers educational opportunities for the community. Several years ago, the Washington Department of Ecology (DOE) identified the need for BPA to mitigate for wetland impacts associated with the Cle Elum facility. Mitigation requires either the creation of new wetlands, or acquirement of property or a conservation easement that protects wetlands in perpetuity. BPA opted to protect existing wetlands and through their relationship with the Yakama Nation, identified the Eagle Bend Property as the land they wanted to acquire.

The Yakama Nation owns property across the river from the Eagle Bend property. They had been working with the owners of Eagle Bend, the Boone family, to create rearing habitat for salmon by reconnecting the gravel pit pond on their property to the river. The pond ultimately made poor rearing habitat, as small fish were easy prey for predators due to lack of cover within the pond. However, when they learned of BPA's mitigation needs, they suggested talking to the Boone family to see if they were interested in permanent conservation of this wetland property. The Yakama Nation also suggested BPA ask the Kittitas Conservation Trust (KCT) if it would be interested in an ownership role of this conservation property. Several years later, the protection of this property was realized, with KCT holding title to the land, BPA holding a permanent conservation easement over the property, and DOE's wetland mitigation requirement being satisfied. Management and maintenance of this property will be in keeping with the conditions specified as part of the acquisition process. This will ensure the legal requirements associated with the protection of this property continue to be met, and that the property's conservation values remain intact.

### **B. Purpose of management plan**

The purpose of this plan is to delineate management goals, actions, and responsibilities associated with protection of Eagle Bend. Management and maintenance of this property will be in keeping with the conditions specified as part of the acquisition process, ensuring the legal requirements associated with the protection of this property continue to be met, and that the property's conservation values remain intact. It is important to recognize, however, that natural areas such as Eagle Bend are dynamic, as is the surrounding human infrastructure and presence. Future management actions may need to be adjusted in response to changes occurring in and around the property.

## **II. Property Description**

### **A. Location**

The property is located on McDonald Road, off Lower Peoh Point Road in unincorporated Kittitas County, near Cle Elum, Washington. There are five parcels that have been combined into one single parcel totaling approximately 40.33 acres that comprise this preserve:

Kittitas County Parcel #

385135

Kittitas County Parcel Map #

20-16-31030-0009

For a complete legal description, see Appendix B. Statutory Warranty Deed.

5. Aquatic priority habitats within the property include instream and freshwater wetlands/fresh deep water. Connections from the ponds to the instream habitat of the Yakima River provide access to and from a variety of fish and wildlife habitat. The Yakima River and the portion of the property below ordinary high water is considered critical habitat for the Middle Columbia River summer-run steelhead distinct population segment and bull trout.

6. Protection of the existing aquatic and riparian habitats on the property allows for focus on recovering listed and at-risk species, as well as providing habitat for native wildlife and fish. The various biological and physical components found on the property provide space for individual and population growth; for food, water, light, minerals, and other nutritional or physiological requirements; cover or shelter; sites for breeding, reproduction, rearing of offspring, and migration. Protection of the property ensures it continues to contribute to open space, biodiversity, clean air and water, and scenic enjoyment.

### **III. Property Management Actions**

The proximity of this property to a major interstate and several county roads, as well as active agricultural fields and infrastructure generate specific ongoing management issues. In addition, the public accessibility of this property by both land and the adjacent Yakima River brings with it ongoing management challenges. These management issues must be addressed in keeping with the stipulation of the original acquisition agreement that this property continue to meet its wetland mitigation role.

#### **A. Wetland management**

As stated previously, the wetlands on the property satisfy a legal mitigation requirement as agreed to by BPA and DOE and no active management is planned. In order to ensure this requirement continues to be met, BPA has agreed to undertake annual monitoring of wetland conditions, and provide the results to DOE and KCT.

#### **B. Riparian forest management**

The riparian forest along the boundary with the Yakima River and fringing the wetland areas is, by its nature, dynamic. It is subject to seasonal flooding and wind events that over time will alter the composition and structure of the forest canopy and understory.

much more challenging than that of terrestrial species, and will likely require coordinated efforts with the Kittitas County Noxious Weed Board.



Figure 2 Canada thistle infestation along southern property boundary

**Species to monitor for new infestations:** While regular monitoring will be required indefinitely to quickly identify new invasive species occurrences, there are two species of particular concern on which to focus future monitoring efforts. These species are not yet known to occur on the Eagle Bend property, but the preserve's habitat and proximity to transmission vectors make it a viable candidate for infestation.

The bullfrog (*Rana catesbiana*) is found throughout the low elevations of Washington, both east and west of the Cascades. Much larger and aggressive than native frogs, bullfrogs are voracious predators, feeding on small amphibians (other frogs), reptiles (small snakes), as well as small birds. Their booming mating call is perhaps the most effective means of identifying their presence, as egg masses and tadpoles can be difficult to differentiate from other species.

Yellow flag iris (*Iris pseudacorus*) is a perennial, aquatic, herbaceous plant which grows 2 to 3 feet tall along shores in shallow water, including ponded areas. Rhizomes spread, forming large clumps, and if left unchecked can reduce the surface area of ponds and ditches by accreting sediment and essentially filling in the water body. Yellow flag iris is present, sometimes aggressively, in the irrigation system and ditches of Kittitas County. Given the connectivity of the Eagle Bend preserve to the KRD irrigation canal, as well as continual water flow entering the preserve from the agricultural fields across McDonald Road, monitoring for the presence this species should be an annual management activity.

#### IV. Management Action Cost Estimates

The following table indicates rough annual cost estimates for preserve management actions. True costs will vary from year to year based on conditions of the property

<b>Management Action</b>	<b>Annual Cost Estimate</b>
Wetland management	<b>\$0.00 (monitoring to be completed by BPA)</b>
Riparian forest management (hazard tree removal, access clearing)	<b>\$200</b>
Invasive species management (herbicide/tools, volunteer management)	<b>\$500</b>
Property maintenance (fences/gates, litter, volunteer management)	<b>\$300</b>
Public access and neighbor relations (meetings, signage)	<b>\$500</b>
Easement monitoring	<b>\$2100</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3600.00</b>

# Kittitas Conservation Trust Eagle Bend Preserve Annual Monitoring Report

## Part I. Property Information and Contacts

**Type of Conservation Interest:** Fee simple ownership with conservation easement held by the Bonneville Power Association

**Property Background:**

**County:** Kittitas

**Nearest city or town:** Cle Elum

**Acreage:** 40.33

**Current Owner/Contact:**

Kittitas Conservation Trust

Attn: Mitch Long, Executive Director

120 W. Pennsylvania Avenue, Suite 202

Roslyn, WA 98941

(509) 649-2951

**Date Acquired:** 12/31/2019

**Monitoring Interval:** Annual

**Date(s) of this monitoring visit:** March 5-6, 2020

**List those present at monitoring visit, including contact information:**

Lisa K. Younger (monitor)

Email: [lyounger32@yahoo.com](mailto:lyounger32@yahoo.com)

## Part II. Site Visit Report

**Landowner Report:**

A conversation with Mitch Long from the Kittitas Conservation Trust (KCT) took place prior to the monitoring visit. As the property was acquired by KCT only 3 months prior to this monitoring report, the staff are still in the process of developing their strategies and management activities. Some likely areas of activity include an annual trash cleanup, removal of the derelict duck blind, noxious weed control, and a neighborhood meeting to engage the community in managing and caring for the preserve. KCT understands the value of good relations with their neighbors, and recognizes that long-time residents in the area have a great deal of information to offer about the history and challenges of the

### **Part III. Narrative Summary**

This site visit occurred in early March with little to no snow on the ground. While chilly, the lack of leafed-out vegetation provided much easier access to many parts of the preserve than can be had later in the summer. This timing does limit the ability to identify noxious weeds, etc. so when possible, the timing of site visits should vary. As only 3 months had passed since KCT acquired the preserve, there were few changes to the property other than seasonal observations.

The water level in the pond is quite a bit lower than noted in the Baseline Report, as KRD has not yet turned on the irrigation system. This also allows for more thorough access to many areas of the preserve that are either underwater or boggy once the irrigation system is active. While water input to the pond from the irrigation ditch is less than in the summer, there is still strong outflow along the eastern boundary, through a culvert under McDonald Road, then running parallel to the road on the neighboring property, and returning to the preserve through another culvert under the road. The rather extreme tree/vegetation trimming that occurred along this boundary during the late winter does provide very clear access to this area of hydrologic activity. If possible, this could provide an opportunity for some additional monitoring of this area, perhaps photos or flow measurements several times during the next year or two before the vegetation grows back.

As noted above, trash blowing onto the preserve from the interstate will be a continuous challenge. Fortunately, the dense vegetation along the pond banks prevents the majority of the debris from reaching the water's edge. Early spring may be a prime time for planning trash/debris cleanup efforts. Songbirds were just beginning to return to the preserve, but waterfowl were abundant. Songbird species included red-winged blackbird, downy woodpecker, pileated woodpecker, American robin, Oregon junco, and black-capped chickadee. Waterfowl included great blue heron, a pair of Canada geese (possibly looking to nest on the northern berm), mallard (flock), hooded merganser (flock), common/Barrow's goldeneye (flock), and green-winged teal (flock). Other wildlife encountered include a large mule deer, and though not seen, the scent of skunk was very strong near the channel connecting the large pond to the Yakima River.

As this will be the first summer that KCT has ownership of the preserve, taking the opportunity to learn about the preserve will be critical. Seasonal observations of vegetation, wildlife, bird use, and noxious weeds are recommended, as are the "getting to know you" activities involving the local community, identified in the Landowner Report section of this report. In addition, understanding the hydrologic situation, particularly as it relates to both the irrigation diversion and the "loop" ditch/culvert system under McDonald Road will be important in identifying normal conditions vs those created by drought, flood, etc.

### **Part IV. Photodocumentation**

See Appendix A. Eagle Bend Preserve 2020 Monitoring Report Photodocumentation

See Appendix B. Map of Eagle Bend Preserve Photopoints

**Eagle Bend Preserve 2020 Monitoring Report**  
**Appendix A- Photodocumentation**



## Eagle Bend Preserve 2020 Monitoring Report Photodocumentation

Photos taken by: Lisa K. Younger, March 5-6, 2020  
GPS Coordinates in latitude-longitude



**Eagle Bend Preserve Photopoint #5a:** Southeast property corner. First photo taken due north, then clockwise 90 degrees each for remaining 3. Frame 1 of 4. GPS coordinates: 47.17494 -120.88905



**Eagle Bend Preserve Photopoint #5b:** Southeast property corner. First photo taken due north, then clockwise 90 degrees each for remaining 3. Frame 2 of 4. GPS coordinates: 47.17494 -120.88905



**Eagle Bend Preserve Photopoint #6a:** Northwest property corner at Yakima River. First photo due north, then clockwise 90 degrees each for remaining 3. Frame 1 of 4. GPS coordinates: 47.17939 -120.88905



**Eagle Bend Preserve Photopoint #6b:** Northwest property corner at Yakima River. First photo due north, then clockwise 90 degrees each for remaining 3. Frame 2 of 4. GPS coordinates: 47.17939 -120.88905



**Eagle Bend Preserve Photopoint #7a:** Northeast property corner at Yakima River. First photo due north, then clockwise 90 degrees each for remaining 3. Frame 1 of 4. GPS coordinates: 47.18267 - 120.89442



**Eagle Bend Preserve Photopoint #7b:** Northeast property corner at Yakima River. First photo due north, then clockwise 90 degrees each for remaining 3. Frame 2 of 4. GPS coordinates: 47.18267 -120.89442



**Eagle Bend Preserve Photopoint #8a:** Property corner at northern-most boundary with I-90. No boundary fence running north-south along this boundary line. First photo due north, then clockwise 90 degrees each for remaining 3. Frame 1 of 4. GPS coordinates: 47.17941 -120.89442



**Eagle Bend Preserve Photopoint #8b:** Property corner at northern-most boundary with I-90. No boundary fence running north-south along this boundary line. First photo due north, then clockwise 90 degrees each for remaining 3. Frame 2 of 4. GPS coordinates: 47.17941 -120.89442



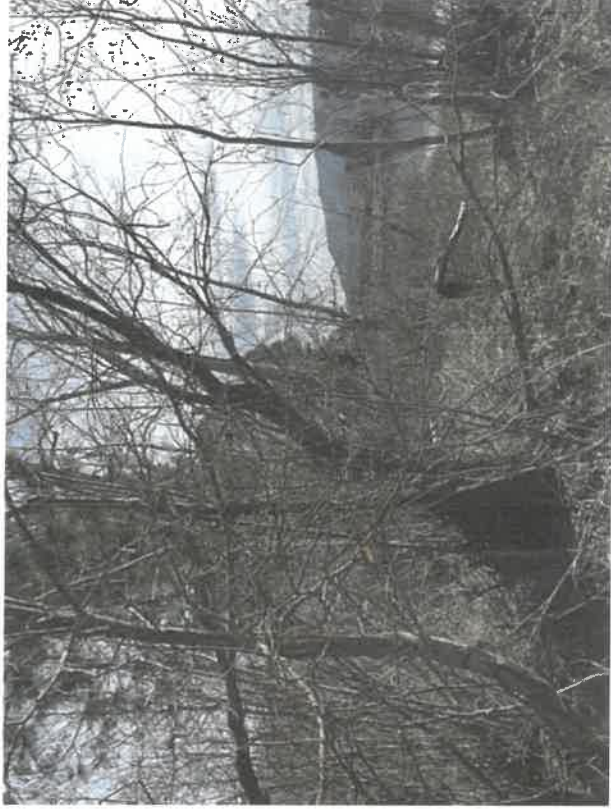
**Eagle Bend Preserve Photopoint #9a:** Property corner toward southern boundary with I-90. First photo due north, then clockwise 90 degrees each for remaining 3. Frame 1 of 4. GPS coordinates: 47.17607 -120.89067



**Eagle Bend Preserve Photopoint #9b:** Property corner toward southern boundary with I-90. First photo due north, then clockwise 90 degrees each for remaining 3. Frame 2 of 4. GPS coordinates: 47.17607 -120.89067



**Eagle Bend Preserve Photopoint #10a:** Property boundary at channel connecting large pond to Yakima River. First photo due north, then clockwise 90 degrees each for remaining 3. Frame 1 of 4. GPS coordinates: 47.18011 -120.89137



**Eagle Bend Preserve Photopoint #10b:** Property boundary at channel connecting large pond to Yakima River. First photo due north, then clockwise 90 degrees each for remaining 3. Frame 2 of 4. GPS coordinates: 47.18011 -120.89137



**Eagle Bend Preserve Photopoint #11a:** Property near bend of McDonald Road. First photo due north then clockwise 90 degrees each for remaining 3. Frame 1 of 4. GPS coordinates: 47.17871 - 120.88905



**Eagle Bend Preserve Photopoint #11b:** Property near bend of McDonald Road. First photo due north then clockwise 90 degrees each for remaining 3. Frame 2 of 4. GPS coordinates: 47.17871 - 120.88905



**Eagle Bend Preserve Photopoint #12a:** Property boundary along McDonald Road. Frame 1 of 3. GPS coordinates: 47.17814 - 120.88924



**Eagle Bend Preserve Photopoint #12b:** Property boundary along McDonald Road. Frame 2 of 3. GPS coordinates: 47.17814 - 120.88924

**NO TRESPASSING**  
VIOLATORS  
PROSECUTED





**Eagle Bend Preserve Photopoint #13b:** Property corner near southern boundary with I-90. First photo due north, then clockwise 90 degrees each for remaining three. Frame 2 of 4. GPS coordinates: 47.17513 -120.89006



**Eagle Bend Preserve Photopoint #13c:** Property corner near southern boundary with I-90. First photo due north, then clockwise 90 degrees each for remaining three. Frame 3 of 4. GPS coordinates: 47.17513 -120.89006



**Eagle Bend Preserve Photopoint #15a:** Property corner at fence corner along boundary with I-90. First photo due north then clockwise 90 degrees each for remaining 3. Frame 1 of 4. GPS coordinates: 47.17825 -120.89260



**Eagle Bend Preserve Photopoint #15b:** Property corner at fence corner along boundary with I-90. First photo due north then clockwise 90 degrees each for remaining 3. Frame 2 of 4. GPS coordinates: 47.17825 -120.89260



**Eagle Bend Preserve Photopoint #16a:** Property corner at fence corner near boundary with I-90. First photo due north then clockwise 90 degrees each for remaining 3. Frame 1 of 4. GPS coordinates: 47.17817 -120.89269



**Eagle Bend Preserve Photopoint #16b:** Property corner at fence corner near boundary with I-90. First photo due north then clockwise 90 degrees each for remaining 3. Frame 2 of 4. GPS coordinates: 47.17817 -120.89269



**Eagle Bend Preserve Photopoint #17:** Old duck blind along north bank of larger pond. GPS coordinates: 47.17995 -120.89128



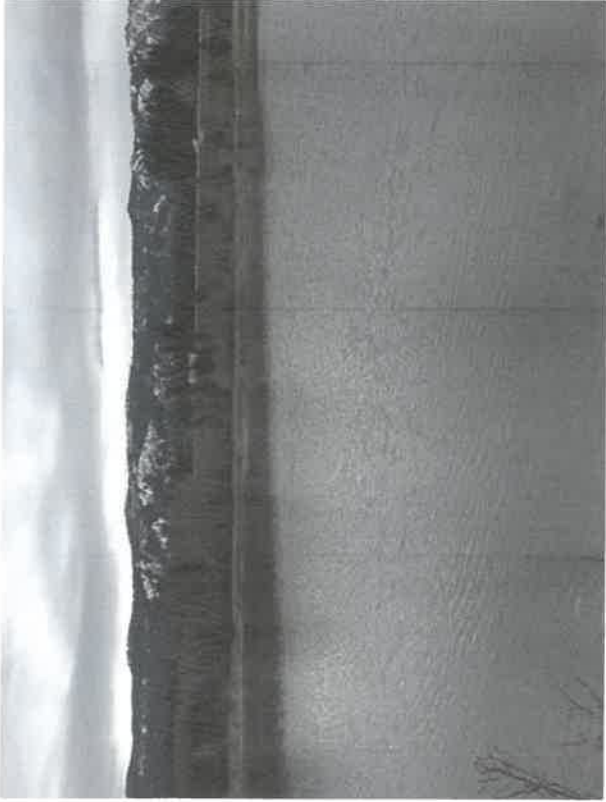
**Eagle Bend Preserve Photopoint #18:** Culvert under McDonald Road at southeast end of larger pond. GPS coordinates: 47.17714 -120.88927



**Eagle Bend Preserve Photopoint #19c:** Smaller of two ponds on the property. Frame 3 of 3. GPS coordinates: 47.18149 -120.89440



**Eagle Bend Preserve Photopoint #19c (iPad Observation Point #4):** Smaller of two ponds on the property. Frame 3 of 3. GPS coordinates: 47.18149 -120.89440



**Eagle Bend Preserve Photopoint #21c:** Panoramic view of large pond from north berm along Yakima River. First photo taken toward east end of pond, then pan right for remaining two. Frame 2 of 3. GPS coordinates: 47.17029 -121.01441.



**Eagle Bend Preserve Photopoint #21d:** Panoramic view of large pond from north berm along Yakima River. First photo taken toward east end of pond, then pan right for remaining two. Frame 3 of 3. GPS coordinates: 47.17029 -121.01441.



***Eagle Bend Preserve Photopoint #23b:*** Old irrigation gate/structure along southern property boundary. Frame 2 of 2.  
GPS coordinates: 47.17582 -120.89038