

October 6, 2006

To: Mark Walker
Director of Public Affairs
Northwest Power & Conservation Council
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Portland, Oregon 97204-1348
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or email comments@nwcouncil.org

Dear Council Members:

This letter is in regards to the draft 2007 BPA project Council recommendation list. I am commenting on two specific projects: Lapwai Creek 2002-070-00 and Big Canyon Creek 1999-015-00 which are not included on the Council's draft recommendation list. Both projects are sponsored by the Nez Perce Soil and Water Conservation District.

I am requesting the Council to include these projects on the final recommendation list to BPA. Through these programs, the Nez Perce Soil and Water Conservation District has made a truly positive impact on the fisheries and natural resources fields. They have worked closely with the Nez Perce Tribe, the Palouse-Clearwater Environmental Institute Watersheds Program, and other organizations to participate in the Hutton Junior Fisheries Biology Program. The Hutton Program, sponsored by the American Fisheries Society, is a summer mentoring program for high school students. It is designed to stimulate interest in careers in fisheries science and management among groups underrepresented in the fisheries professions, including minorities and women.

The Nez Perce Soil and Water Conservation District has participated in the Hutton Program since 2004. Students they have mentored have worked on both the Lapwai Creek and Big Canyon Creek Projects. As a result of this district's participation in the program, they have helped two students to successfully enter the fisheries and natural resources fields. They provided exceptional hands-on experience and mentoring throughout their participation.

In turn, the students have helped contribute to the projects, with no monetary cost to the projects themselves. Since the Hutton Program provides each student with a \$3,000 scholarship, the burden of compensating the students for their work will never fall on the Nez Perce Soil and Water Conservation District or any specific project. In addition, the mentors from the tribe receive further assistance to complete projects that may not have been possible without the help of the Hutton scholars.

We look forward to the Nez Perce Soil and Water Conservation District's participation in the 2007 Hutton Program. We hope that the Lapwai Creek and Big Canyon Creek projects are included in the draft recommendation list, so that their participation may be possible. If these two important projects are continued, it will provide the opportunity for this district and other organizations to provide invaluable experiences to more young people and to increase diversity in the fisheries and natural resources fields.

Sincerely,

Danielle Hawkins
Hutton Program Coordinator
American Fisheries Society