



THE CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF THE WARM SPRINGS RESERVATION OF OREGON

NATURAL RESOURCES  
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Mr. Mark Walker  
Director, Public Affairs  
Northwest Power and Conservation Council  
851 S.W. Sixth Avenue, Suite 1100  
Portland, Oregon 97204

Dear Mr. Walker and Council Members:

The Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon thanks you for the opportunity to comment on the draft recommendations for fish and wildlife program funding for Fiscal Years 2007 through 2009 and submits the following for your consideration.

As an initial matter, I would direct your attention to the comments filed by our Chairman, along with the Chairs of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, the Nez Perce Tribe, and the Yakama Nation. Those comments address broad program level issues of utmost importance, and I would urge you to give them your most serious consideration. They speak to the integrity of the overall Council process and the efficacy of the fish and wildlife program. You will see in those comments that the Tribes have grave concerns. That said, the comments submitted here speak most directly to how your draft recommendations address project proposals submitted by the Warm Springs Tribe for work in the Deschutes, Fifteenmile Creek, Hood, and John Day subbasins.

The Warm Springs Tribe is grateful for the hard work of the Oregon Council members and their staff in organizing the process for prioritizing the proposals. While the local review and OSPIT processes had their difficulties and could be a burden, the goals of transparency and fairness were met in our estimation. Given the limited resources available, we do believe that the draft recommendations for the Deschutes, Fifteenmile Creek, Hood, and John Day offer reasonable and sound packages for Bonneville funding. You should confirm these as your final recommendations.

I am very pleased that we appear to have averted a disastrous situation in the John Day subbasin.

The work that we each did to have Bonneville reconsider its capitalization policy has produced just enough margin to allow the highest rated projects in the John Day to move forward. The modest increases to the highly rated Oxbow and Forrest projects allow us to keep pace with

increasing costs, and to have some seed money available to leverage other sources. We may actually be able to move from the care-taker status we've been in recently to doing some active management to begin to realize the potential of these key properties. Also, we've avoided a shutdown of the Pine Creek wildlife area – the highest rated wildlife project in the John Day. The draft recommendation will provide enough funding for us to remain at about status quo management level. Our cornerstone watershed project in the John Day can continue to meet the increasing demand we have with local landowners if your draft recommendations are accepted.

We realize that after the highest rated, ISRP “fundable” projects for the John Day are funded at reasonable levels, that there is no funding remaining for the next highest priority projects. Over time we must find a way to support these worthy projects. The comments of the four Tribal Chairs speak to that issue.

Similarly, we believe the draft recommendations for the Deschutes, Fifteenmile Creek, and Hood subbasins are the best we can expect given limited resources. We are watching very closely to ensure that the Tribes' bull-trout and lamprey projects in the Deschutes continue to be funded by Bonneville. It is extremely unfortunate that funding limitations have set the fish and wildlife program so far back in its attention to these species basinwide. These two Warm Springs Tribe projects met scientific review standards, were prioritized locally, deal with key species in the recently adopted subbasin plans and present no “in lieu” funding concerns. They will be important projects to preserve and build from as we find the resources to give these species the regard the adopted fish and wildlife program, the Act, and twenty years of implementation history requires.

In closing, again, I thank the Oregon Council office for its dedication to making the Oregon prioritization process fair and transparent under difficult circumstances. We urge the full Council to make the draft recommendations proposed for the John Day, Fifteenmile Creek, Deschutes and Hood subbasins its final recommendations for funding, and then to work with us to assist Bonneville in quickly executing the contracts for these proposals.

Regards,

Robert A. Brunoe  
General Manager  
Branch of Natural Resources  
Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation

Cc: Bruce Jim  
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