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**Grant Soil and Water Conservation District**

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July 5, 2006

Mr. Mark Walker, Director of Public Affairs  
Northwest Power and Conservation Council  
851 S. W. Sixth Ave, Suite 1100  
Portland, OR 97204

2006010008

**Subject: Support for ODFW Sponsored Mainstem, Middle Fork, John Day River Fish Habitat Enhancement Project # 198402100**

To Whom it May Concern:

The Grant Soil and Water Conservation District (District) strongly supports the subject program and believes the action to eliminate BPA funding will seriously restrict or eliminate the program. The District is very concerned regarding the ISRP rating for the subject project and the subsequent OSPIT recommendation of no FY07-09 funding for the project.

This program was initiated as an early conservation effort in the Upper John Day Basin and has effectively implemented riparian protection for over 20 years. The decision to not fund this program will effectively end it. Such a decision will be one that all conservation partners concerned with anadromous and resident fish recovery in the basin will regret.

Protecting riparian resources has been supported by every group the District has toured with in this basin since 1989. The program has been applauded by all fish habitat and watershed restoration supporters as the number of protected river miles have grown over these many years.

The District finds the ISRP comment on the budget spreadsheet referring to the project as a "study" confusing and should be revisited. The District has been familiar with the program since it's inception two decades ago; it was never considered to be a "study" by any parties involved. The overwhelming evidence, including the models used to derive the subbasin plan, supports the benefit of and need for riparian protection as a watershed restoration and fish habitat treatment.

The District has prioritized fish passage, water quality and uplands restoration in the Upper John Day Basin. This ongoing work, plus the work completed by other basin conservation partners, effectively complements the benefits of the ODFW Fish Habitat Enhancement program. The significant BPA investment in riparian leases and protective agreements will be sacrificed if this valuable program is lost.

Thank you for your consideration of our position and your support for continuing the program through BPA funding.

Best Regards,

Kenneth Delano  
District Manager

OCT 02 2006

cc: Russ Powel, ODFW Habitat Biologist

FY 07-09 Project Funding Review: Comment on Council's Draft Funding Recommendations -019