

North Fork John Day Watershed Council

PO Box 444 • Long Creek, Oregon • 541.421.8018 • nfjdw@ortelco.net

Mark Walker
Director Public Affairs
Northwest Power & Conservation Council
851 SW 6th Ave, Suite 100
Portland, Oregon 97204-1348

2006010084

Dear Mr. Walker,

The North Fork John Day Watershed Council (NFJDWC) has reviewed the NPCC's draft BPA funding recommendations for proposed 2007-09 fish and wildlife projects and wishes to provide comment at this time. In general, we are disappointed to see that numerous valuable and beneficial projects within the John Day Basin appear to not be recommended for funding. We are especially concerned that two essential anadromous habitat enhancement projects, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation's (CTUIR) BPA Project #2000-031-00 and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's (ODFW) BPA Project #198402100, remain unfunded.

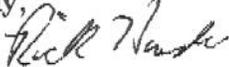
The CTUIR is a member of the NFJDWC and functions as the primary entity, partnering with private landowners to restore anadromous fish habitat in the upper watershed of the North Fork John Day Basin. This project also works closely with the Umatilla National Forest to integrate public-owned headwater sanctuary improvements with private land restoration efforts. The CTUIR's habitat project was ranked sixth by the John Day Basin's local review group and was recommended for funding by the Independent Scientific Review Panel. Yet, this important project, which we believe is a critical component to recovery of Endangered Species Act (ESA) listed stocks in the basin, remains unfunded.

ODFW's habitat project was ranked seventh and has a strong presence in the lower and mid portions of the North Fork John Day Basin. This project has successfully been securing landowner participation and implementing habitat projects throughout the basin for 22 years. The results of their efforts are evident, and the project is highly respected by the public. The project has numerous easements with private landowners, many of which are not likely to be maintained after considerable BPA Funds have previously been invested into these properties. We feel this project is also significant to recovery of ESA listed species. Vast areas, designated as high priority for habitat restoration in the John Day Subbasin Plan, will not be addressed within the North Fork John Day Basin if these two projects remain unfunded.

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The amount of BPA funds being allocated to the John Day Basin is less than ideal. However, the NFJDWC was hopeful that the NPCC would uphold the prioritization process as funds became available. It was our understanding that recent reallocation of expense projects to capital would free up a considerable amount of funding to salvage other high ranking projects. This is why we supported combining BPA Projects #199801700 and #199306600. However, the two habitat projects mentioned above remain unfunded. We urge you to restore funds to these two habitat projects. Loss of these projects will thwart landowner trust of government funded activities and impact recovery of critical habitat and anadromous fish stocks within the basin.

Sincerely,



Rick Henslee
Chairman
North Fork John Day Watershed Council