From: Don Johnson
Sent: Tuesday, October 10, 2006 10:21 AM
To: Baugh, Zenobia
Subject: Project 200726100

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

Dear Mark,

I was only made available of this decision today, but would like you to consider the following comments:
Each year many millions of dollars are spent in efforts to save, stabilize, and/or rebuild salmonid populations. Much of this money over the years has been on dam modifications, hatcheries, predator control, and other attempts at bioengineering; most has been to no avail.

Project 200726100, "Habitat effectiveness survey of existing, historical, and potential beaver habitat in the Upper Columbia Basin, Methow Subbasin", can be funded for a few thousand dollars. The objective is to allow natural systems to heal and improve salmonid habitat in an ecosystem of special concern. Such opportunities have a potential cost:benefit ratio that should not be disregarded.

Please consider the following points:
* The project area involves a stream with three listed species all of which have been targeted for habitat improvement.
* The fish habitat of the area historically used pools created by numerous large beaver dams throughout the system.
* There is an ongoing Forest Service relocation survey in the project area that needs this type of information. Currently there is no identified source of funding for this agency program.
* The project is low-impact.
* Beaver are a keystone species that provide critical large-scale improvements to fish habitat. Current efforts to relocate them have been only marginally successful.
* Beaver dam habitats were listed as limiting features for anadromous fisheries.
* Unlike other fisheries habitat enhancement projects, this project will ameliorate the effects of an ongoing drought, because beaver dams can attenuate water tables, as well as directly benefit smolt.
* An extensive set of references documented the need for this project, however the project was categorized as a Wildlife Enhancement project until being changed back to a fisheries project.

Thank you.
Sincerely,

Dr. Don Johnson
Certified Fisheries Scientist
Carlton WA