

October 6, 2006

Mark Walker  
Director of Public Affairs  
Northwest Power & Conservation Council  
851 SW 6th Avenue, Suite 1100  
Portland, Oregon 97204-1348

Dear Mr. Walker:

The undersigned organizations and individuals are writing to encourage the Northwest Power & Conservation Council to fully fund two requests submitted by the Kittitas County Conservation District (KCCD) for the Manastash Project.

The Manastash Project represents a collaborative effort among farmers and ranchers, state and federal agencies, and environmental representatives, to restore Manastash Creek, an important tributary to the Yakima River in Kittitas County, Washington. The Project is intended to screen water diversions, eliminate passage barriers, and add to existing stream flows, all while ensuring irrigated agriculture and water right holders on the creek remain whole. If successful, the Project will open up access to approximately 30 miles of high-quality habitat within the Wenatchee National Forest for mid-Columbia steelhead.

Currently, there are five major unscreened diversions on Manastash Creek, in addition to an abandoned dam spanning the channel that – while deteriorating – partially blocks passage. Of equal importance, flows in the creek are at times inadequate for fish migration during crucial spring months of steelhead spawning, and the creek dries up entirely during the summer and fall. KCCD's funding requests addressed each of these concerns. Although broken into two requests, they are intertwined to a degree that they are properly considered one effort: Screening and Passage (2003-001-00) and Instream Flow Enhancement (2007-002-00). The Council has preliminarily recommended against any funds for Instream Flow Enhancement, while Screening and Passage does not appear on the Council's spreadsheet of draft recommendations.<sup>1</sup>

As the Council no doubt recognizes, adding flow, removing barriers, and screening diversions are all actions that have the potential to restore steelhead populations in the creek. In addition, the Council's recommendations would appear to be at odds with the Manastash Project's ongoing discussions with decision makers at Bonneville Power Administration. Perhaps more importantly, the Council should consider the substantial progress that has occurred since talks began among the stakeholders in 2001, including major on-the-ground construction slated to occur over the next year.

Today, design plans are complete for reconstructing the Barnes Road and Keach-Jensen diversions to provide for screening and fish passage. Design plans of a single screened

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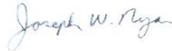
<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.nwcouncil.org/fw/budget/2007/draftrec/province.xls>

diversion for future consolidation of the Manastash, Hatfield, Reed, and Anderson diversions are approaching completion. Moreover, permits have either been issued or are pending for the Barnes Road and Keach-Jensen diversions and applications have been submitted for the Manastash screening / consolidations. Construction will get underway once an agreement with the Bonneville Power Administration concerning long-term ownership and maintenance of the facilities is completed.

The Project will also have the ability to measure its success based in part on the ongoing Yakima Species Interaction Study (YSIS). The YSIS maintains a significant level of baseline fishery data both above and below Project sites. This long-term monitoring will continue through the life of the Manastash Project, providing an excellent source from which to compare conditions before and after the Project's completion.

The diverse interests involved in the Manastash Project have worked together for years to achieve a shared goal of stream restoration, and – with adequate resources – they will soon be able to see that hard work come to fruition. We strongly urge the Council fully support their efforts.

Sincerely,



Joe Ryan  
President, Washington Environmental Council



Representative Bill Hinkle  
13<sup>th</sup> Legislative District



Mark Moore  
Chair, Kittitas County Conservation District



Dave Duncan  
Manastash Ditch Water Association



Dale Dyk  
Hatfield Ditch Diverters



Larry Bland  
Keach-Jensen Ditch Diverters



Clarence Harrell  
Reed Ditch Diverters



Brent Møllergaard  
Barnes Ditch Diverters



Chuck Steward  
Keach-Jensen Ditch Diverters

Ray Newkirk ss

Ray Newkirk  
Project Manager, Washington State Department of Ecology

\*Email authorization to sign for Ray Newkirk.