



# METHOW SALMON RECOVERY FOUNDATION

SOLUTIONS WITH LASTING VALUE

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October 6, 2006

Mark Walker  
Director of Public Affairs  
Northwest power and Conservation council  
851 S.W. Sixth Avenue, Suite 1100  
Portland, Or 97204

REF: Power Council Recommendations

Dear Mr. Walker:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the Council's draft recommendations for funding to BPA on the FY 2007-2009 projects. Methow Salmon Recovery Foundation has entered into a partnership with The Bureau of reclamation to assist in identifying and implementing habitat improvement projects within the Methow basin.

I am concerned by the omission of two projects submitted by our organization for funding consideration. The project applications sought funding to rehabilitate the diversion structures owned by the MVID on both the Twisp and Methow Rivers. Both projects have previously been reviewed through the Lead Entity Project and have received grant funding awards through the SRFB based on Citizen Committee recommendations, ISRP review, and consistency with the Upper Columbia Recovery Planning efforts.

I would like to emphasize that MSRF identified the projects based on the recommended actions developed by the Methow Instream Habitat Restoration Project team and have been favorably reviewed by the ISRP and the local citizen committee established for the Lead Entity process. MSRF has been retained by the Bureau and by the MVID to implement the project and manage all received funding. Our primary focus in undertaking these projects is to address the impacts caused by continued operation of the two structures. Omission of these projects from the Council's recommendations effectively prevents MSRF from addressing these habitat impacts.

### **200717200 - Methow Valley Irrigation District West Diversion Dam Replacement**

The project seeks funding to move the POD upstream by installing a new concrete diversion headworks, realigning a portion of the West Canal intake and constructing a permanent channel-spanning natural rock roughened channel permanent diversion. The existing diversion dam on the Twisp River requires annual construction of a late summer push-up dam, which hinders upstream migration of Chinook, steelhead, and bull trout, or even blocks migration completely during exceptionally dry years. The proposed project will eliminate the need for the existing push up dam and will provide

PO Box 756 Winthrop, WA 98862 - Phone (509) 422-0300 - Cell (509) 429-1232  
Fax (509) 422-1766 - e-mail [msrf@communitynet.org](mailto:msrf@communitynet.org)

improvement in flow for this particular reach. The existing diversion can divert 30 cfs and the new structure will reduce irrigation withdrawals to 11 cfs plus a few additional cfs for operation of the fish return.

The project received \$80,000 in grant funding from SRFB in Round 6 based on Citizen and ISRP review. BPA funding is needed to leverage the grant funds already awarded.

The BPA application submitted by MSRF requested an additional \$275,500 in funding from BPA for the MVID West project. This money was to be matched with additional grant funding requested from the Tributary Habitat Fund.

The project design team is continuing to work in consultation with representatives from NOAA Fisheries and WA DFW to streamline the project to achieve the desired benefits with a reduced public funding need. We are confident that the project goals can be met during the next construction season if BPA funding is awarded and encourage reconsideration of your funding recommendations.

#### **200725100 Methow Valley Irrigation District East Diversion Dam Replacement**

This project proposes to remove the present channel-spanning irrigation diversion dam and replace it with a reinforced earth and rock wing dam parallel to the thalweg. This project will also re-open 1/4 mile of side channel habitat blocked by a pushup berm. The ISRP review stated that "Overall, this is an excellent "on-the-ground" project to improve habitat and fish. This proposal deserves a high priority.

The project has received \$300,000 in grant funding from SRFB in Round 6 based on Citizen and ISRP review. BPA funding is needed to leverage the grant funds already awarded.

The BPA application requested \$617,400 in funding support for the MVID East project. This number was based on preliminary project designs and budget estimates. The design has been reviewed through a quarterly coordinating process with representatives of WA Fish and Wildlife, US Fish and Wildlife and NOAA-Fisheries to identify and address engineering, construction, passage and cost considerations. Based on this process, revisions in project design have reduced the total construction estimate to \$680,000. A partial funding award from BPA in the amount of **\$380,000** would allow completion of the project.

The Power Council's recommendations to BPA did not appear to include any review comments from the local or provisional ranking completed or past regional prioritization and support for these projects. The recommendations also failed to identify the \$380,000 in previously obligated funds for the projects that will remain stranded unless matching funds are obligated. These omissions undermine the efforts of the Upper Columbia Recovery Plan and the review process completed by the Lead Entities in Round 6.

As with the decision on the MVID West project, I would like to re-emphasize that MSRF identified the projects based on the recommended actions developed by the Methow Instream Habitat Restoration Project team and have been favorably reviewed by the ISRP and the local citizen committee established for the Lead Entity process. MSRF has been retained by the Bureau and by the MVID to implement the project and manage all received funding. Our primary focus in undertaking these projects is to address the impacts caused by continued operation of the two structures. Omission of these projects from the Council's recommendations effectively prevents MSRF from addressing these habitat impacts.

I would like to urge the Council to reconsider the omission of both of the MVID projects and provide recommendations supporting funding award. I recognize that the funding totals requested for all projects within the Cascade Columbia Province is not available but would ask the Council to re-evaluate the limited award recommendations for the Methow Basin to include these important projects.

MSRF has submitted separate applications for four other projects: Elbow Coulee Restoration; Fender Mill Restoration; Methow Riparian Enhancement; and Methow Complexity Programmatic. We would like to thank the Council for the positive recommendation on the Programmatic application. Based on initial reviews through the SRFB and Tributary HCP programs it appears that funding will be secured for both the Elbow Coulee Restoration and Fender Mill Restoration projects.

We are disappointed that the Methow Riparian project did not receive positive recommendations as the project would provide significant benefit to existing and proposed easement projects secured with public funding support. MSRF will continue seeking funds for this project and would look forward to any funding consideration that may be available through the Council review process.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

Chris Johnson  
MSRF, President