

From: Tim Quast [mailto:timquast@modernir.com]
Sent: Tuesday, October 03, 2006 11:51 AM
To: Baugh, Zenobia
Subject: FY07-09

Mark Walker
Director of Public Affairs
Northwest Power & Conservation Council
851 SW 6th Avenue, Suite 1100
Portland, Oregon 97204-1348
RE: FY07-09 Budget

Dear Mark:

My family owned the JD Ranch on the Burnt River from 1969 to 2001 in what I think you'd call the Snake River/Hell's Canyon sub-basin (John Day watershed) and still has a few riparian-straddling acres there. I'll note these general concerns with the budget:

1. The absence of any fiscal provision whatsoever for legal disputes with landowners about water and property rights. Keep in mind that water rights in most of these areas well predate the BPA or any federal management and administrative agency. Should you encounter opposition, no fiscal provision exists to defend or advance the agenda.

2. I find weak any budgetary line item involving irrigation systems premised on anadromous fish as the primary species (though I appreciate that 839(6) of the Act singles out anadromous fish). Anadromous fish by definition move upstream from saltwater to freshwater. I think it's lazy to propose fish-easing modifications to irrigation systems on the basis of the needs of anadromous fish. If there's a need, identify the deficiency and the harmed species. I see far too much money lumped broadly under the anadromous catchall. That's not good science or good budgeting.

3. Why is so much spent on land acquisition? Why is a power-generating operation like the BPA buying beautiful ranches in the John Day watershed and various other places? Why are cattle being removed and what is the connection between bovines in Burns and the purpose the Northwest Power Act and its associated proviso to protect, mitigate and enhance fish and wildlife ecologies effected by power generation? In fact, much more time and effort should be spent, seems to me, explaining what benefits substantiate these vast expenditures. Where is the evidence that these monies are accomplishing the purpose of offsetting harmful effects of hydroelectric power generation on species?

4. If these items above aren't considered, the public may begin to view the BPA, which operates like a power generator, but which is in fact a federal agency, and its associated organizations as a giant money-laundering scheme for converting productive private property into public wilderness. Because without better support, it sort of looks that way. There's nothing wrong with wilderness, but this methodology for getting to it seems rather dodgy. Anecdotally, I think it's curious that not a single person on the NPCC council has any more than a smattering of knowledge about farms and ranches and the impact of massive regulatory bodies on the farm/ranch ecosystem. Most are career politicians it appears.

Sincerely,

Tim Quast
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