



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Malheur
National
Forest

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Date: April 25, 2016

Henry Lorenzen, Chair
Northwest Power and Conservation Council
851 SW 6th Avenue, Suite 1100
Portland, OR 97204-1348
hlorenzen@nwcouncil.org

RE: Support for the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs John Day River Watershed Restoration Strategy (Project #2007-397-00).

Dear Mr. Lorenzen,

On behalf of the Malheur National Forest Aquatics Program, I would like to provide comment and support for the Tribes John Day River Watershed Restoration Strategy. The John Day Basin is recognized as a restoration priority by the U.S. Forest Service, and the Tribe has proven itself to be a reliable and knowledgeable partner for collaborative, large-scale restoration work in the basin.

In response to some of the comments of the Independent Scientific Review Panel (ISRP) I would like to provide some additional information and clarification. In 2010 the Warm Springs Tribe entered into a partnership (5 year Master Participating Agreement; 5/6/2010) to facilitate Aquatic Restoration work on public lands within the John Day Basin administered by the USFS. Again this agreement was put in place to facilitate collaboration and cooperatively implement projects that are mutually beneficial to the parties that enhance and restore habitat within the John Day Basin. These projects are designed primarily for anadromous and resident fisheries conditions that lead toward recovery of Threatened and Endangered Species and potentially sustainable and harvestable levels. National Forests included in the agreement were the Ochoco, Umatilla, Wallowa-Whitman and Malheur National Forests. The Agreement was renewed based on its success for another 5 years in 11/19/2015.

It is my understanding that the John Day River Watershed Restoration Strategy was developed specifically to prioritize and distribute funds being administered by the Tribe in a more defined and transparent process. During the development of strategy many meetings occurred soliciting information from partners and stake holders. USDA Forest Service (Region 6) developed a Aquatic Restoration Strategy (2005) of which was incorporated into the tribes Strategy as well as a later developed John Day Basin Aquatics Restoration Strategy(2009) (Strategy Appendices; Page 93). More site specifically watershed action plans from three of the National Forests were also incorporated into the strategy.



There was a comment by the ISRP in relation to Forest Plan Revision. For better or worse the Blue Mountains have been in Forest Plan Revision since 2003. Because of the lengthy process forest plan revision has been challenging. There has been a fair amount of coordination between the tribe and the USFS on plan revision as part of our Government to Government coordination obligations. In relation to management direction of riparian areas and aquatic habitat I don't expect any major changes coming out of Plan Revision. There may be some minor changes in key watersheds but the theme will remain consistent and the Forests will continue to manage for the recovery of Threatened and Endangered Species and Water Quality.

As a member of the John Day Basin Working Group and a representative of the Tribes Science and Stakeholder TAC I would like to express my support to the Tribes effort to consolidate a document that provides a defined and transparent process to administer their funds, and the work that they are supporting and implementing within the Basin.

Sincerely,

/s/ Steve Namitz;
Malheur National Forest
Fisheries Program Manager and
John Day Basin Restoration Coordinator
For the Blue Mountain Forests

Cc:

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