

John Morris
Clark Morris Ranch
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Henry Lorenzen, Chair
Northwest Power and Conservation Council
through Erik Merrill, Manager Independent Scientific Review Panel

RE: REVIEW OF JOHN DAY HABITAT ENHANCEMENT IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY (#2007-397-00)

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL ONLY TO emerrill@nwcouncil.org

Dear Mr. Lorenzen:

My name is John Morris and I am writing to you today to express my concerns with the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs (Tribes) proposed Watershed Restoration Strategy. In addition to being a life-long resident of Grant County, I am a landowner who works with local agencies on many different conservation projects, I served as a director of the Grant Soil and Water Conservation District for 21 years, and was a professional fish and wildlife biologist with the Malheur National Forest and Prineville District Bureau of Land Management.

After being involved with just about every aspect of the John Day basin fish and wildlife conservation program, I can state that successful working relationships with landowners and implementing important projects is more than spending obscene amounts of money on pretty publications:

- Money doesn't buy credibility in Grant County and without the value of your word it doesn't matter how much funding you control, you still won't have access to the most important properties in the basin.
- Just because you're doing projects and spending money doesn't mean that you are working on the most important places for fish and wildlife or in the areas most needing improvement.
- Philosophical approaches are fine for meeting rooms but mean little when implementing programs on working lands with people who have to produce something of value in order to sustain their livelihood.
- Most landowners in critical habitat areas cannot afford the cost contributions (i.e., water sales, whole floodplain restoration, land reserves) that the Tribes are promoting or want to commit to such grandiose schemes due to the substantial interference with a working landscape. Clearly, Tribal claims that their strategy is prepared for landowners are false since most of the project prioritizations exceed what is acceptable.

What made the John Day conservation program successful over the last 40 years was the dedication of local people, who have an actual stake in the outcome of not only the conservation projects but how others benefit from those projects and how the actual programs are conducted. Fundamentally, implementation focused on projects that were balance between the needs of the resource and those of the landowners.

The Tribes proposed plan is a serious departure from what made our long-standing efforts in this basin so successful and is potentially damaging to all the other local interests. Particularly as a relative late-comer to the John Day basin program I would have suspected a somewhat more respectful attitude to the other agencies rather than presenting a plan that suggests clearly that the interest of the Tribes is to direct everyone else's work and hold landowners hostage that desire to do project work until the grandiose philosophical schemes of a few disconnected biologists are implemented.

For these and a multitude of other reasons, I request that the NPPC recommend that BPA deny funding to implement the Tribes' proposal.

Sincerely,

/s/ John Morris

John Morris, Owner
Clark Morris Ranch

cc: Grant County Court
GSWCD