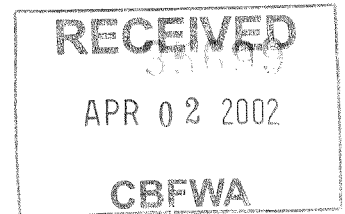


*"...to sustain & improve the Hood River Watershed through education, cooperation, & stewardship"*

Hood River Watershed Group  
2990 Experiment Station Drive  
Hood River, Oregon 97031  
541-386-2275



March 27, 2002

Tom Iverson  
Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Authority  
2501 S.W. 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue Suite 200  
Portland, OR 97201

RE: Innovative Grant Proposal to Evaluate and Apply Undershot Horizontal Fish Screen at Eliot Diversion --Farmers Irrigation District

Dear Mr. Iverson:

We are writing to voice our strong support for the Farmers Irrigation District (FID) proposal to apply and test the undershot fish screen technology in the Hood River Valley. The Hood River Watershed Group is a forum of landowners, irrigation districts, business, citizens and agencies involved in agriculture and natural resource use in the Hood River Valley. We prepared a watershed assessment and a Watershed Action Plan that is consistent with and compliments the goals of Hood River plans and projects developed under the Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Program. Our members are involved in cooperative habitat and water quality improvements completed or in progress thanks to a variety of local, state and federal funding as well as BPA dollars.

Despite years of effort and costly feasibility and engineering design work, resolution of fish passage and sediment problems at Eliot and Coe diversions has been stalled by site challenges, i.e., extreme sediment and bedload movement. The Eliot Branch is a perfect location to test the undershot screen given high bedload and minimal aquatic life due to recent debris torrents. We are confident that this proposal will lead to a timely and superior fish passage solution at Coe diversion, which is identified as a priority in our Watershed Action Plan to protect listed bull trout. This proposal will also foster greater cooperation and collaboration among Hood River Valley irrigation districts to benefit resource protection. Thank you for considering our support in your review of the FID proposal. If you have questions, please call our Coordinator Holly Coccoli at 541.386.2275.

Sincerely,

Chuck Gehling, Chairman  
Hood River Watershed Group

Cc: Jerry Bryan, Farmers Irrigation District  
Brian Conners, Middle Fork Irrigation District