Supporting Stakeholders

Landowners

Rolland Holeman
Shauna Mosgrove
John Ramos
Jeff Spike

Irrigation Districts

Mike Wick, Chairman (Westland)
Chuck Wilcox, Manager (Hermiston)

Tribes

Bill Burke, Chairman of the Tribal Water Committee (Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation)

Watershed Group

Tracy Bosen, Executive Director (Umatilla River Basin Watershed Council)

State Agencies

Tim Bailey, District Biologist (ODFW)

Federal Agencies

Sam Stegeman, Manager (USBR Umatilla Field Office)

Statement of Support
Westland-Ramos Pilot Habitat Restoration Project
Umatilla River, Oregon

Through this statement interested stakeholders express their full support for the Westland-Ramos Pilot Habitat Restoration Project on the Umatilla River, Oregon.

For the past 20 years, the people of the Umatilla River Basin in northeast Oregon have made significant progress in the restoration of extirpated salmon populations in the Umatilla River. In 1999-2000, a total of nearly 12,800 adult spring chinook, fall chinook, coho, and summer steelhead returned to the Umatilla River, where just 15 years ago, only a remnant population of steelhead occurred in the basin. The Umatilla Tribe, State of Oregon, Bureau of Reclamation, water users in the basin, and other interested parties have cooperated to re-introduce salmon, improve in-stream flows, screen irrigation diversions, remove fish passage barriers, construct and operate fish supplementation facilities, and improve riparian habitat conditions to ensure the successful restoration of salmon. Today, Indian and non-Indian fishers enjoy harvests of spring chinook and coho salmon and steelhead trout in the Columbia and Umatilla Rivers due to these efforts in the Umatilla Basin.

While great progress has been made, the fish restoration work in the Umatilla Basin is not complete. As a result, further water exchanges, improvements to water quality, re-establishment of riparian habitat, and watershed restoration efforts are needed and are being planned to provide year-round flow of good quality water for fish restoration in the Umatilla River.

One such restoration project is the Westland-Ramos Pilot Habitat Restoration Project. Westland Irrigation District has taken the lead in preparing a feasibility study, and Hermiston Irrigation District has contributed funds to develop the study (Engineering Feasibility Study and Preliminary Channel Design for the Westland-Ramos Reach of the Umatilla River, January 2000). The study culminated in a plan that will improve instream and riparian habitat conditions in a 1.25-mile corridor of the Umatilla River upstream from Echo, Oregon. When implemented, the project will “notch” two existing irrigation diversion dams (Westland and Hermiston) and maintain the capability to divert water, establish a stable stream channel form, reduce channel width-to-depth ratio, and rehabilitate the riparian zone. The project design also includes a monitoring program to measure the effectiveness of the project. Intended project benefits include the removal of fish passage obstacles, substantial improvement to salmonid rearing habitat, retention of irrigation diversion, reduction of channel shifting and bank erosion, and restoration of native riparian vegetation.

Supporting stakeholders participated in the preparation and review of the feasibility study and support plans for preparing the final design, constructing the project, and monitoring its effectiveness. All of these stakeholders will gain significant benefits from the implementation of the Westland-Ramos Project through substantial improvements to fish habitat, water to maintain irrigation needs, and stream bank stabilization for adjacent landowners. The Westland-Ramos Project will ultimately serve as a model to encourage others in the region to work together to find cooperative, effective, and innovative solutions to river restoration, protection of endangered species, and salmon restoration.