

Nez Perce Tribe Department of Fisheries/Watershed

P.O. Box 365, Lapwai, ID 83540

Phone: 208-843-7144 • Fax: 208-843-7148

February 6, 2001

Northwest Power Planning Council
Mark Walker
Director of Public Affairs
851 SW Sixth Avenue, Suite 1100
Portland, OR 97204

RE: Response to ISRP Report Regarding ProjectID: 23031

Dear Mr. Walker:

This letter is written to respond to the Review of Fiscal Year 2001 High Priority Proposals, as directed by e-mail February 2, 2001 by Stephen L. Crow, NPPC Executive Director. If there are any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me by phone at (208) 843-7144, or by email at heidim@nezperce.org. Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Project Number: 23031

Project Title: Protect John's Creek Watershed

Sponsor: Nez Perce Tribal Fisheries Watershed Program

ISRP Comment: Portions of this proposed work marginally meet the basic criteria – replacement of a dilapidated fence – objective 2, task 2, 3, and 4 (\$50,000 requested, but that appears to be above the going rate for fencing).

Sponsor Response: The ISRP does not expand upon this comment to explain where the project does not meet the criteria. Cost was not one of the criteria, although an explanation of the cost of the project is described below. The technical review by the Idaho SRT determined that this project met every criteria but one, that the stream is not a water quality-limited stream on the 303d list.

The John's Creek watershed is one of two watersheds within the South Fork Clearwater River Subbasin that possess a habitat stronghold for spring Chinook salmon. It is also one of two watersheds to have a wild B-run steelhead habitat and population stronghold in the South Fork Clearwater River (USDA Forest Service, 1998). American Creek, a tributary

to John's Creek where the project site is located, is the only degraded portion of this highly productive watershed. This degradation has occurred from cattle grazing within the stream corridor, resulting in increased levels of sedimentation, stream bank instability and increased temperatures. By fencing cattle out of the creek, we will remove the single, significant source of degradation to fisheries habitat. Not only will this protect the existing stronghold habitats and populations downstream of project site, but by stopping the disturbance resulting from cattle in the unfenced portion of the creek, we will allow natural processes in the system to restore the existing-degraded habitat. With the excellent existing connectivity between the project area and the stronghold areas with John's Creek watershed, we expect to see improvements in both habitat and population status within a few years that will benefit, protect, and strengthen the entire drainage population.

ISRP Comment: Proposed work seems very expensive relative to other fencing projects.

Sponsor Response: The proposed fence will be located in a watershed where the average snowfall is over 6 feet! The fence must be constructed in a manner to withstand these conditions, so that extensive maintenance is not needed in following years. The type of construction needed is 5" wooden pressure-treated posts with only 10-foot spans between each post. The project area is located in high elevation mountainous terrain; therefore, this heavy-duty construction is warranted in this watershed, which experiences extreme winter weather conditions. The costs for this project cannot be compared to *typical* fencing projects. Typical fencing projects are generally located in lower elevations with much milder weather conditions.

Sincerely,

Heidi McRoberts
Nez Perce Tribal Fisheries/Watershed Program
Project Leader/ Habitat Biologist