Middle Fork Irrigation District

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November 17, 2010

Les Perkins
Farmers Conservation Alliance
14 Oak Street, Suite 302
Hood River, OR 97031

Dear Les:

It is my understanding that FCA is working to gain approval for the Farmers Screen as an approved technology from National Marine Fisheries Service. I would like to provide input on the Farmers Screen from the perspective of an irrigation district manager and a small scale hydroelectric project operator.
Middle Fork Irrigation District is located in the upper Hood River Valley and diverts water from high elevations on Mt. Hood for irrigation and hydroelectric production. Diverted water comes primarily from glacially influenced tributaries to the Middle Fork of the Hood River. These streams tend to be extremely variable in both flow rate and turbidity. These natural conditions have historically made effective diversion operation and fish screening difficult at best and occasionally next to impossible.

In the fall of 2009, Middle Fork Irrigation District installed a Farmers Screen on its Coe creek diversion. The project was designed with input from all project partners, including: NMFS, USFWS, ODFW, DEQ, USFS, Hood River Watershed Council, FCA, and The Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs. The project included removal of a stream spanning dam which blocked passage for the Hood River basin's only known bull trout population. The Farmers Screen was chosen for this site to minimize operation and maintenance costs and to protect fish. The Farmers Screen is the only screen type that I am aware of that can operate effectively in the high sediment and rapidly fluctuating environment that exists on Coe Creek. The Coe Creek Farmers Screen has been operating since December of 2009 and has allowed Middle Fork Irrigation District to divert water under very high sediment loads while protecting fish populations. The sediment management system effectively removes a vast majority of natural sediment as well as significantly reducing district crews' time in operating and maintaining the diversion. The

sediment impact to our facilities and our patrons systems was also dramatically reduced this season due to the reduction of sediment entering our system.

In summary, the Farmers Screen has been extremely reliable and has required very little maintenance since the installation of the system. The Farmers Screen is a necessary tool for both irrigators and natural resource agencies in providing effective fish passage and screening on irrigation and hydroelectric diversions. A wide range of technologies should be available for the wide range of site conditions that exist within the Pacific Northwest. Technologies like the Farmers Screen allow for the development of solutions where both agriculture and fish populations win. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Craig DeHart
Manager, Middle Fork Irrigation District