



Oregon Association of
Conservation Districts

Public Forum
David Moskowitz

August 1, 2019

To: The Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission

From: The Oregon Association of Conservation Districts

Re: Support for the Upper Phillips Dam and Ditch Efficiency Enhancement Project

To Director Melcher, Chair Finley and members of the commission,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Restoration and Enhancement Projects recommended by the Restoration and Enhancement Board. I am testifying on behalf of the Oregon Association of Conservation Districts to express support for the Applegate Partnership's Upper Phillips Dam and Ditch Efficiency project. OACD serves and represents Oregon's 45 Soil and Water Conservation Districts, which are special districts governed by elected boards. The Districts protect and enhance soil quality, water quality and quantity, and habitat by supporting voluntary conservation in partnership with private landowners and managers as well as federal, state, and nonprofit partners like the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Watershed Councils. We know that our goals for natural resource conservation can't be achieved alone. This is why OACD advocates for policies and funding that support not only SWCDs, but also those like the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund that support our partners. We are now advocating for the Restoration and Enhancement grant to be awarded to the Applegate Partnership & Watershed Council.


The Upper Phillips Dam and Irrigation Ditch Efficiency project being spearheaded by the Applegate Partnership & Watershed Council exemplifies the partnership approach to conservation unique to Oregon. The project has local buy-in, and would result in benefits for conservation priorities that benefit all Oregonians. More than a dozen water users have been deeply involved in developing the proposal and plan for this project. These stakeholders recognize the importance of the benefits anticipated from the partnership's work. Improved fish passage from a diversion at the Upper Phillips Dam would enhance fish passage and habitat. The diversion alone, however, would not be as effective without the other component of the project: increased irrigation efficiency, and therefore increased in-stream flows, from enclosing a conveyance system that loses a substantial amount of water to evaporation. These improvements will enhance fish habitat directly, and will benefit the local community increased resilience of irrigation for the local agricultural economy, and will benefit the local community and all Oregonians through an important step in supporting thriving fish populations.

The collaboration between the Applegate Partnership, local stakeholders, Jackson SWCD, and other partners demonstrates a strong commitment to implementing an impactful project to achieve conservation of water resources and fish. Each partner has something valuable, but not necessarily monetary, to contribute to this project. For instance, Jackson SWCD's in-kind contribution provides the time and expertise of their agricultural engineer to plan and implement highly technical aspects of the project effectively and efficiently. The last piece of the puzzle to make this project a reality is financial capital. The Applegate Partnership seeks funding from ODFW, the OWEB (Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board), and OWRD (Oregon Water Resource Department) to get the job done, true to the collaborative spirit of Oregon conservation.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding the ODFW Restoration and Enhancement Projects. We encourage you to approve funding for the Upper Philips Dam and Ditch Efficiency project in order to conserve water for the sake of both fish populations and the local community in the Applegate Watershed.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Anna Freitas".

Anna H. Freitas
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