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November 21, 1994

John Wagoner
U.S. Department of Energy, Richland Operations Office
Mail Stop A7-50
P.O. Box 550
Richland, WA 99352



Dear Mr. Wagoner:

The U.S. Department of Energy (USDOE) has announced that land on the North Slope and the Arid Lands Ecology Reserve (ALE) has been cleaned up. The Hanford Natural Resource Trustee Council (NRTC) is of the informed opinion that cleanup of a CERCLA site is not complete until restoration of affected natural resources has been completed. Restoration was committed to in the documentation for the North Slope. Apparently, restoration plans for both sites have not yet been completed.

The NRTC wishes to emphasize to USDOE the importance of natural resource restoration in the CERCLA process and the benefits which can be gained from conducting restoration as a part of cleanup activities, rather than following a Natural Resource Damage Assessment and potential litigation. We make the following recommendations which would ensure that restoration to minimize impacts to natural resources occurs in a timely manner at all CERCLA sites.

1. Language should be included in the Tri-Party Agreement (TPA) stating that restoration of natural resources is required and is to be considered an integral part of the planning and cleanup process.
2. Restoration plans should appear or be referenced in the Proposed Cleanup Plan, the Action Memorandum, and the Record of Decision.
3. In setting TPA milestones, the time required for restoration planning and execution should be included.
4. Under the major milestone for each project, specific restoration-related interim milestones should be listed, including completion of a document describing the restoration plan, and execution of the plan.
5. Natural resource restoration plans should be developed at the same time as the initial cleanup plans, and USDOE should work with other TPA staff to ensure that this occurs.

There are several important advantages to the simultaneous development and execution of restoration and cleanup plans and activities:

1. Cleanup actions would not preclude appropriate restoration options.
2. Restoration could occur as early as possible, eliminating or reducing the time period over which natural resources would be injured.
3. Restoration costs could be included in the total cleanup budget.
4. The total cleanup budget could be effectively minimized, for example, when a somewhat more expensive cleanup option would be chosen because it allowed for a much less expensive restoration plan.

The North Slope cleanup provides several examples of how leaving restoration planning until the end of cleanup resulted in inefficient and expensive cleanup. Including restoration costs in the initial budget would have prevented the current situation where funding will be borrowed from the budgets of other projects, and may not be adequate to fully restore natural resources to the baseline condition. If restoration of natural resources had been planned and budgeted, cleanup contractors probably would have been aware of the actual costs of restoration, and it is likely that they would have been more careful to minimize impacts. Consultation with the natural resource trustees on decisions made during cleanup (for example, the decision to excavate anomalies at landfills) would have ensured that natural resources were adequately considered and that impacts were minimized. Early planning of restoration activities would have identified appropriate species and amounts of native seeds and shrubs needed for revegetation, identified an optimal time period for revegetation activities, and ensured that the seeds and shrubs were available at that time. Reseeding of disturbed areas this autumn (1994) would have minimized noxious weed infestations; reseeding next year may require the use of herbicides or other methods to control noxious weeds, thereby increasing costs. If seeding takes place once noxious weeds are established, weed control will be almost impossible as there are few methods which control weeds without also eliminating the desirable species.

The NRTC emphasizes that adequate habitat restoration should include multi-year monitoring to ensure that revegetation successfully reestablishes baseline habitat conditions, and that further effort is required if revegetation is unsuccessful. When the North Slope and ALE restoration plans are available for review, our comments will reflect these expectations.

Natural resource restoration is a high priority for the NRTC. We request that the plan be provided to the natural resource trustees as early as possible so that we can supply comments in a timely manner. Please note that this correspondence represents the consensus opinion of the signing Trustees.

Sincerely,
Hanford NRTC

Ann Aldrich
Border Area Manager
U.S. Bureau of Land Management

Chris Drivdahl
Assistant Director, Habitat Program
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Michael J. Farrow
Director, Department of Natural Resources
Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation

David C. Frederick
State Supervisor
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Donna Pawaukee
Manager, Environmental Restoration and Waste Management Department
Nez Perce Tribe

Russell Jim
Program Manager, Environmental Restoration/Waste Management Program
Yakama Indian Nation

cc:

U.S. Department of Energy

Hazel O'Leary

Tara O'Toole

Tom Grumbly

John Bascietto

James Bauer

Robert Holt

Roger Freeberg

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Randall Smith

George Hofer

Doug Sherwood

Dennis Faulk

Dave Einan

Washington Department of Ecology

Dan Silver

Dru Butler

Jeff Breckel

David Nylander

Dib Goswami

U.S. Department of Interior, Preston Sleeper

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association, Chris Mebane

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Walter Perro

Sandra Simmons

Hanford Advisory Board, Sue Gould



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Spokane District Office

1103 N. Fancher

Spokane, Washington 99212-1275

IN REPLY REFER TO:

HANFORD NATURAL RESOURCE TRUSTEE
SIGNATURE PAGE

Signature indicates concurrence with the following:

Subject: Accompanying letter
Date: November ?, 1994
To: Mr. John Wagoner
From: The Hanford Natural Resource Trustees

Regarding:

- The need for natural resource restoration planning and execution in the CERCLA cleanup process.
- Recommendations for ensuring that natural resource restoration plans are adequate and timely.
- The North Slope cleanup as an example of lack of minimization of impacts and lack of timely natural resource restoration planning.

Ann B. Aldrich
Border Area Manager
Spokane District Office
Bureau of Land Management

11/3/94

Date

HANFORD NATURAL RESOURCE TRUSTEE
SIGNATURE PAGE

Signature indicates concurrence with the following:

Subject: Accompanying letter
Date: November 18, 1994
To: Mr. John Wagoner
From: The Hanford Natural Resource Trustees

Regarding:

- The need for natural resource restoration planning and execution in the CERCLA cleanup process
- Recommendations for ensuring that natural resource restoration plans are adequate and timely
- The North Slope cleanup as an example of lack of minimization of impacts and lack of timely natural resource restoration planning.

Chris Drisdahl

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Nov. 17, 1994

Date



CONFEDERATED TRIBES
of the
Umatilla Indian Reservation

P.O. Box 638
PENDLETON, OREGON 97801
Area code 503 Phone 276-3447 FAX 276-3317

HANFORD NATURAL RESOURCE TRUSTEE
SIGNATURE PAGE

Signature indicates concurrence with the following:

Subject: Accompanying letter
Date: November 22, 1994
To: Mr. John Wagoner
From: The Hanford Natural Resource Trustees

Regarding:

- The need for natural resource restoration planning and execution in the CERCLA cleanup process.
- Recommendations for ensuring that natural resource restoration plans are adequate and timely.
- The North Slope cleanup as an example of lack of minimization of impacts and lack of timely natural resource restoration planning.

J.H. Richards, Acting Director

for

Michael J. Farrow
Director, Department of Natural Resources
Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation

11/22/94
Date

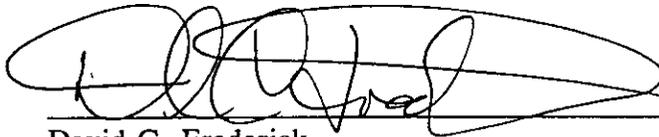
HANFORD NATURAL RESOURCE TRUSTEE
SIGNATURE PAGE

Signature indicates concurrence with the following:

Subject: Accompanying letter
Date: November 21, 1994
To: Mr. John Wagoner
From: The Hanford Natural Resource Trustees

Regarding:

- The need for natural resource restoration planning and execution in the CERCLA cleanup process.
- Recommendations for ensuring that natural resource restoration plans are adequate and timely.
- The North Slope cleanup as an example of lack of minimization of impacts and lack of timely natural resource restoration planning.



David C. Frederick
State Supervisor
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Washington State Office

**HANFORD NATURAL RESOURCE TRUSTEE
SIGNATURE PAGE**

Signature indicates concurrence with the following:

Subject: Accompanying letter

Date: November 15, 1994

To: Mr. John Wagoner

From: The Hanford Natural Resource Trustees

Regarding: -The need for natural resource restoration planning and execution in the CERCLA cleanup process.
-Recommendations for ensuring that natural resource restoration plans are adequate and timely.
-The North Slope cleanup as an example of lack of minimization of impacts and lack of timely natural resource restoration planning.



Donna L. Powaukee
ERWM Manager
Nez Perce Tribe
P. O. Box 365
Lapwai, ID 83540

11/15/94
November 15, 1994

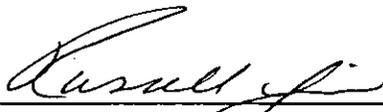
HANFORD NATURAL RESOURCE TRUSTEE
SIGNATURE PAGE

Signature indicates concurrence with the following:

Subject: Accompanying letter
Date: November 10, 1994
To: Mr. John Wagoner
From: The Hanford Natural Resource Trustees

Regarding:

- The need for natural resource restoration planning and execution in the Cercla cleanup process.
- Recommendations for ensuring that natural resource restoration plans are adequate and timely.
- The North Slope cleanup as an example of lack of minimization of impacts and lack of timely natural resource restoration planning.


Russell Jim, Manager
ER/WM Program
Yakama Nation

11-07-94

Date