

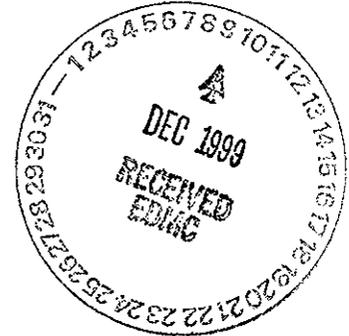


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Richland Operations Office
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NOV 24 1999

Mr. Patrick Sobotta, Interim Director
Environmental Restoration/
Waste Management Program
Nez Perce Tribe
P. O. Box 365
Lapwai, Idaho 83540



Dear Mr. Sobotta:

**FOLLOW-UP TO COLUMBIA RIVER COMPREHENSIVE IMPACT ASSESSMENT
(CRCIA) WORKSHOP OF OCTOBER 12, 1999**

Thank you for our meeting on October 12, 1999. It was valuable, as my staff and I were able to increase our understanding of the CRCIA Team values, principles and contributions, and consider the future involvement of the CRCIA Team. I am committed to ensuring that your views are incorporated in the execution of the Groundwater/Vadose Zone Integration Project (Integration Project).

The CRCIA Team and the organizations and Tribes that the CRCIA Team members represent have contributed greatly to the Hanford cleanup mission. The CRCIA Part 2 Document, completed in fulfillment of a Hanford Federal Facility Agreement and Consent Order (Tri-Party Agreement) milestone, has and will continue to influence the System Assessment Capability (SAC), which is being developed by the Integration Project. While we have a long way to go, the SAC represents the Department of Energy's (DOE) commitment to assess and understand the cumulative, long-term impacts of Hanford derived contaminants, both chemical and radioactive, on the Columbia River and all of its uses and users. The SAC is also intended to provide the information and knowledge required by our regulators and DOE in making technically sound Hanford cleanup decisions.

To support development of the SAC and to further enable the overall success of the Integration Project, I propose the following actions:

1. The Integration Project SAC Work Group should continue to work openly with the CRCIA Team and all other interested people and organizations to design and implement the SAC.

To ensure this continuing dialogue, I propose we conduct a technical workshop to reconcile any issues between CRCIA and the SAC. This workshop should result in a clear understanding of what the SAC can and cannot achieve in the planned timeframes and revisions. Issues and advice captured at this workshop would be recorded in an issues tracking system to ensure that all advice and input is fully considered by the Integration Project.

I propose this workshop be held in the near-term, and that an open and cooperative planning approach be used to prepare for it. Participation by the CRCIA Team members is crucial to the success of this workshop.

2. I believe that the most effective way to protect Hanford's water resources and the river is to understand the multiple cleanup problems/challenges, propose credible options, assess these options, and make timely cleanup decisions. All of this needs to be part of an established process that ensures public involvement and decision making accountability. To date, for the Hanford cleanup mission, this process is established in the Tri-Party Agreement. I propose that the three parties (U. S. Environmental Protection Agency [EPA], State of Washington Department of Ecology [Ecology] and DOE), with support from the Oregon Office of Energy and the Tribes, enter into discussions on how best to bring this important work into the context of the Tri-Party Agreement. This would include discussions on the appropriate regulatory processes (i.e., Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act, and the National Environmental Policy Act) to ensure public participation and the development of Tri-Party Agreement milestones for key deliverables such as the SAC. We have discussed this concept with EPA and Ecology and they have indicated willingness to support such discussions.

The CRCIA Team has identified the need for independence and credibility in the conduct and outcome of the SAC. The SAC must be technically credible and acceptable to our stakeholders. The DOE has committed to providing rigorous oversight and technical advice to assist the Integration Project and the SAC. The Integration Project Expert Panel (IPEP) is actively working with the Integration Project. We are fortunate that one of the members of the IPEP was, in fact, a member of the CRCIA Team at the time CRCIA Part 2 was prepared. In addition to the IPEP, the National Academy of Sciences will also become involved in oversight of the science and technology aspects of the Integration Project later this year. Much of the science and technology is focused on the technical challenges of the SAC.

I know that only our stakeholders can determine what is credible to them; thus, there is a significant role for stakeholders, Tribes and regulators in guiding the Integration Project as it moves ahead. I encourage the CRCIA Team to remain active and engaged in the work groups, workshops, and open project meetings of the Integration Project. By using an open and accessible process to gain early and meaningful input, your influence on the outcomes of the Integration Project can be maximized.

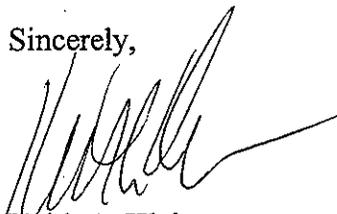
Mr. Patrick Sobotta

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NOV 24 1999

I want you to know that I appreciate the hard work and dedication that the CRCIA Team has brought and continues to bring to the Hanford cleanup. If you want to discuss this matter further or require additional information, please contact me, or Wade Ballard, Assistant Manager for Planning and Integration, on (509) 376-6657, or your staff may contact K. Michael Thompson, Acting Program Manager, Groundwater/Vadose Zone, at (509) 373-0750.

Sincerely,



Keith A. Klein
Manager

GW/VZ:KMT

cc: B. Harper, YN