



Oregon

Theodore R. Kulongoski, Governor



OREGON DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

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January 25, 2008

Mr. Joe Franco
Assistant Manager for the River Corridor
U.S. Department of Energy
Richland Operations Office
P.O. Box 550, MSIN A3-04
Richland, WA 99352

RECEIVED
JAN 31 2008

EDMC

Dear Mr. Franco:

As a natural resource trustee for the Hanford Site, Oregon wants to express concern about the planned demolition of the 183-F clearwell at the Hanford F Area.

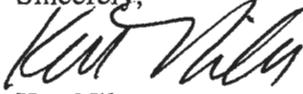
At the October 2007 meeting of the Hanford Natural Resource Trustee Council we were told by Ken Gano, a natural resource specialist with Washington Closure Hanford, that the 183-F clearwell has become home to a very large colony of bats, tentatively identified as *Yuma myotis*. The colony is one of the largest in the State of Washington, with over 2,000 females using the site as a maternity and nursery site. Although the site is not natural habitat for the bats, conditions in the clearwell are apparently well-suited for bats which are thriving in this facility. Monitoring of the site is continuing to fully characterize the extent and duration of use in what has become an important regional habitat.

In a subsequent discussion with Mr. Gano, we were also told that the site is not contaminated, nor is its demolition necessary to facilitate cleanup of nearby contaminated facilities, pipelines, or soils at the 100-F area. The clearwell is structurally sound, so there is no urgency for its demolition. There seems to be no compelling rationale for demolition except that the clearwell is included on a list of remaining facilities at 100-F and as such has been targeted for demolition. By fencing the site, DOE can protect this habitat while spending far less than the cost of demolition. Moreover, in the event that demolition does proceed, there would be a need to provide mitigation for loss of habitat. Washington Closure is evaluating the potential to modify the structure and/or soil cover of a nearby flume, but it is unclear whether the flume can provide suitable replacement habitat.

As we understand it, the clearwell is scheduled for demolition during FY 2009. We urge you to indefinitely suspend or cancel this action for several reasons. First, it preserves scarce, heavily used habitat and prevents disruption and possible loss of this colony. It also obviates the need to spend resources on a mitigation project that might or might not be successful. Finally, in a time of tight budgets, it allows scarce funds that would have been used for demolition to be reallocated to other priorities.

Thank you for your interest in this matter. Oregon remains interested in learning the results on continuing monitoring of the clearwell, and on DOE's plans for the future of this facility. Should you have questions or wish to discuss this matter further, please contact Paul Shaffer of my staff at 503-378-4456.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ken Niles". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "K".

Ken Niles
Assistant Director