



December 20, 2000

Patrick Sobotta, ERWM Director
Nez Perce Tribe
P.O. Box 365
Lapwai, Idaho 83540-0365

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Dear Mr. Sobotta:

BECHTEL HANFORD, INC.'S COMMENT RESPONSES ON THE TAPTEAL GREENWAY REVEGETATION PLAN

Reference: Letter, Patrick Sobotta (Nez Perce Tribe) to Darci Teel (BHI), "Comments on Tapteal Greenway Revegetation Plan," dated November 1, 2000.

Thank you very much for your comments on the Tapteal Greenway Revegetation Plan. Bechtel Hanford, Inc. (BHI) has reviewed your comments and the responses are listed below.

Comment #1:

Any effort to restore habitat that has been destroyed at the Hanford Site by operational activities or natural disasters is generally supported by the ERWM. We believe that it is important to restore as many acres as possible as soon as it can be accomplished. We also commend Bechtel for being creative in projects related to habitat restoration and in ERDF mitigation.

Response:

Bechtel will continue to pursue creative projects as they relate to habitat restoration.

Comment #2:

It is not clear how this project will integrate with the State of Washington's efforts to revegetate the Rattlesnake Slope Wildlife Area. Is the effort being coordinated to conduct the work at the same time using the same equipment to save on costs or are both projects using the same seed source or what? It would be good to have a section in the plan that defines the benefits of establishing a partnership.

Response:

Coordinating the Tapteal Greenway project and the revegetation of the State of Washington ground adjacent to it was brought up during the September NRTC meeting. Unfortunately, the State's revegetation effort could not be implemented in time to coincide with BHI's proposed

revegetation initiative. We will make an effort to coordinate with the State on future revegetation projects.

Comment #3:

The ERWM has been concerned since 1995 about ERDF mitigation. As you know, there has never been any compensation or mitigation for the loss of sagebrush habitat that was destroyed for ERDF cells one and two. We are glad to see that ERDF is willing to make some effort to finally mitigate for cells one and two; however, we think that any mitigation or compensation agreements with ERDF should be coordinated not only with Hanford contractors, but also with the trustee council. The BRMaP provides specific guidance on mitigation ratios for loss of shrub steppe habitat and even though that plan is a draft, the new revision does not change mitigation ratios significantly. We think it would be a good idea to invite ERDF management to a trustee council meeting and discuss ERDF mitigation and determine how much credit they should be given for helping with the Tapteal Greenway proposal.

Response:

Any decision to provide compensatory mitigation rests with the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). We encourage you to contact DOE with regards to your desire to pursue ERDF mitigation.

Comment #4:

It is not clear in the plan why restoration efforts are not being conducted on central Hanford. There are ongoing efforts supported by DOE to revegetate 1000 acres in 200 West but there is a lot more that could be done. If manpower and costs are the controlling factors, this should be pointed out in the plan.

Response:

BHI assisted Fluor Hanford in preparing its plan for revegetation work on the Central Plateau at Hanford. Adequate funding and resources were available to complete work in this area. We will consider other revegetation opportunities for the Central Plateau at Hanford.

Comment #5:

Is the area that is to be revegetated protected from public use and recreational activities to ensure that the plants can become established?

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Response:

The area revegetated on the Tapteal Greenway property is designated a "natural area." It is County property and currently under no restriction. We have spoken with and written to both the Tapteal Greenway, as well as the County, to encourage posting signs to protect the area from disturbance.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me at (509) 372-9633.



D. D. Teel, Manager
Natural Resources & Risk Assessment
Bechtel Hanford, Inc.

DDT:tle

cc: Kevin Clarke, DOE-RL
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Document & Information Services