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1055 Cottonwood Drive
Pasco, WA 99301
January 8, 1994

Dib Goswami, Unit Manager
Washington State Department of Ecology
7601 W. Clearwater Avenue, Suite 102
Kennewick WA 99336



Dear Sir:

As a former resident of White Bluffs--1925 to 1943. I am becoming very disturbed at many of the proposals for future development of the Hanford Reservation.

Since when has the Wahluke Slope become the "North Slope"? The name "Wahluke is unique and defines only one area in the United States and probably the World. The name comes from Wanapum Indians who are also unique to the area. I always thought the North Slope referred to a place in Alaska where the slope of the land was to the north, not the south as is case of the Wahluke Slope. Most of the historical records, maps, Grant County and Bureau of Reclamation files describe the area as the Wahluke Slope, so please describe it by its traditionally and officially correct name.

To me, the renaming of local areas represents a form of ignorance, indifference, or arrogance to established traditions or characteristics of an area by uncaring people who have no attachments to the area other than they happen to have a job which is connected with the area.

I, and many of White Bluffs-Hanford Pioneer Association believe the input of the former residents of the White-Bluffs Hanford Area, which includes the Wahluke Slope, has been

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inadvertently ignored. The State-appointed study group which studied the possible future uses of the reservation did not include any of the former residents, which could have given a better perspective to the study. What group is more qualified, or justified to speak for the area than the former residents who lived there and were removed by Federal edict? I believe a diversified use of the Reservation is the direction to take. The Reservation is large enough to respect the best interest of most groups. The "Hanford Reach" could be left with an undeveloped strip of 1/4 mile except for existing improvements and future facilities deemed to be in the best interests of the public.

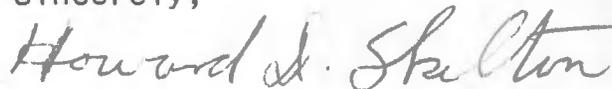
It must be noted that "ecologically speaking" the river banks along the Reach have much more vegetation than before dams and reservoirs regulated the river flow reducing the extreme fluctuations. This can be verified by the old existing highwater marks and historic photographs. Before the dams, occasional floods destroyed most of the trees and shrubs that managed to get established between floods. The floods occurred in May and June and would recede rapidly leaving a dry strip created by the hot July and August weather which discouraged quick renewal of the lost vegetation.

Many so-called environmentalists have exaggerated the effects of changes in the river as if to state that the environment of the river is in a "delicate" state. These people fail to realize mankinds' changes are very temporary

when compared to the powerful effects the Columbia River has had in shaping and reshaping the landscape over millions of years and is presently being witnessed by the erosion of the White Bluffs before the Columbia Basin Project especially in northern Benton County.

It seems that irrigated agricultural development interests are being pushed aside in preference to other interests, if you can believe what you hear or read from the media. The economy of the State of Washington is heavily dependent upon the development and wise use of our natural resources. Our wild life and recreational reserves have to be maintained by public funding. Irrigated agriculture is one of the more stable aspects of our economy, and ever more so since the downturn of our forest products industry. We cannot afford to sacrifice the irrigable portions on both sides of river within the Hanford Reservation. There is sufficient land within the Reservation unsuitable for irrigation to allow wildlife, recreation, and commercial development.

Sincerely,



Howard D. Skelton

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