



# Nez Perce

ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION & WASTE MANAGEMENT

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August 13, 2008

Arlene Tortoso  
U.S. DOE, Richland Operations Office  
P.O. Box 550, MS: A6-38  
Richland, WA 99352

Dennis Faulk  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
309 Bradley Blvd., Suite 115  
Richland, WA 99352

Dear Ms. Tortoso and Mr. Faulk:

Re: *Proposed Plan for Remediation of the 200-Zp-1 Groundwater Operable Unit  
(DOE/RL-2007-33, Rev. 0)*

The Nez Perce Tribe retains reserved treaty rights in the Mid-Columbia region under the Treaty of 1855 with the United States Government. These rights have been recognized and affirmed through subsequent Federal and State actions. These actions protect Nez Perce rights to utilize our usual and accustomed resources and resource areas, including those in the Hanford Reach of the Columbia River. Accordingly, the Nez Perce Tribe Environmental Restoration and Waste Management program (ERWM) has support from the Department of Energy (DOE) to participate in and monitor relevant DOE activities. Degradation of groundwater is relevant to reserved treaty rights, and therefore we maintain involvement in waste management/vadose zone/groundwater issues.

The Nez Perce ERWM appreciates the opportunity to review the Proposed Plan For Remediation Of The 200-Zp-1 Groundwater Operable Unit (DOE/RL-2007-33, Rev. 0). We support the Tri-Parties selection of Alternative 2, which consists of Pump-and-Treat, Monitored Natural Attenuation, Flow-Path Control, and Institutional Controls.

However, we believe that the projected cost (\$174 million) and time frame for completion of the remediation (125 years) are overly conservative. The vertical distribution of contamination is poorly defined, and additional characterization is needed to better define the vertical distribution and movement of contamination within the aquifer. This characterization should

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facilitate a more cost-effective and timely remediation of the aquifer. Additional concerns with the proposed plan are listed below.

1. Remediation of vadose zone contamination is a key component of groundwater remediation. This proposed plan only discusses the waste sites in the 200-PW-1 Source Unit. Other source units such as the tank farms, 200-SW-2, 200-TW-1&2, 200-LW1&2 and 200-CW-5 source units should be integrated into the groundwater remediation.
2. Currently, it appears to us that DOE is underestimating the potential for actinide mobility in the vadose zone and the potential impact of actinide migration to groundwater.
3. The remediation of the 200-ZP-1 Groundwater Operable Unit will need to be closely coordinated with the remediation of 200-UP-1 Groundwater Operable Unit.

ERWM would appreciate timely participation in the further development of the remediation approach for the groundwater in the 200 West Area Please contact Stan Sobczyk of our staff, at (208) 843-7375, ext. 3751 for inclusion into an open decision-making process and close coordination to expedite the work needed to remediate the groundwater to protect the Nez Perce Tribe's retained treaty rights and the Columbia River.

Sincerely,



Gabriel Bohnee  
ERWM Director

Cc: Stuart Harris, CTUIR  
Russell Jim, YIN  
Ken Niles, Oregon DOE  
David. Brockman, DOE/RL  
Nick Ceto, EPA  
Jane Hedges, Ecology  
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