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Hanford Remedial Action EIS
U.S. Department of Energy
Richland Operations Office
P.O. Box 550
MSIN HO-12, Richland, Wa 99352

JUN 09 1999
DOE-RL/DIS

Ron and Janet Nelson
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We are writing on behalf of preservation of the wonderful National Treasure that we have at the Hanford Reach.

When we first moved to Richland (we've lived there several times) in 1978 the Corp of Engineers was holding hearings on a potential dam on the Hanford Reach in Richland, which we attended. At that time the shipping interests, who wanted another dam, were represented, as well as indians and sport fishermen testifying as to the quality of the fishing and importance as a spawning ground for anadromous fish, not to mention the federal government at Hanford who were concerned about possible impact on the nuclear industry of a potential dam. Most of the people who testified at that hearing were very much opposed to a dam, and helped convince the Corp to not build another dam.

We did a lot of cycling in the Area, you could do that back then, and came to appreciate the biological richness and remote, tranquil, serenity of this island of desert sagebrush steppe in a sea of ever encroaching irrigated farmland.

We visited the Columbia River at Ringold, boated up the river from Richland and even followed the Columbia up and over the Canadian Border to bicycle along the river and could see for ourselves that the only relatively free flowing stretch of the Columbia in the United States was at The Reach. The rest of it has been dammed up. And now with the impending extinction of so many anadromous fisheries it is clear that the Reach has the ONLY healthy salmon spawning fishery on the whole Columbia system. Nothing should harm this fragile situation.

Private interests have had their sights on the Reach for a long time and we are not surprised that farming interests are trying to get the rights to the Wahluke Slope. But this land, which has been protected by the federal government for so long, belongs to All the people not just a few farmers in the neighborhood (who have been polluting the river for years with irrigation runoff, a good example of what kind of care could be expected from them.)

We would like to see All of the public lands at Hanford including the Wahluke Slope, The Reach and its Islands, the McGee Ranch and the Arid Lands Ecology Reserve turned over to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in order to protect them as a National Wildlife Refuge. We support your preferred alternative for the EIS and urge you to protect as much as is possible while the opportunity exists.

Most Sincerely,

Ronald C. Nelson
Janet Nelson