



Nez Perce

TRIBAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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August 22, 2017

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Re: Nez Perce Tribe's concerns regarding coordination with regard to small-scale dredge mining on the South Fork Clearwater River and its tributaries

Dear Ms. DeGering, Mr. Luke, Ms. Probert, Mr. Cardwell, Mr. White and Mr. Troyer:

The Nez Perce Tribe ("Tribe") would like to express its appreciation for the role your agencies have played in preventing illegal, small-scale dredge mining in the South Fork Clearwater River ("SFCR"). The Tribe would also like to gratefully acknowledge the relationships your agencies have established with the Tribe and the coordination you have facilitated regarding this very important topic. The Tribe is pleased to see Tribal, state, and federal staff successfully working together to protect the Tribe's Treaty-reserved resources and important public resources.

The Tribe has devoted substantial time and resources to the recovery of its Treaty-reserved resources within its territory. Within the SFCR watershed specifically, the Tribe spends \$2.6 million annually on a wide variety of aquatic restoration programs. The watershed provides important habitat for Chinook salmon, steelhead, bull trout, and Pacific lamprey.

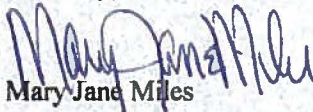
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For the above reasons, the Tribe is disappointed that it did not receive notice of Idaho Department of Water Resources' June 21, 2017 hearing regarding small-scale suction dredge mining in the SFCR and only learned of proposed changes to the South Fork Clearwater Special Supplement for power sluicing and dredge mining for 2017 at the eleventh hour. The Tribe is also disappointed that it did not receive any notice of Mr. Richardson's and Mr. Stickley's recent permit applications to dredge in the Red River. Had Tribal staff not stumbled upon these applications, the Tribe may not have had the opportunity to comment.

These recent events highlight the need for early and frequent notification and collaboration between the Tribe and your agencies. In order for the Tribe to effectively co-manage its resources and protect its Treaty-reserved resources, it must receive notice of changes to small-scale suction dredging in the SFCR watershed—and elsewhere within its aboriginal territory—with sufficient advance warning for its staff to weigh in and for your agency to fully consider the Tribe's concerns. The Tribe specifically requests that your agencies keep it apprised of further discussions regarding changes to the South Fork Clearwater River Special Supplement following this season, ending August 15th.

Thank you again for your work to keep illegal, small-scale suction dredging out of the SFCR watershed. The Tribe looks forward to further communication and coordination with your agencies. You are welcome to contact Amanda Rogerson, Staff Attorney, at (208) 843-7355 or amandar@nezperce.org, with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,


Mary Jane Miles
Chairman

Cc: Katy Fitzgerald, USFWS