



State of Washington  
**DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE**

South Central Region • Region 3 • 1701 South 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Yakima, WA 98902-5720  
Telephone: (509) 575-2740 • Fax: (509) 575-2474

July 26, 2018

Scott McKinney  
Shorelands and Environmental Assistance Program  
Washington State Department of Ecology  
PO Box 47600  
Olympia, Washington 98504

Subject: 2019-2021 Floodplains by Design Grant Proposal - Gap to Gap 1135  
Ecosystem Restoration Locally Preferred Alternatives

Dear Scott:

The Yakima Basin Integrated Plan (YBIP) Habitat Subcommittee wishes to express our support for the proposed Yakima River Gap to Gap Section 1135 Ecosystem Restoration Project and the complementing Gap-to-Gap 1135 Ecosystem Restoration Locally Preferred Alternative (the Project) application to the 2019-2021 Floodplains by Design grant opportunity. We are a cooperating partner and part of the Gap-to-Gap Partnership, which includes local, state, tribal and federal jurisdictions and stakeholders with an interest in the restoration, and management of this reach. The proposed project will reconfigure the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers' (Corps) Yakima Project levees to increase the width of the active floodplain and allow the river to function more naturally with reduced threat to Federal levees and the infrastructure and property they were designed and constructed to protect. A major goal of the Partnership is to secure authorization for the Corps to conduct the feasibility analysis and begin implementation of the project, which requires support from the Corps and approval by Congress. The feasibility analysis is now complete and the project partnership agreement for the section 1135 project is expected to be signed this year by the Corps and Yakima County, allowing design and construction of the tentatively selected plan. To achieve maximum stakeholder benefit, the locally preferred alternative must also be funded and implemented. We feel this 2019-2021 Floodplains by Design grant opportunity is the perfect match to achieve these benefits.

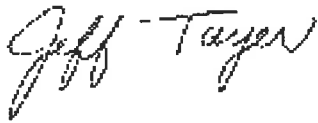
This Project will provide benefits for all stakeholders' interests in the river. It will widen the river corridor to allow natural river function and habitats; reduce flood hazard risk to adjacent landowners and the Cities of Yakima and Union Gap; maximize flood protection to transportation and irrigation infrastructure; and allow full implementation of regional transportation and economic development plans.

There is broad local support for this Project, and it has been included in local flood hazard reduction plans, habitat restoration and ESA recovery plans, and water quality management plans in the Yakima River Basin. There have already been significant investments in infrastructure for project implementation, including purchases of large areas of floodplain in this reach by the

Bureau of Reclamation, the Yakama Nation, Yakima County, and the Yakima Greenway. The Washington State Department of Transportation has constructed a new bridge for State Route 24, which will allow the proposed levee setback. The Yakima County Flood Control Zone District, the City of Yakima and the Bureau of Reclamation have invested in studies which are critical for implementation of the project and meeting Project goals of flood hazard reduction, improving the environment and economy of this reach and region, and restoring habitats for salmon and steelhead in the Yakima River Basin.

The Habitat restoration objectives of this project align well with the goals of the Habitat Subcommittee. We join with the other partners in supporting the funding and implementation of this Project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeff Tayer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jeff Tayer

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Chair of the YBIP Habitat Subcommittee

YBIP Habitat Subcommittee:

Michael Callahan, Washington Department of Ecology

Wendy Christensen, Bureau of Reclamation

Alex Conley, Yakima Basin Fish and Wildlife Recovery Board

Mark Cook, Kittitas County

Jeanne Demorest, Bureau of Reclamation

Joel Freudenthal, Yakima County

Kelsey Green, American Rivers

Sean Gross, NOAA Fisheries

Perry Harvester, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Emily Johnson, US Forest Service

Eric Merten, US Forest Service

Scott Nagel, US Forest Service

Scott Nicolai, Yakama Nation

Jason Romine, US Fish and Wildlife Service

Danielle Squeochs, Washington Department of Ecology

Richard Visser, Bureau of Reclamation

Mike Williams, US Forest Service