

STEAMBOATERS * THE NORTH UMPQUA FOUNDATION
UMPQUA WATERSHEDS * UMPQUA VALLEY FLY FISHERS * NATIVE FISH SOCIETY
NORTHWEST SPORTFISHING INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION * PACIFIC RIVERS
NORTHWEST GUIDES AND ANGLERS ASSOCIATION * ROGUE FLYFISHERS
PACIFIC COAST FEDERATION OF FISHERMEN'S ASSOCIATIONS * OREGON WILD
PORT ORFORD SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD * INSTITUTE FOR FISHERIES RESOURCES
AMERICAN WHITEWATER * SOUTH UMPQUA RURAL COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP
CASCADIA WILDLANDS * MCKENZIE FLYFISHERS

April 1, 2020

Via Email

Board of Directors
Winchester Water Control District
PO Box 661
Winchester, OR 97495

Re: Winchester Dam Removal

Dear Winchester Water Control District board and membership:

We the undersigned organizations are writing to you because we have become aware that WaterWatch of Oregon, in an effort to end ongoing harm to fisheries and water quality in the North Umpqua River, approached the Winchester Water Control District board of directors in February with a proposal to enter into a voluntary agreement to remove Winchester Dam at little to no direct cost to the District. We wish to inform you that we wholeheartedly support this proposal. In addition, we all stand ready to work together to help acquire the state, federal, and private funds necessary to achieve a successful dam removal under such a voluntary agreement, which we believe is the most ecologically and economically viable alternative for addressing the multitude of chronic problems at this structure.

As you know, Winchester Dam on the North Umpqua River is among the state's highest priorities for improving fish passage. Dating back to the turn of the previous century, this obsolete and deteriorating structure provides no flood control, hydropower, or water supply function, but significantly harms salmon, steelhead, and water quality in one of Oregon's most famed and valuable rivers.

Protecting and restoring the North Umpqua River is vital to increasing wild steelhead and salmon abundance in the Umpqua Basin. The North Umpqua's important cool water and spawning and rearing habitat for salmon and steelhead has been the focus of decades of intense locally-driven protection and restoration efforts.

Dam removals, such as the many dam removals in the Rogue Basin, have been shown by scientists at Oregon State University and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to

provide multiple public benefits, including restoration of valuable salmon and steelhead populations. We believe Winchester Dam removal will increase salmon spawning success and juvenile salmon survival by improving access to large areas of high quality protected upstream habitat. We also believe that its removal will expand recreational opportunity and enhance public safety in the lower North Umpqua.

As a general rule, our organizations support collaboration between dam owners, public agencies, and non-profit organizations to actively and substantively work towards improving fish passage, improving public safety, and ending harm to fisheries and water quality. We are hopeful this can occur here, and urge you to reach a voluntary agreement for dam removal with WaterWatch that will facilitate such an approach. We are convinced that this agreement would benefit all who value and depend upon the spectacular North Umpqua River.

If you wish to respond to our letter, we ask that you do so by contacting Jim McCarthy, WaterWatch's Southern Oregon Program Director at 541-708-0048 or jim@waterwatch.org.

Sincerely,

Tim Goforth
President
Steamboaters

Becky McRae
Chair
The North Umpqua Foundation

Stanley Petrowski
President
Umpqua Watersheds Inc.
South Umpqua Rural Community Partnership

Mike McCoy
President
Umpqua Valley Fly Fishers

Liz Hamilton
Executive Director
Northwest Sportfishing Industry Association

Bob Rees
Executive Director
Northwest Guides and Anglers Association

Glen Spain
Northwest Regional Director
Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations
Institute for Fisheries Resources

Steve Pedery
Conservation Director
Oregon Wild

Aaron Longton
Port Orford Sustainable Seafood
F/V Golden Eye

Steve Day
President
Rogue Flyfishers

Greg Haller
Executive Director
Pacific Rivers

Kirk Blaine
Southern Oregon Regional Coordinator
Native Fish Society

Josh Laughlin
Executive Director
Cascadia Wildlands

Thomas O'Keefe
Pacific Northwest Stewardship Director
American Whitewater

Dave Thomas
Board Member
McKenzie Flyfishers

Cc:
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
Oregon Water Resources Department
Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
Oregon Department of State Lands
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
National Marine Fisheries Service