



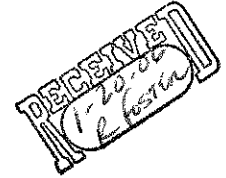
IDAHO FISH & GAME

SALMON REGION
99 Highway 93 North
P.O. Box 1336
Salmon, Idaho 83467

Sharla Cox
Administrative Assistant
Idaho Department of Water Resources
900 N. Skyline Dr. Suite A
Idaho Falls, Id. 83402-1718

January 20, 2006

Dirk Kempthorne / Governor
Steve Huffaker / Director



Re: Application 74-15613, Big Timber Creek

Dear Sharla,

The Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) protests the application submitted by Mr. James Whitaker for 5 cfs from Big Timber Creek during March 15 through November 15. IDFG, in cooperation with the Idaho Department of Water Resources, the Office of Attorney General of Idaho, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and the Upper Salmon Basin Watershed Project, is in the process of developing and implementing several conservation strategies designed to reconnect Big Timber Creek with the Lemhi River. As with most tributaries, this stream has been isolated for many years as a result of complete dewatering from over-appropriated irrigation use and the presence of irrigation structures that block fish migration. Working with the irrigation district, efforts are currently underway to remove barriers and provide adequate flow for fish passage.

Big Timber Creek would arguably be the most biologically significant reconnection in the Lemhi drainage. Reconnecting this stream would benefit anadromous Chinook salmon and steelhead, and resident bull trout, redband trout, and cutthroat trout. Moreover, Big Timber Creek is one of several tributaries that are identified as important reconnects for a Section 6 Agreement under the Endangered Species Act between Lemhi Irrigation districts, USFWS, and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), and the Snake River Basin Adjudication Water Rights Agreement between the State of Idaho, the Nez Perce Tribe, USFWS, and NMFS. Mr. Whitaker's request for 5 cfs would seriously compromise efforts to provide critical stream flow for this reconnect.

We appreciate the opportunity to review this application. I have enclosed a check for the \$25 protest fee. Could you please send me a receipt to the above address. Thank you.

Sincerely,

James R. Lukens
Regional Supervisor

Receipt
#E031578

RECEIVED

JAN 23 2006

Department of Water Resources
Eastern Region

cc: Tom Curet
Natural Resources Policy Bureau

Keeping Idaho's Wildlife Heritage