



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

NAVAL AIR STATION WHIDBEY ISLAND  
3730 NORTH CHARLES PORTER AVENUE  
OAK HARBOR, WASHINGTON 98278-5000

IN REPLY REFER TO :

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Ser N44/ 0216

February 11, 2013

Mr. Brian Abbott  
Salmon Recovery Funding Board  
Recreation and Conservation Office  
P.O. Box 40917  
Olympia, WA 98504-0917

SUBJECT: ENDORSEMENT LETTER FOR CRESCENT CREEK RESTORATION  
PROJECT ON NAVAL AIR STATION WHIDBEY ISLAND

Dear Mr. Abbott:

I am pleased to submit this letter, on behalf of Naval Air Station (NAS) Whidbey Island, in support of the Skagit River System Cooperative's (SRSC) proposed Crescent Creek Restoration Project. NAS Whidbey Island has worked closely with SRSC over the last several years to implement and monitor the Crescent Harbor Restoration Project, which restored fish access and tidal inundation to 206 acres of formerly inaccessible salt marsh habitat. The site was historically the largest open barrier salt marsh on Whidbey Island but had been cut off from tidal exchange and fish access through management actions that occurred prior to Navy ownership.

Following restoration at the site, monitoring conducted by SRSC revealed immediate utilization of habitat within the Crescent Harbor Salt Marsh by Endangered Species Act-listed juvenile Chinook salmon, as well as by Chum salmon, Pink salmon, and other native Puget Sound fish species. Chinook and Coho salmon were also shown to utilize habitat within Crescent Creek, which enters the salt marsh at its northwest edge. It is our understanding that small streams such as Crescent Creek, which supply freshwater to salt marshes, have been shown to be vitally important for juvenile salmonids, allowing them to acclimate gradually to the salt water environment before entering the open ocean. Habitat along the creek is currently degraded from its historic condition. It has been channelized, diked and straightened, reducing instream and floodplain habitat area.

In 2008, NAS Whidbey Island staff explored the possibility of habitat restoration along Crescent Creek as a means of

5090

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mitigating for construction to reconfigure NAS Whidbey Island facilities prior to the introduction of the P-8A Multi-Mission Aircraft (MMA). While the use of Crescent Creek for mitigation purposes is no longer required, habitat restoration at the site remains a beneficial objective to improve instream habitat and connectivity to the existing Crescent Harbor Restoration site. Preliminary designs developed from the MMA mitigation feasibility study will be used as a starting point from which final design can be developed.

To facilitate completion of restoration at Crescent Creek, we have partnered with SRSC to pursue grant funding to complete design and permitting for restoration at the site. The Navy, as landowner and lead federal agency, will commit staff resources that may be considered as our match commitment to this grant. This includes completing all necessary environmental permitting and documentation for the project (estimated value \$10,000) and providing engineering review and expertise to assist with completing the final construction design (estimated value \$20,000).

The Navy looks forward to continuing its partnering with the Skagit River System Cooperative to complete this highly beneficial restoration project. Please feel free to contact Mr. John R. Phillips at (360) 257-8873 or by email at [john.r.phillips1@navy.mil](mailto:john.r.phillips1@navy.mil) with any questions concerning this partnership.

Sincerely,

  
G. J. JOHNSTON  
Captain, U.S. Navy  
Commanding Officer