

Dear NWCOS Planning Committee:

I received your letter dated December 12, 2005 expressing your frustration with the RMP schedule. I certainly understand your frustration. I also appreciate that you recognize that many of these problems are beyond my control.

I am accountable to meet the milestone dates in our preparation plan; that is a given. At the same time I remain committed to an open process and up front community involvement as the right way to do business. These two things are difficult to reconcile and have led to increased pressure on all of us involved in this project. A number of factors, including delayed availability of interim work products, have indeed required us to adjust our work schedule a number of times to keep the project on track to meet our milestone dates. Some adjustments have been made to allow NWCOS more time on certain tasks. Other schedule adjustments that have been made to ensure we meet major deadlines, and have had the effect of tightening turn around times for everyone.

We are doing our best to ensure that our estimates for availability of interim products are accurate in terms of available date, format and content, and to let you know when those estimates need to be adjusted. In the interest of transparency, we will continue to make work products available as soon as we receive them from our contractor. Please realize that these interim work products are not polished documents and may therefore be cumbersome to review.

I would like to make an observation and suggestion regarding expectations and focus.

Several months ago when we discussed NWCOS involvement during the impact analysis, we made it very clear that we did not have time built into the schedule to go through a detailed iterative process with NWCOS like we did when we developed the range alternatives. We said we would make the impact analysis information available as soon as we could for two reasons. First, so that NWCOS could see if there is some disclosure in the analysis that might affect the direction you would take in development of the community alternative. Second, if there is something significant you can see that we missed in the analysis, it would be good to find out sooner than later.

I do not expect NWCOS to reach consensus on the 1600 page summary impact analysis table recently produced by Booz Allen Hamilton. I've never said I did. The table is a developmental tool that will ultimately be condensed and refined into the impact analysis for the draft EIS. We still have a lot work to do with BAH to develop the impact analysis. However, the table is provided and available for your use in development of the community alternative.

I have stated numerous times that I believe the most valuable thing NWCOS can do is to come up with a community vision and develop that vision into a community alternative for our RMP. I'm sure that you realize that revising an RMP is a long and complex process which requires the full attention of several of my full-time staff. It is up to NWCOS to decide where to spend their time in this process. However, I am concerned that NWCOS is spending so much time and effort on every detail of the planning process at the expense of developing the community alternative. I am seeing citizen participation in NWCOS suffering because of tendency of the

group to try to focus on everything. I believe that if NWCOS were to use the available time to concentrate on the community alternative, you would make an invaluable contribution to our planning effort. I am encouraged by the focus on the community alternative that NWCOS and the sector sub groups have shown over the last several weeks.

I respect the fact that working within tight timeframes is challenging for NWCOS. We have expanded the opportunities for up front community participation in this RMP revision with a very open approach. I hope you will continue to participate and take advantage of these opportunities as well as the traditional opportunities in the BLM planning process, such as the comment period on after the release of the draft RMP/EIS.

Thank you for your continued dedication to this collaborative effort.

Sincerely,

John E. Husband,
Little Snake Field Manager