Environmental Assessment for Relocating the Lower Columbia River Fish Health Center from the Spring Creek Site to the Willard Site

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Prepared by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1. PURPOSE AND NEED FOR ACTION

1.0 Background

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) Lower Columbia River Fish Health Center (Center) has outgrown its facility at the Spring Creek National Fish Hatchery (Spring Creek Site), Skamania County, Washington. The Center's primary responsibility is to inspect fish for pathogens, diagnose fish diseases, provide remedial treatments, and develop recommendations for Hatchery practices to improve fish health. The Center routinely offers these services for six lower Columbia River Federal fish hatcheries, one tribal hatchery, and for State and private hatchery facilities in Oregon and Washington upon request. The Center provides these services for the purpose of contributing to the restoration and conservation of salmon and steelhead in the Columbia River Basin. In addition, the Center conducts health surveys of the wild and native fishes to help prevent mismanagement of fishery resources and to prevent the spread of new diseases. In this way, the Center concentrates to restoring anadromous fish resources throughout the Columbia Basin.

The Center plays an important role in the conservation, supplementation, and restoration of salmon and native fishes. By safeguarding the health of salmon and steelhead of Federal and tribal fish hatcheries in the Columbia River Basin, the Center ensures that these populations survive for ocean and sport fisheries and maintain spawning runs that are self-sustaining. The Center works to restore declining native fish populations by monitoring health and applying fish health policies to prevent the spread of disease, maintaining a national database of information accessible to all Federal, state, tribal and public interests. The Center works to prevent the spread of aquatic nuisance species that would reduce the viability of fish.

At present, the FWS is unable to carry out some functions because there is not enough room to house certain equipment. The unused equipment is being held in storage. Also, the Center requires use of an electron microscope which is impractical at the Spring Creek Site because of the vibration of nearby passing trains. At this time, the Center employs seven people year-round and a temporary person in August and September.

Over the next 20 years, the Center's workload is likely to increase to where it may require as many as twelve personnel working full-time to solve problems related to fish health. In addition, the Center hopes to provide water quality testing and facilities for an electron microscope in the future. For these reasons, the FWS is actively seeking a facility adequate to accomplish the current and future work of the Center.

A possible site to relocate the Center arose when the U.S. Forest Service (FS) discontinued use of the Willard Work Center in the 1990's. Formerly it was used by the Forest Road Maintenance Crew. The property was identified as excess to management needs. After completion of the Facility Master Plan in 2003, the FS planned to decommission the site and remove all buildings with the intent of conveying ownership of the property to another Federal agency. Soon afterward, the FWS expressed interest in the property as a possible site for establishing a larger Lower Columbia River Fish Health Center capable of accomplishing the current and anticipated work of the Center.

The 11-acre Willard Site, formerly the FS Willard Work Center, is located in the Little White Salmon River Valley, Skamania County, Washington. The address is 201 Oklahoma Road in the small, unincorporated community of Willard about 6 miles north of the Columbia River Gorge. The Site is in Section 35, T. 4 N., R. 9 E., Willamette Meridian.

1.1 Purpose and Need

The purpose of this action is to provide additional, useable space for the Lower Columbia River Fish Health Center. This action is needed because the existing facility, located at Spring Creek Fish Hatchery is not large enough to house the expected increased staff and is inadequate to operate an electron microscope in support of an increasing workload. There is an additional need to find a suitable use for the Willard Site which is excess to the needs of the USFS.

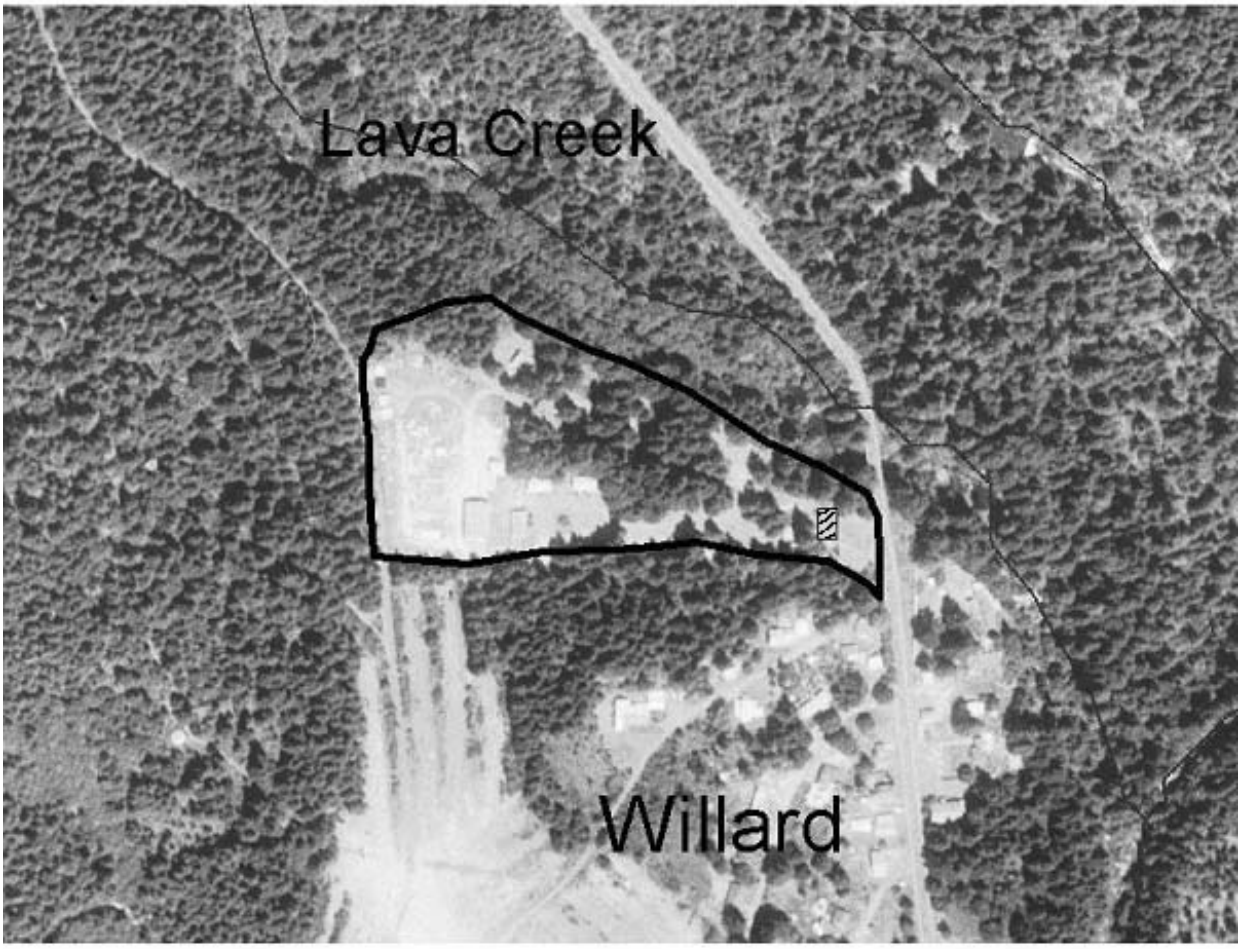
1.2 Proposed Action

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service proposes to relocate the Lower Columbia River Fish Health Center to the Willard Site (see map, page 3). In order to allow the proposed Center relocation, the FS would issue a 30-year use and occupancy Special Use Permit to the FWS and a construction permit allowing the FWS to demolish and replace the one-story FS Front Office Building (#2011) with a new building designed to meet the needs of the Fish Health Center. Although the FWS would construct a new building for the Center at the east end of the property, access to the entire 11-acre Willard Site parcel is required to control the water and electrical systems that traverse the property and to maintain another building and possibly the gasoline tanks located at the far west end of the parcel. The intention of both the FS and the FWS is to work toward a transfer of the Willard Site from the FS to the FWS.

There are fourteen structures on the Willard Site all of which would be demolished and removed except the historic Willard Garage or Old Sign Building (#1511) and the Pole Barn (#2309). Construction of the new building would involve ground disturbance from digging a 3 - 4 foot deep foundation and a 50 -100 foot long/3.5-foot deep underground trench for the power line leading from the power source to the building. An electrical system, heating-ventilation system, and a new underground power line would be installed for the new building. The decision to place the power line underground is based on avoiding the risks associated with snow loads such as “silver thaw” and falling trees. A back-up generator would be installed for safety purposes.

The area where the building would be constructed at the Willard Site would need to be re-plumbed and the septic system accessed for disposal purposes; however, the 1000 gallon septic tank was last pumped in 1995 and was in good condition at that inspection. The septic system was built for the use of 24 to 50 people.

Once in the new building, the Center would continue its operations as they are now, much like a veterinarian clinic, serving as “fish doctors.” In the coming twenty years, the workload would likely increase, requiring up to twelve people to handle the expanding role of conserving and restoring runs of salmon to the Columbia River Basin, providing better opportunities for fishing in Washington, Oregon and Idaho. Water quality testing may be added, too, as another duty.


Lava Creek
Willard
0.1
0
0.1
0.2 Miles
Location of New Fish Health Lab Building
Willard NFHC Project Site
Fish-bearing Streams
N
W
E
S

1.3 Management Direction

Actions occurring on Gifford Pinchot National Forest lands are guided by the *Gifford Pinchot National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan* (1990), amended by the *Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest FWS and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl* (1994, commonly known as the Northwest Forest Plan). These planning documents establish land allocations which are subdivided Management Areas. Goals, objectives, standards, and guidelines for managing lands within each of the land allocations and their included Management Areas are set forth by these plans.

The Willard Work Center is located within the Administrative Site Management Area. The goal of Administrative Sites is to provide for facilities required to accomplish administration of the National Forest. The Standards and Guidelines for Administrative Sites allow the issuance of permits that are consistent with the purposes of the Administrative Site. Relocation of the Center to the Willard Work Center would be consistent with the Standards and Guidelines for Administrative Sites under the plans mentioned above. Additionally, the proposed action would not change the land use and purpose. Buildings, roads, and other facilities would still be evident.

1.4 Decisions to be Made and Authorities

The Forest Supervisor of the Gifford Pinchot National Forest will determine whether or not the FS will proceed with the proposed action to issue the FWS a Special Use Permit for construction of a new facility and use and occupancy of the Willard Site.

The Assistant Regional Director for Fishery Resources will determine whether or not the FWS will proceed with the proposed action to relocate the Center to the Willard Site. The Assistant Regional Director will consider several factors in evaluating the proposed action and the alternatives to make a final decision:
(1) accomplishing the purpose and need; (2) the effects on public health and safety,
(3) manageability; and (4) financial liability.

These decisions will be based on an inter-Departmental MOU, the FS Special Use Permit, and Operation Plan; public comments; and the analysis documented in this EA.

The FS and FWS are cooperating agencies under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for the Environmental Assessment. The authorities for the proposed action are the Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956, as amended (16 U.S.C. 742(a)-754); Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C.1532-1544, 87 Stat. 884); Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act of 1934, as amended (16 U.S.C. 661 et seq.); Mitchell Act of 1946 (16 USC 755-757; 52 Stat. 345); and the Salmon and Steelhead Conservation and Enhancement Act of 1980 (94 Stat. 3299; 16 U.S.C. 3301-3371).

1.5 Scoping and Public Involvement

The FS and FWS sought comments from the public in April 2004 via legal notices printed in the local newspapers (Skamania County *Pioneer* and *The Enterprise*) and the Gifford Pinchot National Forest quarterly schedule of proposed actions, *Pinchot Projects*. There were no issues

or concerns raised by the public. The FS and FWS considered the public interest when developing the proposed action and analyzing the proposed action and alternatives described in this EA.

The FS and FWS identified several issues to be addressed including clean up of existing contamination on the property, how the historic structures would be handled, whether or not there would be impacts from the demolition and construction, how the FWS would connect to suitable water and electrical sources, and how lab waste generated by operating the Center would be disposed of at the Willard Site. These issues are examined under Chapter 3.

Chapter 2. ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED ACTION

2.0 No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative serves as a baseline for comparison of the effects of the Proposed Action and any other alternatives and may be considered for selection as a viable alternative. Under the No Action Alternative, the FWS would continue to operate the Center in the same way, at its current location. Some of the Center's work would be out-sourced to another laboratory (if available) or the laboratory modified in place.

2.1 Other Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Further Study

The FWS considered expanding the existing facility at the Spring Creek Site to meet the Center's space needs. However, the building could not be expanded on the first story due to non-compliance with the Columbia River Gorge Scenic Act nor could a second story addition be sufficiently expanded to meet the Center's space needs. Additionally, as mentioned above, the Spring Creek Site is inherently limited in that an electron microscope cannot be used due to the vibration of passing trains.

In the FWS's search for a site which could accommodate a larger Center, the FS provided the FWS with a list of potential FS sites for relocating the Center throughout the geographic area of Lower Columbia River Basin, the area over which the Center provides support services. Joint visits were made to these sites. Only the Wind River Site and the Willard Site appeared to have potential for operating the Center. However, upon closer investigation, the Wind River Site was ruled out because it has limited building space as well. Maintenance of the water system, under agreement between the FS and Skamania County, is out of compliance with the State and the Wind River Site is out of commutable distance for some of the current Center employees. Thus, the FWS concluded that relocation of the Center to the Wind River Site was infeasible, and therefore, the Wind River Site is not considered in this EA as a practicable alternative. The Willard Site, on the other hand, was found to be potentially suitable for relocation of the Center. No other viable options have surfaced in the FWS's search for potential sites to relocate the Center. Thus, the EA evaluates relocating the Center to the Willard Site and compares this proposed action to taking no action for meeting the purpose and need identified by the FWS for effectively operating the Center.

2.2 Required Mitigation

Relocation of the Center to the Willard Site, under the proposed action, would require the mitigation outlined in this section of the EA.

The concrete slab foundation underneath the FS Front Office Building #2011 would be removed after the building is demolished; the underground oil tank, asbestos, and lead paint removed; and any other unsafe materials would be safely discarded.

Concrete slab foundations, underground storage tanks, asbestos, and lead paint would be removed from the other structures that would be demolished and removed from the Willard Site as well, and any unsafe materials would be safely discarded.

Existing contamination throughout the 11-acre Willard Site would be removed and remediated in accordance with Federal, State, and County environmental laws and FWS directives.

In constructing the new Center, the FWS would minimize or eliminate impacts to the riparian habitat through the selection of a contractor based on their record of careful work with regard to environmentally sensitive areas. The contract would include specifications for erosion control, and the construction work would be scheduled prior to the winter rains in order to reduce erosion. The FWS would also place silt fences at the edge of the riparian area to avoid erosion.

The FWS would ensure the Center's fuel storage facilities have appropriate containment to prevent spills, including the use of concrete pads with curbing to capture any leakage.

Chapter 3. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

The Willard Site is situated on a 64.4-acre parcel of the Gifford Pinchot National Forest surrounded by private timber company lands. The elevation is 1260 feet above mean sea level and the topography is flat. The property is bounded by Lava Creek on the north side and Gifford Pinchot National Forest on the west side. One hundred yards south of the property, a private lumber mill and private residences form the southern boundary. The boundary on the east side is Willard Road.

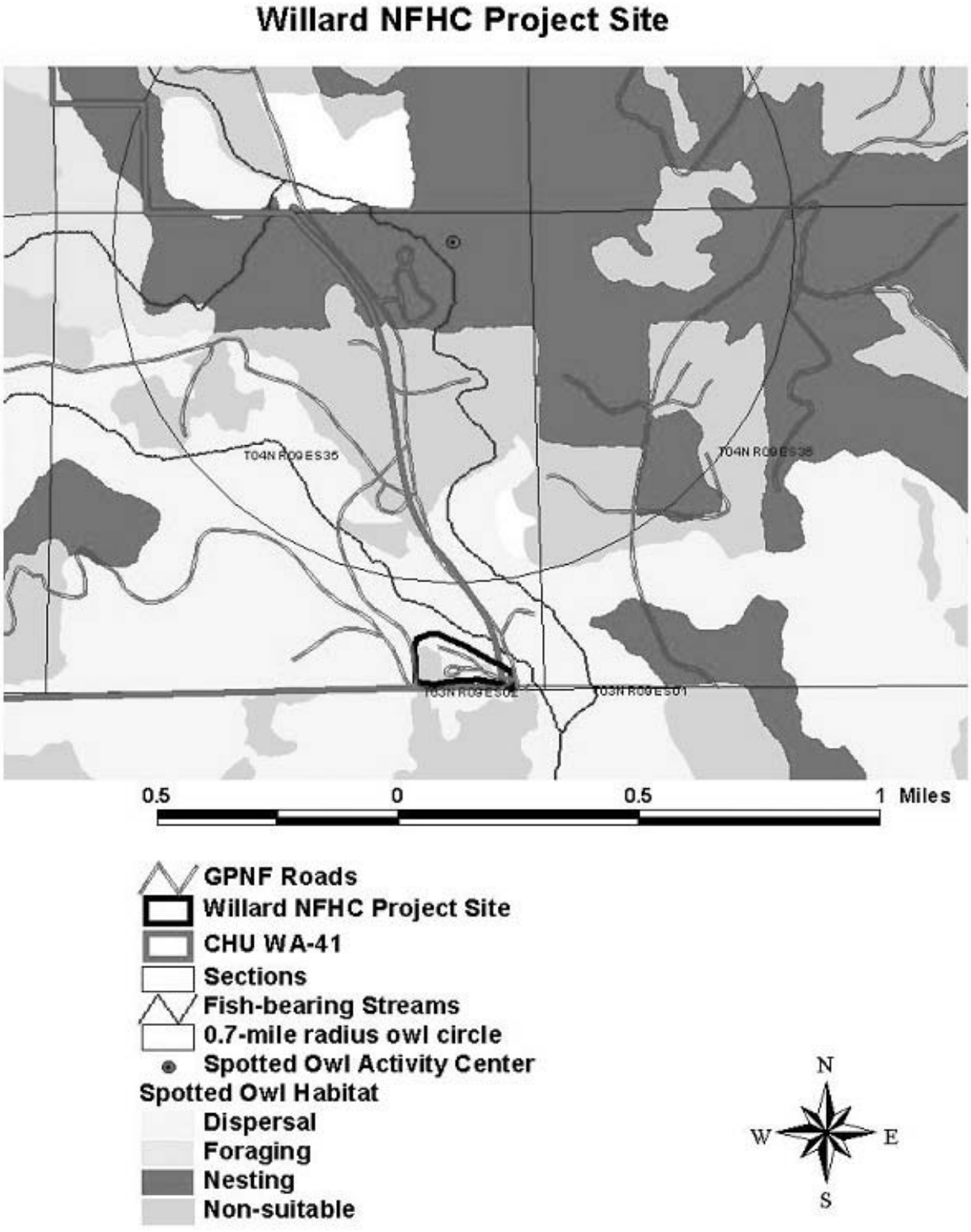
3.0 Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat

Northern Spotted Owl *(Strix occidentalis caurina)*
The northern spotted owl was listed as a threatened species throughout its range in Washington, Oregon, and northern California effective July 23, 1990 (USDI 1990). Loss of late-successional forest habitat from timber harvest was the primary reason for the listing. There are seventeen documented spotted owl activity centers that are either completely or partially contained within the Little White Salmon watershed (USDA 1995). One activity center located near the Moss Creek Campground is approximately 0.9 miles north of the Willard project site (Figure 2). A nesting pair of spotted owls was last documented at this activity center in 1999 (WDNR 2004). There have been no surveys for spotted owls in this area since 1999, so the current status of this activity center is unknown, but it is presumed to be occupied. In the Washington Cascades, we utilize 0.7-mile and 1.8-mile radius circles surrounding an activity center to represent the core area and the median home range area for spotted owls, respectively (USDI 1992a). The Willard project site is located within the median home range of the Moss Creek activity center.

The Gifford Pinchot National Forest vegetation database indicates that the forest surrounding the Willard Site is approximately 75 years old and primarily Douglas-fir. The vegetation database classifies this area as dispersal habitat (Figure 1). Based on our site visit, we classified the habitat surrounding the project site as "young forest marginal" habitat for northern spotted owls (WFPB 2000). In other words, the forest likely supports some limited northern spotted owl foraging or dispersal opportunities, but it lacks the structural features (i.e. large trees, snags with cavities, or limb platforms) required for spotted owl nesting. According to the vegetation data, the nearest spotted owl nesting habitat is located approximately 0.25 miles east of the project.

The project site is continuously subjected to the noise and activity associated with the community of Willard (i.e. sawmill noise, vehicles, log-trucks, etc.). Due to the location of the project site within Willard, we do not believe that the noise and activity associated with the construction and operation of the Center would be significantly different from the existing background noise in the area. The presence of the Center would not change the functional value of the adjacent forest as spotted owl dispersal/foraging habitat because this area has been subjected to the noise and activity associated with the Willard community and the FS Work Center for the past 75 years. No spotted owl habitat would be removed as part of the proposed action. Therefore, it is the FS and FWS' determination that the project would have no effect to spotted owls. This determination is based on the rationale that the FWS' construction and occupancy of the Willard Site with the Center would not affect spotted owl roosting, nesting, foraging, or dispersal habitat and/or behaviors. This determination does not require consultation with the FWS.

Figure 2. Map of spotted owl habitat surrounding the Willard Fish Health Center project site.



Designated Northern Spotted Owl Critical Habitat
Critical habitat was designated for the northern spotted owl on January 15, 1992, to provide essential habitat for the conservation and recovery of the species (USDI 1992b). The primary constituent elements of critical habitat for spotted owls are the physical and biological features that support nesting, roosting, foraging, and dispersal (USDI 1992b). The Willard project site is located within the boundaries of northern spotted owl critical habitat unit WA-41 (CHU WA-41) (Figure 1). However, because the Willard project site has been a developed administrative site for over 75 years, there is no expectation that these lands would ever attain habitat features essential for the conservation of the spotted owl. In the Final Rule listing critical habitat, the FWS determined that some small areas of non-habitat such as lava-flows, alpine areas, poor timber sites, airports, roads, parking lots, and water bodies are not affected by the critical habitat designation because they will never contain the constituent elements (USDI 1992b). The Willard project site clearly falls within this definition of areas that are not subject to the critical habitat rule. Because the construction and operation of the Center would not result in loss of any of the primary constituent elements of critical habitat, the FS and FWS determined that the proposed action would have no effect to spotted owl critical habitat. This determination is based on the rationale that the presence of the Center would not change the functional value of the adjacent forest as spotted owl dispersal/foraging habitat because this area has been subjected to the noise and activity associated with the Willard community and the FS Work Center for the past 75 years. The no effect determination is also based on the rationale that because this area has been an administrative site for many years, there is no expectation that this site will ever provide critical habitat for spotted owls. This determination does not require consultation with the FWS.

Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus)*
The bald eagle was federally listed as a threatened species in Washington in 1978 (USDI 1986). There are no known bald eagles nests in the Little White Salmon watershed (WDNR 2004, USDA 1995). Bald eagles are known to utilize portions of the lower Little White Salmon River near the Columbia River corridor during the winter months for roosting and feeding. Because bald eagles are seasonally present in the watershed, it is likely that bald eagles may occasionally pass over the Willard project area during migrations. However, there are no aspects of the construction and occupancy of the Center that would potentially affect bald eagle roosting, nesting, or feeding habitat and/or behavior. Therefore, the project would have no effect on bald eagles.

Larch Mountain Salamander *(Plethodon larselli)* **and Terrestrial Mollusks**
The Larch Mountain salamander is listed as a sensitive species by the Regional Forester, and as a FWS species of concern. Under the Northwest Forest Plan, the Larch Mountain salamander was listed as Survey & Manage species requiring pre-disturbance surveys for any activities that are likely to affect their habitat (USDA and USDI 2004). There are 87 known Larch Mountain salamander sites documented on Federal lands. In the Little White Salmon watershed, there are at least eight documented sites, including one site located approximately 0.5 miles northwest of the Willard project site (WDNR 2004). The Larch Mountain Salamander occurs in variety of habitat types including talus and rocky slopes within a dense conifer overstory. At the Willard project site the forested riparian slope adjacent to Lava Creek is potential habitat for Larch Mountain salamander. Because there would be no ground disturbance or vegetation removal in this area, there is no need to conduct a pre-disturbance salamander survey. No aspect of the construction or operation of the Center is expected to impact Larch Mountain salamanders or

their habitat. Areas within the project site where ground disturbance would occur during construction do not provide suitable habitat for Larch Mountain salamander (i.e. grass lawn adjacent to existing buildings). None of the riparian trees and shrubs that exist adjacent to the project site would be removed, and no change in micro-climatic conditions on the riparian slope is anticipated. Therefore, the construction and operation of the Center would have no impact to the Larch Mountain salamander. Similarly, no impacts are anticipated to rare terrestrial mollusk species that were previously managed under the Survey & Manage program for the same reasons the FS and FWS believe there will be no impact to Larch Mountain salamander.

Townsend's Big-eared Bat (*Corynorhinus townsendii)*
Townsend's big-eared bat is listed as a sensitive species by the Regional Forester, and as a FWS species of concern. Under the Northwest Forest Plan, bats are afforded protection buffers for known roosting and hibernation sites. In the western United States, Townsend's big-eared bats use caves, old mines, and buildings as summer day roosts, with buildings being used most often in humid coastal areas (Nagorsen and Brigham 1993). In Washington, there are 75 documented Townsend's sites in the Natural Heritage database, including 28 sites on the Gifford Pinchot National Forest. All of the sites documented on the Gifford Pinchot National Forest have been associated with caves. The nearest documented site the project area is located about 12 miles north in the upper Little White Salmon watershed (WDNR 2004).

As previously stated, we examined the Old Office Building #2011 for potential bat roosts. There did not appear to be any openings on the outside of the building that would allow bats to enter the structure. Looking inside the attic crawlspace, there did not appear to be any evidence of bats roosting in the attic. The FWS also examined the exterior of several other buildings on the project site and did not locate any evidence to suggest that bats are using these building for roosts. Based on this, the risk of impacting a sensitive bat species is very low. However, the survey effort was not comprehensive enough to ensure absolutely that no bats would be affected by the removal of buildings. Therefore, the construction of the Center may impact individuals or habitat, but will not likely contribute to a trend towards Federal listing or cause a loss of viability to the population or species. We believe this is a valid effects determination due to the low-likelihood that the species is present on the site, and the fact that there are 28 known roost sites on the Gifford Pinchot National Forest that occur in natural caves that are currently afforded protection under FS policy.

Essential Fish Habitat for Coho and Chinook Salmon
Essential fish habitat (EFH) has been designated under the Magnuson-Stevens Act to protect waters and substrates necessary for fish spawning, breeding, feeding, or growth to maturity (NMFS 1997). The geographic extent of freshwater EFH is specifically inclusive of all aquatic habitats within entire watersheds. In this case, the Middle-Columbia River – Hood basin (USGS hydrologic unit number 17070105) is identified as EFH for both Chinook and coho salmon. This basin includes the Little White Salmon River watershed. In the Little White Salmon River, upstream migration of anadromous fish such as Chinook, coho, and steelhead is blocked by a barrier dam located near the mouth of the river at the Little White Salmon National Fish Hatchery. Historically, anadromous fish were blocked at a natural barrier falls located in the lower river at river mile 1.38. No anadromous fish species exist in the watershed today with the exception of hatchery reared fall and spring Chinook and coho salmon which are present in Drano Lake at the river's confluence with the Columbia River (USDA 1995), approximately 6

miles downriver from the proposed Center at Willard. No threatened, endangered, or sensitive fish species have been documented in the watershed above Drano Lake (USDA 1995).

The northern boundary of the Willard project site borders the Lava Creek riparian corridor for approximately 1,000 feet. The naturally vegetated riparian corridor at the project site varies in width from approximately 100 feet to 250 feet (Figure 1). During the construction and operation of the Center, there would be no removal of the existing natural vegetation along the riparian slope, and no ground disturbance on the riparian slope, so there would be no loss of riparian shade or future sources of aquatic large wood debris. Additionally, there does not appear to be any risk of water quality contamination. There are no direct drainage ditches or surface water drainage features that directly link the project site to Lava Creek. Any sediment generated by the construction of the Center would be naturally filtered overland through 100-250 feet of riparian vegetation. Removal of several of the existing buildings on the site would have a nominal beneficial effect by reducing the amount of impervious surface in the watershed and by facilitating the natural re-vegetation of the riparian corridor. The FWS will ensure that all fuel storage facilities on the Willard Site have appropriate containment to prevent spills.

Aquatic habitat indicators include water quality, habitat access, habitat elements, channel conditions, hydrology, and watershed conditions. Although this project is located along the edge of a riparian corridor, short-term or long-term degradation of all aquatic habitat indicators other than the continued administrative use within the riparian corridor is not anticipated. The continued use of this site would preclude the natural regeneration of riparian vegetation at the location of the Center. Because this site is located approximately 6 miles upriver from anadromous fish habitat and there would be no loss or degradation of fish habitat indicators, the construction and operation the Center would have no effect to Essential Fish Habitat or listed fish species. This determination does not require consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service.

If the FWS does not relocate to the Willard Site under the No Action Alternative, the FS may demolish or remove all the buildings to eliminate the costs of maintenance and the Willard Site would remain vacant and unused until it was transferred to another agency or sold. In this case, there would be no change from the existing condition with regard to wildlife and wildlife habitat.

3.1 Historic

Three of the 14 buildings at the Willard Site were built by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930's. There are three historic buildings on the Willard Site. One, the Willard Garage (#1511), would be retained for use by the FWS and, under the terms of the Special Use Permit, would be managed and protected under the guidelines of the *Amended Programmatic Memorandum of Agreement For Management of Depression-Era Administrative Structures on National Forest Lands in Oregon and Washington* (PMOA) (1989). The other two historic buildings, the Willard Tool House (#2611) and the Willard Garage (#1510), according to the 2003 "Heritage Resource Survey and Assessment of Effects" (see References), are significant historic properties previously found eligible to the National Register of Historic Places due to their status as Depression-Era Administrative Buildings. Their management is governed by the (PMOA) and supplemental *Internal Management Guidelines*. The *Guidelines* recognize that, "In some cases changing administrative needs will result in the loss of some buildings." The proposed undertaking (proposed action in this EA) represents such a case.

To prepare the Willard Site for planned long-term FWS occupancy, the FS would propose for sale and removal the Willard Tool House (#2611) and the Willard Garage (#1510). Under the implementing regulations of the National Historic Preservation Act, this action would constitute an adverse effect on historic properties. Thus, to minimize the adverse effect and to be in compliance with Stipulation VII of the PMOA, the FS would attempt to sell the buildings with conditions regarding preservation and maintenance as deed covenants. In the event that sale is not possible with the deed covenants, the FS would attempt resale without the deed covenants. If no purchasers are found to move the two buildings, they would be demolished after *Historic American Building Survey* recordation. Distinctive building materials and hardware would be salvaged, stored, and retained for use the FS in future historic building restoration projects. By following the PMOA stipulations and procedures outlined above, the impact to the historic properties would be insignificant.

If the FWS does not relocate to the Willard Site under the No Action Alternative, the FS may demolish or remove all the buildings to eliminate the costs of maintenance and the Willard Site would remain vacant and unused until it was transferred to another agency or sold. In this case, the FS would not retain the Willard Garage (#1511) for use by the FWS. Instead this historic building would be proposed for sale and removal along with the other two historic buildings on the Willard Site, as described above.

3.2 Social and Economic

People in the sparsely populated community surrounding the Willard Site seek to stave off social and economic decline and have encouraged a re-introduction of operations at the Willard Site. Thus, it is likely the local community would appreciate a new structure to serve as a replacement landmark for the Old Office Building. A visitors lobby at the Center would provide information for tourists and the local community as the FS had done when the Willard Work Center was in operation. In years past, tourists would stop to get information about the area. The Center would renew this tradition with a visitor's kiosk which would contain educational pamphlets, maps, and possibly a video display to explain activities of the Center. The Center may also contract services, such as snowplowing, from citizens of the community with the intent of attracting a vendor that might provide food services, keeping in mind that the nearby USGS Fisheries Research Lab (over 100 people), Little White Salmon/Willard National Fish Hatcheries, Mill A school, and local residents might also partake. In conclusion, the new Center could provide minor benefits to Skamania County's economic and social well being which has been negatively affected by changes in Federal forest management and reduced Federal timber supply.

Traffic patterns created by the new Center are not expected to adversely affect the community. Seven employees would arrive at the Center at times ranging from 6:30 to 8:30 a.m. and leave at 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. Daily, one to four vehicles may travel from and back to the Willard Site in order to carry out duties at the hatcheries. Vehicles would rarely proceed north beyond the site. One to several times per year, there might be up to twenty vehicles visiting the site for small meetings. The FS had been renting the four living quarters at the Willard Site up through fall of 2003 so there had been daily traffic to and from the Site recently.

If the FWS does not relocate to the Willard Site under the No Action Alternative, the FS may demolish or remove all the buildings to eliminate the costs of maintenance and the Willard Site

would remain vacant, possibly subject to vandalism, and unused until it was transferred to another agency or sold. In this case, there would be no change from the existing social and economic conditions associated with the property.

3.3 Contaminants

The FWS has contracted with RMCAT Environmental Services, Inc., to perform an ASTM Standard Practice E 1527-00 Phase I Environmental Site Assessment and will contract with RMCAT to perform an ASTM Standard Practice E 1903-97 Phase II Environmental Site Assessment for the Willard Site. The Phase I survey and report has recently been completed. Upon review of the Phase I by USFWS, the Phase II will be scheduled to be performed. To date, there have been no major contaminant problems identified. However, there is probable soil contamination associated with an above-ground petroleum tank and several storage containers that may pose an environmental or health and safety threat. Any existing contamination discovered will be removed and remediated in accordance with Federal, State, and County environmental regulations and FWS directives.

Under the proposed action, the FWS would relocate the Center to the location of the Front Office Building #2011 on the Willard Site. It has a 1728 square footprint (72 foot long/25 feet deep). The Front Office Building would be replaced with a new one-story building of 4500 square footprint (90 foot long/50 foot deep). The concrete slab foundation underneath the FS Front Office Building would be removed after the building was demolished; the underground oil tank beneath the construction site removed; and asbestos, lead paint, and any other unsafe materials safely discarded from the construction site. The FWS is committed to isolating and removing hazardous materials at the construction site in accordance with the Code of Federal Regulations, 40 CFR, 61.150A-B, at no cost to the FS.

It is estimated that the Center produces less than 10 pounds of solid chemical waste per year. This would be the case at the Willard Site as well. The Center follows Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OHSA), Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), Clean Water Act (CWA), and other Federal and State regulations for storage, use and disposal of chemicals. By Washington State standards, the Center is considered a Small Quantity Generator of Hazardous Waste (less than 220 lbs/month or no more than 2.2 lbs/month of acutely dangerous chemical product waste). This is a category shared by medical/dental clinics, laboratories, and some road maintenance shops. The chemicals used by the Center are listed in Appendix A. Of these, only formaldehyde (formalin), sodium azide, phenol, and alpha-naphthylamine are considered acutely dangerous. The Center keeps about 3 gallons of formaldehyde and uses about 1 gallon per year. Only 0.02 grams of the stored 10 grams of sodium azide are used per year. Phenol and alpha-naphthylamine are kept in lesser amounts and used infrequently.

In a year, about 6,000 fish are sampled and about 3,000 of these are brought as whole fish to the Center. After collection of specific tissues for testing, the carcasses are frozen until disposal into a lidded dumpster on garbage collection day. This is done to avoid offensive odors and garbage raiders. These fish do not pose a threat to human, animal, or fish health. Any suspect fish and all diseased tissues, contaminant testing substances, and equipment are autoclaved under high heat/pressure to completely destroy “germs” before disposal into the garbage. Additionally,

equipment like pipettes and flasks are decontaminated in a sterilizing mix of chlorine. There are no human health concerns generated by the fish examined at the Center.

In 2001, a concerted effort was made to dispose of all unnecessary hazardous chemicals and these were removed by Phillips Environmental, a hazardous waste management firm. Currently set aside for future waste disposal are: 1 gallon of a dilute (10%) formaldehyde solution and 3 small mercury light bulbs (for a microscope). Proper disposal of this waste will occur before the Center moves to the Willard site.

Vehicles would continue to be serviced off-site so there are no oil or anti-freeze concerns. All other chemicals used by the Center are disposed according to their individual MSDS (Material Safety Data Sheet) requirements as designated by OSHA and are either put into the garbage or into the septic system.

The Center does not discharge any point source pollution at its present site nor would the Center do so at the Willard site. All told, it is unlikely that the Center would use or dispose of any more chemicals than has occurred to date by the FS at the Site. The original use of the property was by the Forest Road Maintenance Crew which used a variety of materials for road building, soil analysis, and making signs. The new Center is unlikely to ever approach the volume of hazardous chemicals formerly used and stored on site by the Forest Maintenance Crew which included paints (lead-based, latex), asphalt products, petroleum-based products, solvents (methylene chloride, methanol, etc.), chemicals for soil testing, acids (sulfuric, hydrochloric), herbicides and pesticides. In conclusion, with regard to contaminants, the operations of the Center would have an insignificant impact on the resources of the Willard Site.

If the FWS does not relocate to the Willard Site under the No Action Alternative, the FS may demolish or remove all the buildings to eliminate the costs of maintenance and the Willard Site would remain vacant and unused until it was transferred to another agency or sold. In this case, there would be no change from the existing conditions with regard to contaminants.

3.4 Cumulative Effects

NEPA defines “cumulative impact” as “the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (Federal or non-Federal agency) or person undertakes such other actions” (40 CFR Section 1508.7).

Other actions that would have an effect on the human environment within the vicinity are primarily public and private timber harvest. Timber harvest would modify wildlife habitat. However, the proposed action would have no effect to listed terrestrial or aquatic species. Effects would remain cumulatively insignificant if the proposed action were implemented.

If the FWS does not relocate to the Willard Site under the No Action Alternative, the FS may demolish or remove all the buildings to eliminate the costs of maintenance and the Willard Site would remain vacant, possibly subject to vandalism, and unused until it was transferred to another agency or sold. In this case, there would be no change from the existing condition.

Chapter 4. CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION WITH OTHERS

4.0 Agency Coordination and Public Involvement

The FS and the FWS informed landowners, community organizations, interested groups, Federal, State, Tribal (Yakama Nation), and local government, and individuals about the proposed project through advertisement in the local newspapers, The Skamania County *Pioneer* and *The Enterprise*, and through the Gifford Pinchot National Forest schedule of proposed actions, *Pinchot Projects.* The FS and the FWS consulted with agencies and organizations within the County of Skamania (see Appendix B).

4.1 Environmental Review

The FS and FWS, like other Federal agencies, must comply with the National Environmental Policy Act. An EA is required under NEPA to evaluate reasonable alternatives that will meet the objectives and assess the possible impacts. The analysis in this EA serves as the basis for determining whether or not implementation of the proposed action would constitute a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. The EA facilitates the involvement of government agencies and the public in the decision making process.

4.2 Other Federal Laws, Regulations, and Executive Orders

In undertaking the proposed action, the FS and FWS would comply with the following Federal laws, executive orders, and legislative acts: Floodplain Management (Executive Order 11988); Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs (Executive Order 12372); Protection of Wetlands (Executive Order 11990); Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations (Executive Order 12898); Hazardous Substances Determinations (Secretarial Order 3127); the Protection of Historical, Archaeological, and Scientific Properties (Executive Order 11593); and the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended; and the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended.

4.3 Distribution and Availability

Notice of the release and availability of the EA was sent for review and comment to the agencies, organizations, community groups, and individuals listed in Appendix B. Additional copies of these documents are available from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Refuge Planning, 911 N.E. 11th Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97232-4181, phone (800) 662-8933; the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Lower Columbia River Fish Health Center, Underwood, Washington, phone (509) 493-3156; and the U.S. Forest Service, Gifford Pinchot National Forest, South Zone Planning Team, 2455 Highway 141, Trout Lake, WA 98650, phone (509) 395-3411. The documents are also available on the World Wide Web at the following address: *http://pacific.fws.gov/refuges/.*

Chapter 5. PLANNING TEAM

5.0 Planning Team

Ted Buerger, Environmental Contaminants Specialist, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Portland, Oregon.

Bengt Coffin, Hydrologist, U.S. Forest Service, Vancouver, Washington

Chuck Eggleston, Fisheries Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Portland, Oregon

Jeremy Fleming, Environmental Compliance Specialist, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Portland, Oregon

Ron Freeman, Engineering, Public Service, Lands & Minerals Staff Officer, U.S. Forest Service, Vancouver, Washington

Dan Forney, Regional Environmental Compliance Coordinator, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Portland, Oregon

Susan Gutenberger, Project Leader, Lower Columbia River Fish Health Center, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Underwood, Washington

Vince Harke, Endangered Species Biologist, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Lacey, Washington

Cynthia M Henchell, South Zone Planning Program Leader, U.S. Forest Service, Trout Lake, Washington

Marv Henry, Civil Engineer, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Portland, Oregon

Rich Johnson, Fisheries Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Portland, Oregon

Tom Manabe, Realty Specialist, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Portland Oregon

Steve Nelson, Recreation Planner, U.S. Forest Service, Vancouver, Washington

Cathy Osugi, Refuge Planner, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Portland, Oregon

Virginia Parks, Cultural Resource Specialist, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Portland, Oregon

Eric Pelton, Assistant Project Leader, Lower Columbia River Fish Health Center, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Underwood, Washington

Georgia Shirilla, Realty Specialist, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Portland, Oregon

LouAnn Speulda, Cultural Resource Specialist, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Portland, Oregon

Don Steffeck, Environmental Contaminants Specialist, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Portland, Oregon

Mitch Wainwright, Wildlife Biologist, U.S. Forest Service, Trout Lake, Washington

Vicky Wessling, Realty Specialist, Columbia Land Area Zone, U.S. Forest Service, Vancouver, Washington

Amy Wing, Refuge Planner, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Portland, Oregon

REFERENCES

Nagorsen, D.W., and R.M. Brigham. 1993. Bats of British Columbia. UBC Press, Vancouver, BC.

NMFS 1997. Magnuson-Stevens Act Provisions; Essential Fish Habitat (EFH). National Marine Fisheries Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Department of Commerce. Federal Register Vol. 62, No. 244:66531-66559. December 19, 1997.

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USDI 2000. National Wild Fish Health Survey: Lower Columbia River Fish Health Center. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Portland, OR. 6 pp.

WDNR 2004. Washington Department of Natural Resources and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. Heritage Database – Wildlife Occurrences in Washington State. Olympia, Washington. Note: these data are subject to WDFW and WDNR sensitive data policies.

WFPB 2000. Washington Forest Practices Board – Forest Practices Rule Book – WAC 222. April 2000.

Appendix A

CHEMICAL LIST

for the

Lower Columbia River Fish Health Center, USFWS

(October 2003)

Reference codes for Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS), OSHA:

Book 1 includes chemicals A-H, Book 2 includes chemicals I- P, Book 3 includes chemicals Q-Z, Book 4 includes all other MSDS (household, car items, etc.) not found in Books 1-3.
NOTE: The MSDS for all chemicals will be coded by book, in alphabetical order along with storage location. For example: Acetone, (book 1/a), receiving room/ flammable cabinet

Any chemical waste that cannot be safely disposed through garbage or septic system is stored in a Hazardous Materials cabinet for removal by a professional hazardous waste disposal company.

ACUTELY DANGEROUS CHEMICALS

Formaldehyde (formalin) (bk1/f), receiving rm/flammable cabinet– 12 Liters, 2 Liters used/yr
Sodium Azide (bk3/s), virology rm– 10 g, 0.02 g used/yr
Phenol Red Concentrate (bk2/p), main lab/refrigerator– 10 ml; rarely used
Alpha-naphthylamine (bk1), main lab/refrigerator–10 g; rarely used

DANGEROUS CHEMICALS

Disposal is done in accordance with OSHA Material Safety Data Sheets; however, during usage, most evaporates into air.
Acetone (bk1/a), receiving rm/flammable cabinet– 2 liters; use 10-50 ml/yr
Methanol (bk3/m), receiving rm/flammable cabinet– 16 liters; use 12 liters/yr

CHEMICALS

These chemicals are kept and used in small amounts. For a year, total disposal of chemicals is estimated at less than 10 lbs solids and 28 Liters (7.4 gallons). Disposal is done in accordance with OSHA Material Safety Data Sheets.

API kits(bk1/a), main lab/refrigerator
Brilliant Blue G (bk1/b), microscope rm
Bromine Water (bk1/b), receiving rm/ container on shelf

Bromoresol Green-Methyl Red (bk1/a), microscope rm
Bromothymol Blue reagent (bk1/b), microscope rm
Carbol-Fuchsin Solution (bk1/c), microscope rm
Chromium Potassium Sulfate (bk1/c), main lab/north upper cupboard
Citric Acid (Monohydrate powder) (bk1/c), virology rm, main lab/north upper cupboard
Crystal Violet (bk1/c), microscope rm
2-4 Diamino-6,7 Diisoproplpterdine (bk1/d), main lab/refrigerator
Diff-Quik Stain Kit (bk1/d), receiving rm/flammable cabinet
Erichrome Black T (bk1/e), microscope rm
Ethidium Bromide (bk1/e), pcr lab
Ethyl Alcohol (ethanol) (bk1/e), receiving rm/flammable cupboard
Evans Blue (bk1/e), microscope rm
FA Rodamine Counterstain (bk1/f), main lab/refrigerator
Ferric Chloride (bk1/f), main lab/north upper cupboard
Giemsa Stain (bk1/g), microscope rm
Glutaraldehyde (bk1/g), main lab/Elisa freezer
Hydrochloric Acid (bk1/h), receiving rm/corrosive cabinet under fume hood
Hydrogen Peroxide, 30 % (bk1/h), virology rm/refrigerator
Iso Amyl Acetate (bk1/i), main lab/safety cabinet
Light Green Counterstain (bk1/l), microscope rm
Lugols Solution (bk2/l), microscope rm
Magnesium salts (bk2/m), virology/bact/main lab/cupboard
Malachite Green (bk2/m), microscope rm
Methyl Violet 2B (bk2/m), microscope rm
Methylene Blue (bk2/m), receiving rm/flammable cabinet
Nitric Acid (bk2/n), receiving rm/corrosive cabinet under fume hood
Oxidase reagent (bk2/o), main lab/refrigerator
Periodic Acid 2.3% (bk2/p), main lab/refrigerator
Perioxidase (bk2/p), main lab/ELISA refrigerator
Pinacynol Chloride (bk2/p), main lab/refrigerator
Potassium salts virology/main lab/north upper cupboard
Povidine Iodine (bk2), main lab–24 Liters, use 24 liters/yr
Safranin O (bk3/s) microscope rm
Silver Nitrate USP (bk3/s), receiving rm/poison cabinet
Sodium salts (bk3/s), main lab/bacteria cupboard
Sulfanilic Acid Crystals (bk3/main lab/north upper cupboard
Sulfuric Acid (bk3/s), receiving rm/corrosive cabinet under fume hood
Temac Methyl Ammonium (bk3/t), pcr lab/main lab Elisa freezer
Tetramethylammonium Chloride Solution (bk3/t), virology rm
Thimersol (bk3/t), ELISA rm
Trizme Hydrochloride (bk3/t), virology rm/cupboard
Tween 20 (bk3/t), main lab/under hood/ ELISA rm
Zinc (bk3/z), receiving rm/flammable cabinet

STORE BOUGHT PRODUCTS

CLEANSERS

Biz Bleach, main lab/under north sink
Blue Windex, main lab under north sink
Clorox Bleach, main lab/under north sink
Formula 409 Cleanser, main lab/under north sink, kitchen sink
Lysol Toilet Bowl Cleanser, bathrooms
Rug Doctor Steam Detergent, kitchen/under sink
Woolite Carpet Cleaner, receiving rm/shelf

DEGREASER/LUBRICANTS

DJ-154, receiving rm/shelf
Fluoro Glide, receiving rm/shelf
Household 3 in 1 oil, receving rm/shelf
Quick Shot, receiving rm/shelf
WD-40, receiving rm/shelf

SOAPS

Dawn Dish Soap, mainlab/north sink, kitchen sink
Derma Scrub, main lab under north sink
Softsoap antibacterial-moisturizing soap, by all sinks

CAR PRODUCTS

Mac's Thermo Aide, receiving rm/shelf
Motor Oil 10W40, receiving rm/shelf
Power Steering Fluid, receiving rm/shelf
TR3 resin Glaze Car Polish, receiving rm/shelf
Turtle Wax Zip Car Wash, receiving rm/shelf
Windshield Cleanser 20/10, receiving rm/shelf
Windshield De-Icer, receiving rm/shelf

INSECT/GARDEN SUPPLIES

Dcon Rats & Mice Killer, main lab/under north sink, storage shed
Raid Ant & Roach Killer, receiving rm/shelf
Rose and Floral Spray, receiving rm/shelf

OFFICE SUPPLIES

Canon EP-S Cartridge, main office/laser jet printer
FX1 Cartridge, main office fax machine
Hewlett Pachard Deskjet Color Printer, main office printer
Marking Pens, kitchen/storage cupboard
Toner Powder/Canon Copier, library copier
White out, kitchen/storage cupboard

MISCELLANEOUS STORE PRODUCTS

Glade Potpourri Floral Spray, womens bathroom
Vinegar, main lab/under north sink
Salt, main lab/bacteria cupboard

MEDICAL SUPPLIES

Neosporin Plus Ointment, main lab/first aide cabinet
2nd Skin moist Burn Pads, main lab/first aide cabinet
Sting Ease Swabs, main lab/first aide cabinet
Waterjel Burn Treatment, main lab/first aide cabinet

PATCHING COMPOUNDS

25 Yr Acrylic Caulk, receiving rm/shelf
Contact Cement, receiving rm/shelf
Elmers Wood Glue, receiving rm/shelf
Fixall, receiving rm/shelf
Plumbers Putty, receiving rm/shelf
Ready Coat Rain Patch, receiving rm/shelf
Ross White Glue, receiving rm/shelf
Seam Sealer, receiving rm/shelf

Appendix B

NOTIFICATION LIST

Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission
Chris Golightly
729 N.E. Oregon Street, Suite 200
Portland, Oregon 97232

Cold Springs Conservancy
1012 Chenowith Road
Underwood, Washington, 98651

Gifford Pinchot Task Force
Kirsten Stade
917 S.W. Oak Street, Suite 410
Portland, Oregon 97205-2838

Underwood Conservation District
Jim White
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White Salmon, Washington 98672

Northwest Ecosystem Alliance
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Northwest Environmental Defense Center
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