

EO-907



SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
Washington, DC 20423

Office of Economics, Environmental Analysis and Administration

April 28, 2008

Ms. Kate Valdez, THPO
Cultural Resources Officer
Yakama Nation
P.O. Box 151
Toppenish, WA 98948-0151

**Re: Section 106 Consultation and Cultural Resources Discipline
Report / Survey for STB Finance Docket No. 34936, Northern
Columbia Basin Railroad Project – Construction and Operation – In
Grant County, Washington**

Dear Ms. Valdez:

As you know, the Surface Transportation Board (Board) and the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) are conducting an environmental review of a proposed rail line construction project called the Northern Columbia Basin Railroad Project. The project is located in the Moses Lake area of Grant County, Washington. In a letter dated February 21, 2007, the Board and WSDOT formally invited the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs to become involved in the environmental review process pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, 16 U.S.C. 470f (NHPA).

In order to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA); Section 106 of the NHPA; the Board's environmental rules; WSDOT requirements; and other applicable Federal and state laws and regulations, the Board's Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) and WSDOT are preparing an Environmental Assessment that evaluates the potential environmental effects of the proposed project, including any effects on archaeological and historic resources.

On October 17, 2007, we sent a letter with information about the proposed project, including maps and a description of the Area of Potential Effect (APE), to the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (State Historic Preservation Office or SHPO). On October 31, 2007, Mr. Matthew Sterner, Transportation Archaeologist at the SHPO, concurred with our APE determination.¹

¹ Copies of these letters are included in the Cultural Resources Survey.

Following the SHPO's concurrence with the APE determination, a Cultural Resources Discipline Report / Survey (Survey) was prepared. The Survey found that the proposed project will not affect any known or previously recorded cultural resources. In addition, no prehistoric archaeological sites, historic-period archaeological sites, or traditional cultural properties were identified within the APE.

Enclosed is a copy of the Survey for your review and comment. Any comments or suggested changes must be provided within 30 days of receipt of this letter. Due to the delay in receiving mail at the Board, e-mail responses are strongly recommended in addition to hard copies of your response through regular mail.

Please send comments to:
Surface Transportation Board
Section of Environmental Analysis
395 E Street, S.W., Room 1108
Attn: Christa Dean
Washington D.C. 20423-0001

Please send emails to:
christa.dean@stb.dot.gov

Thank you for taking the time to review the Survey. We look forward to working with you to ensure that any tribal concerns regarding the project are included as part of the Section 106 and environmental review processes. If you have any questions about the proposed project, please do not hesitate to contact Christa Dean with SEA at (202) 245-0299 or Elizabeth Phinney with WSDOT at (360) 705-7902, or phinnee@wsdot.wa.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Victoria Rutson".

Victoria Rutson
Chief
Section of Environmental Analysis

cc: The Honorable Ralph Sampson, Chairman
Dr. Allyson Brooks, Washington SHPO
Elizabeth Phinney, WSDOT Rail

Enclosure: Project Cultural Resources Discipline Report / Survey