



COMMUNITY SUPPORT LETTER

SUN PEAK PRESERVE PROJECT

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The proposed Sun Peak Preserve project is a transformative river restoration project. The section of the Big Wood River between the BLM's Lake Creek Trailhead and the BLM's Sun Peak Day-use area is one of the most unstable reaches of the whole river. If we, as a community, do nothing, the river will continue to degrade, harming habitat for fish and other wildlife, exacerbating flooding downstream, and filling in the Hulen Meadows Pond. But together, our community can come together to reconnect the river to its floodplain, repair old damage, and restore the pond in a way that can bring the wonder of nature to all members of our Valley – regardless of physical ability or walk of life.

The Hulen Meadows reach of the Big Wood River has been severely degraded from anthropogenic activities such as the installation of the Sage Road bridge, which restricts the movement of the river; channelization of the river to protect Highway 75; and dredging from the initial creation of the pond. The impacts from the bridge and channelization have disconnected the river from its floodplain, which is causing increased erosion and inadequate sediment transportation through the system. The result has degraded fish and wildlife habitat and, if it continues, will increase flooding impacts to infrastructure downstream. We have the opportunity to restore this stretch of river and reverse some of the impacts.

The stream restoration design enhances fish and wildlife habitat, preserves the pond, and allows for natural river functions like appropriate sediment transport to occur to the greatest extent possible. The design encompasses approximately 2,000 feet of river; reconnects 4.5 acres of floodplain habitat; constructs large woody debris structures to mimic natural processes and increase diverse fish habitat; and replaces degraded rock drop structures to allow natural sediment transport. Creating a way to prevent the pond from filling in with sediment will protect this popular recreation amenity and also provide for crucial wildfire mitigation to nearby neighborhoods.

The pond was originally one of many excavation pits used as part of the road construction projects on Highway 75 and, like the others, was meant to serve as a sediment trap. When filled with water, the pond became an amenity enjoyed by many, as the quiet water provided a different experience than the nearby river for activities like learning to paddle board, kayaking, or throwing a stick for your dog. The Sun Peak Preserve project offers the opportunity to restore the pond and ensure access for everyone, regardless of physical ability.

I support the Sun Peak Preserve project that will enhance public lands for public good by restoring habitat critical for fish and wildlife and that will help create a more inclusive Wood River Valley.