

Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs 2008 Resolutions

RES. NO. 5: SUPPORT SELECTION OF “NO ACTION” ALTERNATIVE FOR WARM SPRINGS CASINO ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

BACKGROUND: The Columbia River Gorge (the “Gorge”) is an irreplaceable national scenic treasure. The proposed Warm Springs Casino development is proposed within this national treasure. The Mark O. Hatfield Wilderness and proposed Wilderness additions are located immediately south of this site. The Gorge is one of the most amazing corridors of North America. The area is comprised of basalt layers that were laid down more than 14 million years ago.

The Mazamas’ vision for this area and the communities within it is sustainable development that does not negatively impact the visual beauty of the Columbia River Gorge, that serves to repair and enhance the site and adjacent waters and not degrade them, and that air quality is improved and not further degraded.

The proposed Casino would negatively impact the Gorge at the ground level, the river level properties and at the cliff and ridge level. These features define and shape the Gorge. The proposed Casino would also negatively impact the Columbia River, which flows through the Scenic Area, and the land on both sides of the river. This massive development is proposed for the eastern end of the town of Cascade Locks on and near Herman Creek and Government Cove. This creek flows from the adjacent Wilderness and provides habitat for several endangered species of *salmonids*.

The proposal would negatively impact the visual experience in the Scenic Area, increase noise impacts and reduce air quality. The development would also negatively impact water quality in adjacent streams and the waters of the Columbia River. These impacts are substantial and the proposal does not provide for sufficient mitigation. The site development would impact the waters of Herman Creek, Government Island Cove, and the Columbia River through discharges of storm-water from surface parking, parking garages, and buildings. Although the proposal includes a variety of water detention methods, the end result is that the proposal would lead to increases in pollution impacting several endangered species using Herman Creek and the Columbia River.

In conclusion, the proposed Casino is overwhelmingly large and intense for an area intended by Congress to preserve the stunning natural beauty of the Gorge. The purpose of the Gorge Act was intended to limit large urban style development. This proposal is likely to be followed by additional development proposals. The three existing casinos in Oregon are now expending up to \$70 million in additional development.

In addition, the proposal at Broughton near White Salmon seems poised to move forward with year-round residential and resort construction. The proposed casino at Cascade Locks would lead to increased pressure for intense retail operations in a widely visible area. These

reasonably foreseeable impacts must be disclosed and considered.

RESOLUTION: The FWOC supports the selection of the NO ACTION alternative for the Warm Springs Resort EIS and denial of the proposed resort's application, because the resort would degrade the Columbia River Gorge Scenic Area, a national treasure. Submitted by and Contact: Mazamas, Joan Zuber, email: zuberj@juno.com