

April 2, 2009

Franklin County Water Conservancy Board
1620 Road 44 North
Pasco, WA 99301

Re: Easterday-Pepiot Transfer, Water Right G3-00101C

Dear Franklin County WCB Members,

This letter is provided by Five Corners Family Farmers, a membership-based non profit organization dedicated to protecting the water resources and environment of North Franklin County, as a supplement to the protest filed by Five Corners Family Farmers and the Center for Environmental Law and Policy regarding the transfer of Water Right G3-00101C. It is intended to provide documentation of declining groundwater levels in the Connell/Kahlotus area as evidenced by the disappearance of surface lakes in the area, and declining area well levels.

Since the late 1960's Sulphur Lake and Kahlotus Lake water levels have steadily declined until today they are essentially dry, as illustrated by the included photographs. Sulphur Lake holds some runoff in winter and spring, which disappears by summer. Locals recall fishing and boating on Kahlotus Lake in the 1960's – during this time one could actually rent boats on the lake, and the town of Kahlotus was subject to flooding from the lake during high water. Today, landowners are irrigating and farming the lake bed at its western end, and surface water is completely gone. A smaller lake east of Kahlotus Lake proper has also completely disappeared. See attached map and photographs.

Since the 1970's, several well owners in the Connell-Kahlotus area have had to drill their wells deeper in order to procure adequate water supplies. Anecdotal evidence from locals indicates that well levels began declining as irrigation wells in the area, notably the initial Paul Loeber well, began pumping. A drawdown and lack of water was noted in surrounding wells owned by Lester Dougherty at his homestead and the Olds homestead, Larry Hoffman, Dan Bauermeister, Joe Havlina, and at the Drummond homestead southeast of Connell. Declining water levels were noted shortly after the Loeber well began pumping, and most or all of the above wells had to be drilled deeper to obtain adequate water, even for domestic purposes. Currently, the city of Connell is experiencing water supply problems associated with declining groundwater levels.

Additionally, this past year Bill Harder Jr. has abandoned several of his irrigation wells east of Kahlotus due to inadequate water supplies, and the economic impracticality of drilling deeper in search of adequate water to grow enough alfalfa to feed his cattle. As a consequence, Bill has had to buy hay for his cattle for the first time in history.

It is my sincere hope and request that the Franklin Water Conservancy Board will conduct a thorough investigation of all aspects and issues associated with the transfer of Water Right G3-00101C, and the potential impacts of said transfer on local groundwater supplies and the local residents who depend on this groundwater for their very existence.

Sincerely,

Randy Jones, Treasurer, Five Corners Family Farmers; Owner, C&R Ranch
2063 Stastney Road, PO Box 158
Eltopia WA 99330

Address information provided pursuant to WAC 173-153-090