



PO Box 1123 Turner, OR 97392  
[www.thebridgesfoundation.info](http://www.thebridgesfoundation.info)

Coos County Community Development  
250 N Baxter  
Coquille, Oregon 97423

March 27, 2024

Re: File # ACU-23-074-FP-23-012

Dear Coos County Community Development,

I am writing regarding the permit submitted for Winter Lake Phase III project by the Beaver Slough and Coaledo Drainage Districts, with additional assistance provided by the Coos Soil and Water and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

As background, I own and operate Santiam Valley Aquaculture based in Turner, Oregon. On my ranch, I own the largest warm-water fish aquaculture facility in the State, operate five waterfowl hunting areas, manage a heard of approximately 50 beef cattle and support working lands through the Wetland Reserve Program. I operate my property for the dual purpose of an economic return for my family as well as a balance with nature. I pride myself in the diversity of wildlife and waterfowl on my property and manage my lands in a way that promotes thousands of birds to use it each year as a migratory stopover.

In addition, as a child I grew up on the neighboring property, Santiam Valley Ranch in Turner, Oregon. There I learned about aquaculture and helped to manage a 300 sheep operation, including pasture management and irrigation. My college degree in Forest Management and Wildland Fire Science brings additional training and expertise toward ecosystem management.

My lifetime commitment to farming and ranching, coupled with my effort to support agroecosystem management, I also participate as a Trustee for The Bridges Foundation where I serve as Conservation Director. Through this effort, The Bridges Foundation owns 529 acres located in the Winter Lake area which is served by the Beaver Slough and Coaledo Drainage Districts for summer irrigation for cattle pasture and for winter drainage. A chief goal for the districts is to provide upgraded infrastructure needed for

addressing fisheries habitat management, particularly involving coho, steelhead and lampreys, and for which The Bridges Foundation has particular interest to support.

While the farm in Coquille generates revenue, it is not enough to pay for the major infrastructure upgrades that are needed to promote good drainage on the property, meet statutory fish passage requirements, allow cattle and equipment to move effectively around the fields, or fully utilize the primary tide gates which are now in marked disrepair.

In my opinion, the project proposed known as Winter Lake Phase III will not result in any negative impacts to The Bridges Foundation's property. Instead, the Phase III effort will resolve several problems farmers and ranchers currently face. In addition to promoting a lasting partnership bringing considerable financial resources to our drainage district property owners, it will also provide modern and high functioning infrastructure essential for wildlife, waterfowl and fisheries conservation and the farming community.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Luke Fitzpatrick', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Luke Fitzpatrick, Conservation Director  
The Bridges Foundation  
503-930-9431