

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

Washington, DC 20423

Office of Economics, Environmental Analysis, and Administration

Nez Perce Tribe
Mr. Kevin Cannell
P.O. Box 365
Lapwai, ID 83540

August 25, 2004

**Re: STB Docket No. AB-872X, Great Northwest Railroad, Inc. –
Abandonment Exemption – in Clearwater County, Idaho**

Dear Mr. Cannell:

The Surface Transportation Board's Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) is conducting an environmental review of Great Northwest Railroad, Inc.'s (GNR's), proposed abandonment of a rail line in Clearwater County, Idaho, pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act and related environmental regulations, including the National Historic Preservation Act, 16 U.S.C. 470f (NHPA). The rail line is approximately 27.5-miles long and is located between Milepost 3.5, at Orofino, and Milepost 31.0, near Jaype, Idaho.

Susan Pengilly Neitzel at the Idaho State Historical Society has indicated that a portion of the line may be located on the Nez Perce Indian Reservation and identified the Nez Perce Tribe as a potential consulting party to the Section 106 process of the NHPA. Accordingly, we are formally inviting you to become involved in the environmental review process as a consulting party under Section 106. Please find the following information enclosed for your review: 1) copies of GNR's environmental and historical reports, which include a description of the abandonment and a map showing the location of the abandonment, and 2) an August 11, 2004 letter with the Idaho State Historical Society's comments.

As required by 49 CFR 1105.10(b), SEA is currently preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) that will be made available for public review and comment. The Nez Perce Tribe has been added to the service list and will receive a copy of the EA. We would appreciate any information that you have regarding environmental, historic, or cultural resources. In particular, we invite your comments on any potential effects that the proposed abandonment could have on historic or cultural properties.

We would appreciate a response within 30 days of your receipt of this letter regarding your interest in acting as a consulting party for Section 106 purposes. Your response should be

marked on the accompanying self-addressed postcard. The postcard is included for your convenience but is not intended to replace any comments that you would like to submit to SEA.

We look forward to working with you to ensure that any tribal concerns regarding this proposed project are included in the Section 106 and NEPA processes. If you have questions regarding the Section 106 review process or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at (202) 565-1606. For additional information regarding the Board, please refer to our web site at <http://www.stb.dot.gov>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Christa Dean".

Christa Dean
Attorney Adviser
Section of Environmental Analysis

Attachment

cc: Susan Pengilly Neitzel, Idaho State Historical Society