

19 February 2014

Bill Stalzer
Stalzer and Associates
603 Stewart Street, Suite 512
Seattle, WA 98101

Re: Proposed Shoreline Jurisdiction Summary for Whetstone Hollow Creek

Dear Bill:

This analysis of Proposed Shoreline Jurisdiction for Whetstone Hollow Creek supplements the analyses in the October 25th and December 18th letters which discussed the “preliminary” shoreline jurisdiction for the Walla Walla Regional Shoreline Master Program Update. Specifically, it focuses on Whetstone Hollow Creek and provides additional information requested by Jaime Short about adjacent land uses, size of the contributing basin, precipitation, aerial photos, and Coppei Creek.

As previously noted in our October 25 and December 18 letters, the preliminary shoreline jurisdiction was determined based upon the upstream point where the mean annual flow is 20 cubic feet per second (cfs) for all downstream areas as determined by a 2003 USGS¹ study provided by Ecology

Whetstone Hollow Creek is a tributary to the Touchet River, joining the Touchet River just west of the City of Prescott. Per the USGS (2003) study, the 20 cfs mean annual flow point is located approximately 3 miles upstream, just northeast of the Prescott city limits where a small tributary joins the creek. Approximately 14 parcels, all in agricultural use, including one within the Prescott city limits, intersect the potential shoreline jurisdiction along Whetstone Hollow Creek. The USGS derived 20 cfs point represents a contributing basin size of 65,000 acres. However, the modeled regression analysis in the USGS study uses a precipitation value of 25 inches per year from a location along Dry Creek near the City of Walla Walla and likely does not represent actual precipitation values for the Whetstone Hollow Creek basin. No stream gage data is available for Whetstone Hollow Creek.

I conducted a site visit on 12 November 2013 and observed Whetstone Hollow Creek at the bridge along Hwy 124, just west of the City of Prescott (Figures 1 and 2), and at the bridge along Skyrocket Road (Figure 3) which is approximately ½ mile west (downstream) of the USGS

¹ <http://pubs.usgs.gov/wri/wri034042/pdf/wri034042.pdf>

modeled 20 cfs point. At the time of my site visit, I estimate that water was flowing at less than 0.5 cfs.

Whetstone Hollow Creek can be characterized as a narrow grass lined channel with a channel width typically varying from 1 to 3 feet at the points of observation. Input from several local residents familiar with Whetstone Hollow Creek, including Chris Hyland from the Walla Walla Watershed Management Partnership, indicates that the channel is dry for much of the year. Review of recent aerial photographs dating back to 1996 indicates that the channel has not changed during this time period. Based on my site observations, local input and comparative flow data from nearby streams (e.g. Coppei Creek, which does not meet the 20cfs mean annual flow criteria, yet has a greater channel width), it is highly unlikely that Whetstone Hollow Creek meets Ecology's flow requirements and therefore should not be considered a Shoreline of the State.



Figure 1: Whetstone Hollow Creek looking east (upstream) from Hwy 124 bridge west of Prescott.



Figure 2: Whetstone Hollow Creek looking southwest (downstream) from Hwy 124 bridge west of Prescott.



Figure 3: Whetstone Hollow Creek looking east (upstream) from Skyrocket Road bridge near Prescott.

Based on this additional information, it remains my opinion that it is unlikely that Whetstone Hollow Creek meets the Washington State standards to be considered as a Shoreline of the State. These considerations should be approved by the Washington Department of Ecology and the affected local jurisdictions involved with the regional Shoreline Master Program update.

Please call if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dan Nickel". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the printed name.

Dan Nickel
Environmental Engineer