

Department of the Interior
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Oregon Fish and Wildlife Office
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<http://www.fws.gov/pacific/oregonfwo>

News Release



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Public Comment Sought on Proposed Settlement Agreement to Benefit Johnson Creek Watershed Fish and Wildlife

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is seeking public comments on two projects to be funded by Thermo Fluids Inc. as part of a proposed settlement agreement with the Department of the Interior for natural resource damages resulting from an oil and chemical spill into Johnson Creek from TFI's Portland plant. The accidental spill contaminated the creek and killed more than 1,870 fish in March 2004.

Under the proposed agreement, TFI, an Arizona-based recycling company, would provide more than \$200,000 for environmental education and natural resource restoration projects. One project, the Johnson Creek Watershed Council's Environmental Education Project "Watershed of 10,000 Stewards," would receive \$58,728. Another project, the City of Portland Bureau of Environmental Service's "Restoration of Fish Habitat on Errol Creek," would receive \$144,650.

The Johnson Creek Environmental Education Project focuses on outreach for the watershed's ecology and would encourage citizen stewardship activities. The Errol Creek project would restore aquatic and riparian habitat in an area impacted by the spill and identified as a high priority for restoration in the Watershed Council's *Comprehensive Watershed Action Plan* and the Bureau of Environmental Service's *Johnson Creek Restoration Plan*.

Comments on the proposed settlement must be received by close of business on September 9, 2005. The proposed settlement agreement may be examined at http://www.fws.gov/pacific/oregonfwo/EnvContam/EC_home.html. Comments should be addressed to Dr. Michael Szumski, USFWS, Oregon Fish and Wildlife Office, 2600 SE 98th Avenue, Suite 100, Portland, OR 97266. A copy of the proposed settlement agreement also may be obtained, or comments submitted, by contacting Dr. Szumski by telephone at 503-231-6179, by fax at 503-231-6195, or by e-mail at Mike_Szumski@fws.gov.

Final approval of this agreement by the Department of the Interior will be subject to this public notice and comment. The Department of the Interior may withdraw its consent if public comments disclose facts or considerations indicating that the agreement is inappropriate, improper or inadequate.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 545 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish

hatcheries, 64 fishery resources offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign and Native American tribal governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.