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Board of Commissioners
Curry County, Oregon

Curry County Commissioners
PO Box 746
Gold Beach, Oregon 97444

Curry County Commissioners,

In light of recent testimony during a hearing to allow Tidewater, Inc. to mine gravel from the old mill site on the south bank of the Rogue River, I felt compelled to provide a little history of my work with the landowners immediately adjacent to, and downstream of that area to halt severe erosion threatening their land and houses. I believe that allowing Tidewater to harvest gravel in the proposed area will lower the bed elevation on the south side of the Rogue River at the old mill site and encourage flow into the south channel of the river below the mill site. This area is a steep, nearly vertical, 30+ foot, cut-bank that is and has been actively eroding. Landowners in this area have lost a considerable amount of property to erosion, and sediment from this area is a major contributor to sediment aggradation in the Rogue River estuary. A few houses in this area are in imminent danger of being lost to the river during a high flow event on the Rogue River.

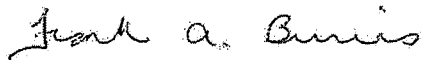
I first looked at this site in 2002 with the Oregon Department of Fisheries and Wildlife and the Lower Rogue Watershed Council. In 2006, a group of highly qualified hydrologists and bioengineers from Bioengineering Associates looked at the site and developed a restoration plan to both keep the landowners in this area from losing any more property, and to reduce sediment loading into the Rogue River estuary. At that time, the restoration was estimated to cost around \$1.3 million dollars to complete. Since that time, I have been actively shopping around for a grantor willing to pay for the restoration of the cut-bank, but have not found a willing funder.

There is significant potential for gravel removal at the old mill site to make it easier for water to flow toward the south bank, increasing the rate of erosion downstream. My advice would be to not allow gravel removal at the old mill site until either: a) a hydro-geomorphic study is done showing that removal of gravel will not increase erosion along the south bank of the Rogue River immediately adjacent to and downstream from the old mill site; or b) the bank restoration and stabilization project proposed by Bioengineering Associates for the south bank of the Rogue River immediately adjacent to and downstream from the old mill site is completed and woody vegetation has had time to grow roots that will anchor the project and resist scouring from Rogue River currents.

I would be glad to conduct a field tour of the project area and to bring plans and site-specific designs developed by Bioengineering Associates so that you can better understand the urgency of completing

bank restoration work at this site. A personal visit to this site will clarify the need to act with utmost caution in approving any modifications to the floodplain and channel of the Rogue River that might increase the potential for additional erosion at this site.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Frank A. Burris".

Frank A. Burris
Watershed Management Extension Agent
Oregon State University