United States Department of Agriculture
Forest Service
Willamette National Forest
Detroit Ranger District
HC 73 Box 320
Mill City, OR 97360
Tel (503) 854-3366
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Letter of Recommendation

By Natural Resources Staff / Fisheries Biologist, Darren Cross, and Hydrology Technician, David Klug

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This letter is to affirm and recommend Michael Herrick, President of Aquatic Contracting LLC, as an environmental restoration contractor worthy of your consideration.

The Aquatics Team of the Willamette National Forest contracted Aquatic Contracting LLC in the Summer of 2009 to complete one of our most effective stream restoration projects on the Detroit Ranger District. We were the Contracting Officer's Representatives on the ground who directed this over-the-top Contractor to safely tip 60 large fir trees and directionally fell 87 trees, 73 of them identified as hazards, into the upper North Santiam River and two of its tributaries.

Aquatic Contracting's crew was always right on time, communicating and negotiating well with all parties involved, and successfully completing every task as directed. Their seasoned, veteran crew members were all woods-savvy, drawing from a deep well of experience.

They overcame many logistical problems in the big timber, working well together and with our Contracting Office representatives to perform a complex set of itemized tasks. Their mobile yarder being the largest skidder ever made gave them the extra versatility and capability needed to take on the most difficult tree tipping tasks. Coordination with Oregon Department of Transportation's (ODOT) flagging crew along a busy highway corridor and their safety conscientiousness made for incident-free operations when falling and tipping many large fir trees well over 150 feet tall. Carefully considering how to execute every task, they operated cohesively and competently as a skillful and talented team.

This heavily used recreational corridor is now a safer place after removal of those looming overhead hazards. Aquatic Contracting tackled the most dangerous tree over the highway, a huge 76-inch diameter at 220+ feet tall. The crew expertly pulled it over opposite its heavy lean and into the river.

The Contractor cooperated with us and maximized their opportunities at every turn, exceeding our expectations. They maximized bonus earnings for minimal tree bole breakage. In addition, the satisfied foreman from the local ODOT shop contracted them to directionally fell three other large danger trees safely away from Highway 22.

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Aquatic habitat complexity was improved by the addition of 192 pieces of large wood that this Contractor placed instream. Recent surveys conducted by the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife (ODF&W) have found spring Chinook spawning and taking cover in the improved habitat.

The success of the 2009 project was essential in being approved for grant dollars from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) for another similar project in the upper North Santiam River, again to be coordinated with our local partner, ODOT. We are currently working with the North Santiam Watershed Council to contract with Aquatic Contracting again to perform more tree tipping and snag falling in the summer of 2011. Our market research has found this company to be the best equipped for the job. We are confident that our up-coming project would then be equally successful.

The Aquatics Team on our Forest and local representatives of the ODF&W and ODOT all greatly appreciate the outstanding work performed by Mr. Herrick's firm. We encourage any restoration project manager to take a good look at Aquatic Contracting to successfully meet your implementation needs and exceed your expectations as well.

If you have any questions that we may answer for you, please don't hesitate to contact us. Either of us can be contacted according to the information at the top of this letter.

Sincerely,

Darren Cross
Natural Resources Staff /
Fisheries Biologist

David Klug
Hydrology Technician

Date: November 12, 2010