



The U.S. Shorebird Conservation Partnership

Building Collaborative Action for Shorebird Conservation

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Dr. Rob Clay, Director
Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network Executive Office
Manomet
P.O. Box 1770
Manomet, MA 02345

Dear Dr. Clay,

The U.S. Shorebird Conservation Council supports the nomination of Willapa Bay and Long Beach Peninsula as a Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network site. While the nomination form indicated that the site qualifies as meeting criteria for Hemispheric Importance, we believe more current counts are needed to establish the nomination at that level of designation. However, we do believe that the numerical data from all species and the use by Red Knots clearly qualifies the site as one of International Importance. If site partners could provide updated information to substantiate the Hemispheric designation, we would encourage the WHSRN Hemispheric Council to upgrade the designation at that time. The authors have written a clear and concise application and should be commended for their efforts to assemble the necessary information and letters of support. The detailed nomination package was reviewed by Brad Andres, Mark Drever, and Vanessa Loverti. Note that Vanessa is listed on the nomination but only provided some information from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Migratory Bird office.

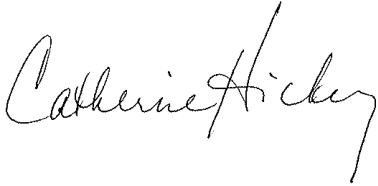
Overall, the nomination would benefit from more current shorebird counts. If these new counts were conducted using the same methods as Buchanan and Evenson (1997, *Western Birds* 28: 158-168), it would allow an assessment of trends since that time, both in the absolute counts and the relative distribution of species within the site, as well as provide baseline information from which to evaluate management actions in the future. Clearly, the combined sites of Grays Harbor, Columbia River Estuary, and Willapa Bay provide a critical shorebird stopover complex along the Pacific Americas Flyway.

The letters of support are enthusiastic and cover all the landowners depicted in Figure 2, including federal, state, first nations, and NGOs. The high value of the area for tourism means the nomination would provide a great opportunity to generate awareness about shorebirds well beyond the local community. Designating Willapa Bay with landowner commitments is

significant; the Long Beach Peninsula is an area where threats to shorebirds (during breeding, wintering, and migration) from people need to be better managed. Ideally, the Oyster Growers Association would be included in the nomination, but our understanding is that the partners will be working with this group over time to address the pesticide application issue and build trust.

Please let us know if there is additional support we can provide.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Catherine Hickey". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned centrally below the word "Sincerely,".

Catherine Hickey, WHSRN Representative
U.S. Shorebird Conservation Council