

OREGON WHEAT

March 23, 2000

Brigadier General Carl Strock
Commander, Northwest Division
US Army Corps of Engineers
220 NW 8th Ave.
Portland, OR 97208-2870

Dear General Strock:

I was surprised by the article in this morning's *Oregonian*, stating that the perceived sampling of public opinion at the regional hearings on the lower Snake Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and the All-H paper might cause the Corps to select breaching as a preferred option.

1 I attended the Pasco hearing, and also an advance meeting there with the various federal representatives to answer questions about the process. During that meeting, Colonel Eric Mogren from the Corps stated more than once that the Corps would not evaluate input by simply counting the number of comments on either side of the breaching question; rather, the Corps is looking for *quality* comments and new ideas on the proposals in the DEIS. The statements attributed to you by the *Oregonian* suggest that the Corps will evaluate input by simply counting comments.

Contrary to the theatric productions displayed at several of the hearings, nothing close to a regional consensus favoring dam breaching exists. The costs of breaching are too high, the benefits too uncertain, and non-breach alternatives exist that are just as effective at saving fish, if not more so, than the breaching options. The plan that has become known as Framework Alternative 6 is one example of such a plan.

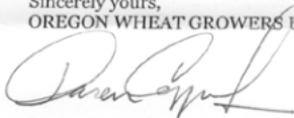
2 There are two reasons why so much pro-breaching comment was provided at the hearing: (1) The breaching advocates took buses of people to the hearings and organized training seminars for their troops. These people knew that the limited time not taken by elected leaders would go quickly, and pushed themselves to the front of the line to stack the testimony. Those who weren't testifying were staffing displays or dressing up in costumes to capture the eye of TV cameras. (2) The farmers, business people, barge operators, longshoremen, grain merchants, bankers, timber workers, aluminum workers, and others who might have testified did not attend the hearings because they were too busy *working*. In contrast to the breaching advocates, our people don't have extra time and money to spend designing costumes, chartering buses, stacking sign-up lines, putting on training seminars for activists, and otherwise undermining the Corps' efforts to have an honest discussion of this issue.

These facts in no way make the views of our members, or those of the various labor unions and economic interests, any less valid. They simply mean that a large segment of the northwest population, who is opposed to breaching, chose not to participate in the hearings that the breaching believers turned into sensational referenda on breaching dams.

3

We strongly encourage you to follow the guidance described by Col. Mogren, and weigh the substance of the comments, not merely their quantity. The Corps needs to assert leadership on this issue, and give the region its best recommendation — based on the facts, not the polls — as a Preferred Alternative. The Corps' decision on the John Day Phase I study was an excellent example of this principle. Blowing with the wind of perceived public opinion would abrogate this responsibility.

Sincerely yours,
OREGON WHEAT GROWERS LEAGUE



Daren Coppock
Executive Vice President

DC

c: Senator Gordon Smith/Pendleton office
Senator Ron Wyden/LaGrande office
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INSIDE
THIS SECTION

• OBITUARIES, DIO
• OPINION, D12
• CLASSIFIED, D15

Hearings sentiment leans to breaching

The Corps of Engineers says that absent any clear scientific finding, public opinion may influence its recommendations

By JONATHAN BRINKMAN

THE OREGONIAN

Most people who spoke at 15 hearings throughout the Northwest and Alaska on the subject of breaching tidal dams expressed support for the idea, the regional commander of the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers said Thursday.

And that collective sentiment, he said, could influence the corps' final recommendations to Congress if it finds science does not clearly indicate whether breaching dams is the best option. "I hope State River should be breached to help endangered salmon."

If there is disagreement between one thing or another, the recognition of the population is going to be a component in our decision, said Brig. Gen. Carl Stock, the Portland-based commander of the corps Northwest Division. Still, Stock said that advocates of breaching might have been better orga-

nized, and that those advocating change might be more likely to stop friendly state supporters of the status quo. "The number of people who stepped up to give a microphone may not truly represent the feelings of the region," Stock said.

The outcome of the hearings, held in four Northwest states and attended by several thousand people, was a solid victory for conservation and fishing groups, a proposal to build a dam at the Grand Monumental, Lake Coeur and Lower Granite dams in Eastern Washington. Those groups, led by the Seattle-based

Save Our Wild Salmon, urged an all-out campaign to pack the hearings with supporters of breaching.

"It's clear to us that the region has spoken," said Chris Zimmerman, a spokesman for Save Our Wild Salmon. "It's now up to special leaders to follow the will of the people."

The corps has not commented on the analysis of roughly 2,000 comments received at the hearings.

Nicole Cordun, policy director for Save Our Wild Salmon, said those who spoke favored breaching by a ratio of about 3 to-1. Opponents of breaching agree that

they were outnumbered. "They say that but it will not influence federal deliberations."

"They had more money, more time to spend organizing," said Doug Hagg of the Labor Coalition for Responsible River Use, a Portland group that represents 14 labor unions opposed to breaching the dams.

"They did a better job in getting the facts out than we did," said Bruce Lowlin, executive director of the Portland-based Columbia River Alliance that represents the ports and other industrial users of the river and its lake trees. But

Printed on **DAMS**, Page 18

Transit plan gives more costs more

Tri-Met's new budget would bring additional trains, buses and shelters, and a fare increase

By BILL STEVART

THE OREGONIAN

Tri-Met's death of its new budget, but survivors have to answer later increases, promises more trains, buses and shelters.

The \$267 million budget, released Wednesday, is scheduled to be approved later 26 and would become effective July 1. Service improvements and fare increases would start in August. The current budget is \$264 million. When can we move from this year



Third man is accused in rape case

Authorities say an Albia man is linked to an assault on UW student by his wife

ILLINOIS — A 29-year-old Albia man was accused Wednesday in connection with the rape of two women after police on Feb. 15 were alerted by his wife.

Antonio Vasquez, 29, is charged with rape of a minor in the assault on the 15-year-old. He has been in the Washington County Jail since March 3.



VASQUEZ
CHARGED

He is charged with rape of a minor and failure to identify himself.

Vasquez faces charges of two counts of first-degree rape, two counts of first-degree sexual abuse and two counts of first-degree sexual abuse. He is expected to be arraigned Feb. 24.

Police Sergeant Amyra 21 and Sgt. Vasquez, 45, both of Hillsboro, were charged earlier in the case.

The girls told investigators they were forced into a van at 430 a.m. March 3 by five men and Gerald Street in Hillsboro. They said they were raped repeatedly and then pushed from the van 2 1/2 hours later in Canby.

Washington County Sheriff Debra H. Williams said the girls were taken to Vancouver, where they were driving when the girls were abducted.

Investigators think two more men were involved in the attack. They are being sought in the region. Vasquez, 26, is a person of interest. Anyone with information should

Dams: Foes of breaching outnumbered

Continued from Page 11

There is no regional consensus on dam breaching."

The dams show large timber-scale erosion by making the lower Snake silt and deep. They generate less power and are more expensive to own. For Harbor near Pasco, Wash., it is used to irrigate surrounding farmland. Ripgs said breaching opportunities exist there but we're to save salmon while keeping the dams in place.

Such measures could include using barges to carry silt to prevent impoundments to dams that make them less dangerous to salmon and creating streams where salmon spawn.

Only in Pasco were opponents of breaching in the majority. They were outnumbered at other hearings in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Nevada, California and Montana. In Idaho, an inland

river made possible by the dams, just the same number of supporters as opponents spoke at the hearing.

Steed said he was surprised by the number of breaching supporters he heard of in neighboring states.

"I would have expected at some of the places we went, places like Louisiana and Alaska, that the pro dam crowd would be the one that won out by those that wanted

their dams to stay," Steed said. "If the only thing you had was what you heard in those hearings, you would come away with the impression that breaching was not accepted anywhere."

The corps will accept public comments until March 31. Information is available on the World Wide Web at www.usace.army.mil. The permit is available to salmon biologists/conservationists at 509-827-7832.

Tonya Harding absent as court resets conference date

VANCOUVER, Wash. — Tonya Harding's latest case was on the agenda Wednesday in Canada's Supreme Court, but the figure skater was nowhere in the courtroom.

The apocryphal pretrial conference, set for April 12,

"We agreed to talk and listen," Steed said, declining further comment. Pretrial conferences are not required in such cases.

Harding, 29, faces a misdemeanor charge of fourth-degree domestic-violence assault. She is accused of hitting her husband, Jeff, in 2004. She is also accused of drugging and punching him during a fitness club, 22 in the house they shared at that time in Canby.

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