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CONSERVE YOUR OUTDOOR AMERICA

PEORIA CHAPTER

Izaak Walton League of America, Inc.

DEFENDERS OF SOIL, WOODS, WATERS, & WILDLIFE

March 3, 2000

Department of the Army
Walla Walla District, Corps of Engineers
Attn: Lower Snake River Study
201 North Third Avenue
Walla Walla, WA 99362-1876

RE: Draft Lower Snake River Juvenile Salmon Migration Feasibility Report and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my support for Alternative #4, the dam breaching alternative. As a conservationist, I am deeply concerned about the plight of wild Snake River salmon and steelhead, which have declined precipitously since the last of the four federal dams was constructed on the lower Snake River. Obviously, since what we have been doing to conserve Snake River salmon and steelhead has not worked, maintaining the status quo (Alternative #1) is unacceptable. Doing more of the same on a simply larger scale (Alternatives #2 and #3) is economically and biologically unsound, as well.

The scientific analysis in the DEIS clearly indicates that dam breaching is the alternative with by far the best likelihood of recovering imperiled Snake River salmon and steelhead. Although a holistic approach that meaningfully addresses habitat, hatcheries and harvest is also necessary, restoring the lower Snake to a free flowing river is an absolutely indispensable component of any successful recovery strategy.

The economic impact analysis in the DEIS overstates the costs associated with dam breaching and underestimates the benefits of a free-flowing river, such as indirect economic benefits from increased sport fishing, river recreation and tourism from nonresidents. The cost analysis is fundamentally flawed by not fully incorporating the costs of nonbreaching alternatives, including fish bypass and transportation costs, Clean Water Act compliance measures, flow augmentation from the upper Snake River in southern Idaho, and potential tribal treaty abrogation costs.

In closing, I wish to urge the Corps of Engineers to select Alternative #4 as the Preferred Alternative in the Final EIS. We owe it to ourselves and to future generations to make the right

choices today, regardless of the difficulty, to ensure that these magnificent fish survive and recover to the point of once again being a viable, self-sustaining resource.

Sincerely,

Dawn A. Thaller

Dawn A. Thaller
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