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DIVISION OF NATURAL SCIENCE

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16 March 2000

Brigadier General Carl A. Strock
Department of the Army
Walla Walla District Corps of Engineers
Attention: Lower Snake River Study
201 North Third Avenue
Walla Walla, Washington 99362-1876

Dear General Strock,

The rivers of the Pacific Northwest are home to spectacular and world-renowned wild salmon and steelhead runs. The Columbia and Snake rivers are the lifeblood of this region and these fish. But human activities have devastated salmon runs on large sections of these rivers. Four dams constructed by the Army Corps of Engineers on the lower portion of the Snake River between 1962 and 1975 have nearly wiped out the salmon runs there - nearly every salmon species in the Snake River is either listed on the Endangered Species Act or already extinct. Draft scientific and economic reports indicate that partial dam removal is the best option for the fish and for the Pacific Northwest economy.

Specifically, I would urge the Corps to consider the following points:

- >> Dam removal must be the centerpiece of any option chosen to recover Snake River salmon.
- >> All species of salmon and steelhead in the Snake River are likely to be extinct by 2017 if we don't make the decision to remove these dams now.
- >> Restoring the salmon and the Snake River ecosystem will benefit the region economically by creating more jobs than keeping the dams in place and losing the salmon.

Thank you for considering my opinion on this issue.

Sincerely,

John P. Nelson, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Biology