

Spokane Canoe & Kayak Club Spokane WA

MAR 27 2000

March 17, 2000

Brigadier General Carl Strock
Department of the Army
Walla Walla District Corps of Engineers
Attn: Lower Snake River Study
201 North Third Ave
Walla Walla, WA 99362-1876

Dear General Strock:

In 1991 and 1992, under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) identified and listed three stocks of wild salmon as endangered or threatened. By 1997, the Snake River wild steelhead had been added to the list. Every species of salmon and steelhead in the Snake River is either already extinct or on the ESA list. The Corps must choose an option that complies with the Clean Water Act and protects all remaining Snake River Salmon species. As you know, only bypassing the four lower Snake River dams offers this option. All species of salmon and steelhead will be extinct by 2017 if we don't make the decision to remove these dams now. We need salmon, and those dams just no longer make sense.

Both the DEIS and the "All-H" paper show that the Corp's structural alternative involving partial dam removal must be the cornerstone of any recovery program. Any plan short of bypassing the dams will not meet recovery goals. The document also shows that bypassing is the least expensive and most cost effective. The Fisheries study concludes that bypassing the dams is the only option that would not violate federal law. Other alternatives just don't make sense.

It is mind boggling to realize that taxpayers are paying a total of thirty millions every year- year after year, to keep the natural Snake River treasure locked and buried. In the past ten years more than three billions have been spent on failed salmon recovery systems. Thirty millions annually in dam maintenance so that barges can get free miles beyond those that the Pasco Port provides. It just doesn't make sense when road and rail, the original carriers, would provide competitive pricing to Pasco. A recent analysis shows that, if rail and highway improvements are made in eastern Washington, actual costs to farmers who now ship via barge would average only one cent per bushel more. Restated, that thirty million taxpayers' subsidy provides only 1 cent/bushel edge over rail and truck.

The same study shows only a modest increase in truck traffic if rail and highway improvements are made, since truck hauls from farms to rail terminals are shorter than from farms to the Lower Snake River ports.

We should ask, however, just what might be the economic impact to farmers if the bypassing is selected. The Corp's own Drawdown Regional Economic Workgroup stated that bypassing the dams may restrict irrigation water to only thirteen farming operations that encompass 37,000 acres.

Thank you for your efforts to protect our national treasure. Please include this letter in the official public comment record for both the Corp's DEIS and the "All-H" paper.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Larry Wood".

Larry Wood

Spokane Canoe & Kayak Club