

## STS. PETER &amp; PAUL PARISH

April 6, 2000

Walla Walla District Corps of Engineers  
Attn: Lower Snake River Study  
201 N. Third Ave.  
Walla Walla, WA 99362

Dear Sirs:

I have been watching the interplay of the factors effecting the survival of the salmon runs in the Snake River system. I believe that the Snake River Salmon should be studied in relation to salmon stocks from California to Alaska. It seems to be that too many people are looking at the Snake River stock without looking at what is happening to other salmon runs along the Pacific Coast.

I see that there is an overall decline of salmon in all Pacific runs. The dams on the lower Snake couldn't be responsible for the decline of the rest of the runs. It would seem that a 2 degree temperature increase in the Pacific is causing the decline. I'm not sure if that has sent the fish North of their normal fresh water runs and kept the returning salmon from finding their waters of origin. I would hope that this issue would be researched.

No, I am not suggesting that the Corps set out to lower the ocean temperatures. Perhaps the Corps could sponsor the research to see what the temperature change is doing to the salmon runs and maybe sponsor research on how to mitigate for the changing ocean temperature.

I read much of the discussion on removing the Lower Snake River Dams. I'm not reading any information on removing the island the Corps built from dredging the Lower Columbia River. If 1/4 of the fish are being eaten by birds on an Corps made Island, why isn't the Corps talking of removing the island in the Columbia?

I read some discussion that the salmon gene stock is declining. Perhaps those working with the hatcheries could do a bit more mixing of genes in their breeding programs. I see no reason why the Corps couldn't sponsor programs at the land grant universities of the region to improve the salmon stock across the entire Pacific Northwest.

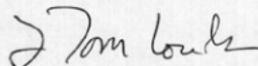
Recently I read that the dams on the Lower Snake account for 5% of the electrical production in the Northwest. The writers were stressing that this 5% isn't very much. It is an incredible amount! The nation has a significant investment in the dams. The nation is avoiding bigger trade deficits by using hydropower rather than fossil fuels to generate electricity. New reports are saying that the Northwest is facing an energy shortage in the near future.

If we are to face an electrical energy shortage in the near future, the only kind of electrical productions that can be brought on line to meet the demand is fossil fuel driven electrical generation. No one is going to be allowed to build more dams. No one is going to be allowed to construct new, nuclear fueled, generating facilities. The new, fossil fuel plants will contribute to global warming, possibly raising the ocean temperatures even more. That would have a detrimental effect on the salmon runs along the entire Pacific Coast.

Leave the dams. They are an economic asset for the nation. The dams help the nation avoid a worse balance of payments deficit. The dams contribute to energy self sufficiency in the Pacific Northwest. The dams help the US to reduce carbon consumption. The dams may be a contributing factor against additional global warming. Their replacements in electrical production would contribute toward global warming. While the dams may contribute to the decline of the salmon runs in the Snake River system, the dams are not the determining factor. Removing the dams doesn't guarantee the revival of the salmon runs.

If the Corps leaves the dams in place, the Corps could try to cool the water in the river by planting forests [fast growing cottonwoods] in a 300 ft. wide swath along the South side of the river. It would provide a micro-climatic change, shading for the river and a cooling habitat through a dry climate. The Corps could contribute to the re-forestation of the Earth.

Sincerely yours,



Fr. Thomas J. Loucks  
Pastor