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PROJECTS/GRI MISC/DJH DAM BREACHING LTR

Department of the Army  
Walla Walla District Corps of Engineers  
201 North Third Avenue  
Walla Walla, WA 99362-1876

Attention: Lower Snake River Study

**SUBJECT: Breaching of Lower Snake River Dams, Snake River E.I.S. Comments**

Breaching of the dams is not a stand-alone issue. Our region needs a comprehensive plan to restore and maintain healthy anadromous fish populations that is based on good science. It is essential to determine whether making our rivers more fish friendly will significantly affect fish populations. Some factors such as declining numbers of food fish in the ocean, have nothing to do with dams. After following this issue for several years, I recognize that a consensus on what is good science may not be reached in the near future. However, as a matter of common sense, it is foolhardy to be considering dam breaching when you and I can still fish for threatened species, and while gill nets are still present in the Columbia River. A total ban on commercial and recreational fishing in the ocean and our inland waterways is the most obvious initial step in any plan.

The dam breaching alternative must be considered with respect to costs and in light of the economic impacts. Although considering costs may not be a popular viewpoint, the simple fact is that there may be a point where the cost per fish is so high that it is not feasible, realistic, or appropriate to pursue this goal. By this I mean that we have limited resources, and they should be used in the most effective manner to restore and maintain fish runs to get "the most bang for the buck."

In summary, dam breaching should only be considered as a potential part of a comprehensive plan that is based on good information and has a defined goal. Until other, less costly and more obvious actions are implemented, dam breaching should not be further considered.

Very truly yours,

Dwight Hardin