

Anthropology Department  
 Willamette University  
 900 State Street  
 Salem, OR 97301

April 11, 2000

Dear U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,

We, the students of Professor Rebecca Dobkins' "Indigenous Peoples, Human Rights and the Environment" anthropology class at Willamette University are concerned about the future of Columbia River salmon.

Salmon play a defining role in the culture of the Pacific Northwest:

- \*salmon contribute to river habitats and are indicators of river health
- \*wild salmon have genetic advantages over hatchery salmon
- \*Native American tribes value wild salmon for their traditional ceremonies

In the 1855 treaties signed with Pacific Northwest tribes, the United States promised the tribes the rights to take fish at the "usual and accustomed places" in exchange for 40 million acres of land. In so doing, the federal government pledged to protect salmon resources.

However, significant damming of the Columbia River basin has caused a massive decline in salmon populations. Historically, 16 million salmon made the yearly journey up the Columbia River. Today, those runs have dwindled to just over 1 million!

This trend cannot continue. Soon, the Columbia River wild salmon will become extinct. As a result, our Pacific Northwest culture will lose one of its defining qualities. We urge you to continue to consider breaching of the Snake River's four dams in order to restore wild salmon spawning grounds and uphold the treaty promises of 1855.

Sincerely,

Willamette anthropology students

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