

Snake River Dams-Portland Testimony
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1. My name is Jim Martin and I recently retired after 30 years as a Fisheries Biologist for Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. I served for 6 years as Chief of Fisheries and 3 years as one of Governor Kitzhaber's Salmon Advisors. I have two degrees from OSU and teach in the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife there. I am currently Senior Outreach Manager for For the Sake of the Salmon and Conservation Director for Pure Fishing, a fishing tackle manufacturer.
2. I participated in the Idaho V. NMFS settlement in 1995 when the Federal Government promised the court and all the plaintiffs that interim measures would be followed in 1999 with a long term, strategic recovery strategy. I remember clearly Judge Marsh's words, admonishing the Federal Government for minor, politically acceptable adjustments to the hydro system, when the system literally cried out for a major overhaul. In 1995 NMFS promised that their strategy would meet recovery goals when evaluated by collaborative science, would be consistent with the requirements of the Clean Water Act and would honor Treaty Rights. The PATH Process was the collaborative science process, which resulted from that settlement.
3. The Path Analysis is the most collaborative, transparent, peer reviewed and credible analysis of the options. The Path Analysis suggests that only through breaching of the four Lower Snake River Dams can all the species of listed salmonids in the Snake River Basin be recovered. I agree. Nearly all the independent, knowledgeable scientists I am aware of agree that recovery of listed Snake River Salmonids will be impossible without removal of these dams. I do agree with the portion of the CRI analysis, which emphasizes how close to extinction these fish are and how damaging a further delay might be. Most knowledgeable scientists understand that breaching the four lower Snake River Dams is not a silver bullet, but would need to be supplemented by water quality improvements, migration habitat improvements and continued harvest/hatchery adjustments. However, the breaching is an indispensable element of any successful recovery strategy in the Snake.
4. Some in NMFS would have us believe that we can recover these fish with the dams in place by improving the freshwater habitat, restricting fisheries and hatcheries and improving the estuary. With regard to Snake River Spring/Summer Chinook salmon the remaining habitat is in at least as good a shape as it was in the 60's when the stocks began their collapse. Much of the habitat is pristine, and yet almost devoid of native salmon and steelhead. If harvest was the problem, the closures of the last 30-40 years would have recovered the fish. If the estuary was the primary problem, there wouldn't be the strength in the Upriver Bright and Lower River Tributary populations of fall chinook, which rely on the estuary the most. No.... it was the development of the four Lower Snake River Dams, which caused the Snake River salmonids to begin

their divergence from the other salmon of the Columbia, and to arc precipitously towards extinction.

5. If NMFS thinks the stocks can be recovered with the four Lower Snake River Dams in place, let them put a recovery strategy on the table. Let them show how the measures can be dependably delivered and how the numbers model out...and without sacrificing the Treaty Rights or violating the Clean Water Act. That is NMFS's responsibility and that is not what they are doing. That is all we ask and have been asking since 1995. The fish have been listed for over a decade and NMFS has yet to put a recovery strategy on the table for peer review. The "Four H" paper is a broad discussion of salmon recovery in the basin. It is not a substitute for specific, technically sound and legally required federal actions with respect to the Hydro system.
6. In the 1980's Jack Ward Thomas and the science team from the Federal Agencies clearly laid out the requirements of the Spotted Owl and other Old Growth Dependent Species. That led to multiple trips to Federal Court because the political system blocked the measures that were required to obey the law. The situation was remarkably like the situation we find ourselves in now. Except we know a lot more about the science of these salmon than we did about the owl. This Federal Administration stood up for telling the truth and obeying the law with the Northwest Forest Plan. It's a shame and an embarrassment that the same Administration shows such lack of vision, courage and integrity this time around.
7. 50 years ago Aldo Leopold told us "the first law of intelligent tinkering is to save all the pieces". Boiled down, that means avoid irretrievable consequences. If there is doubt, make risk averse decisions. In this case, with a probable future of more development in the Columbia Basin, more intensive water use, the detrimental consequences of Global Climate Change on cold water salmonids and highly cyclic ocean and draught fluctuations, the only risk averse decision is to take bold action to recover these fish. It is highly unlikely that we will overdo it for salmon, and quite possible for us to lose these irreplaceable fish with timid measures and more study.
8. Jack Ward Thomas boiled it down for us in the last decade..."Obey the law and tell the truth". That was the best advice then and it still applies. If we do, our children will judge us well.