

ATTN: Brigadier General Carl Stock
Department of the Army
Walla Walla District Corp of Engineers
201 North Third Street Avenue
Walla Walla, WA 99362-1876

Re: Lower Snake River Study

On behalf of myself and my college, I would like to express my concern for the diversity of the area of the Snake River, particularly of the presently degraded salmon populations becoming increasingly evident in that area. Numerous studies have concluded that the low levels of salmon (90 percent lower than they once were) are directly the effect of the four dams that were placed in the area. The existence of the salmon is intricately tied to the existence of many other species in the system. They are a primary source of food for many animals, including bears and eagles, and upon their death they release valuable nutrients that are recycled back into the environment. Unless the four dams are removed, the quality of this area will continue to degrade. The Snake River dams must be removed as required by law and by treaty to restore the area to a healthy, biodiverse habitat.

Another point of concern is the apparent violation of a treaty signed with the Columbia River Basin Indian tribes in 1855, to maintain the salmon at harvestable levels. The tribes gave 6.2 million acres of their land to our country for the right to fish on familiar territory. According to current studies, the population of wild salmon are now *seven to ten times below* these levels. At this rate of degradation, it has been predicted that the Snake River salmon and steelhead are likely to be *extinct within the next twenty years*. This disappearance of the salmon population would damage the Northwest tribe's way of life. The salmon's survival is directly tied to the economic, spiritual, and physical well-being of the tribes. To blatantly disregard this "way of life" would be heartlessly continuing the unethical treatment of our Native Americans.

Finally, the removal of the dams on the Snake River will have little impact on the local economy – except perhaps to bolster the job market and employment base. U.S. taxpayers have spent 3 billion dollars on costly recovery methods. The estimated cost of removing the dams is approximately a third of that sum. Removal of the dams makes sense for the local and for the national economies.

Unless the four dams of the Snake River are removed, fishery and wildlife officials will be helpless to watch as the river runs continues to degrade and the salmon population disappears forever from its waters. I urge you to consider removal of the dams to conserve biodiversity in our natural waters as well as making a new precedent for wildlife and habitat restoration.

Sincerely Yours,