



The Lower Snake River Juvenile Salmon
Migration Feasibility Report/
Environmental Impact Statement



Recreation and Tourism Analysis

Information
on effects
on recreation
and tourism
analysis

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) continues to study ways to improve juvenile salmon passage through the hydropower system on the Snake River. As part of this effort the Corps released the Draft Lower Snake River Juvenile Salmon Migration Feasibility Report/Environmental Impact Statement (FR/EIS) in December 1999. These information sheets discuss specific topics covered in the FR/EIS. The entire FR/EIS can be found on line at <http://www.nww.usace.army.mil>. For more information contact Dave Dankel, Walla Walla District Corps, at (509) 527-7288, dave.a.dankel@nww01.usace.army.mil.

The Drawdown Regional Economic Workshop (DREW) was established to aid in the development of a comprehensive social and economic analysis (which includes recreation and tourism) for this Feasibility Study. The DREW includes economists from Federal agencies, the Northwest Power Planning Council, states, tribes, contractors, and other regional stakeholders. The DREW analyses on any given subject presented with these sheets should be seen as only part of the overall economic analysis and should always be viewed in the context of the larger economic analysis as presented in Appendix I of the Draft FR/EIS.

The Recreation and Tourism Analysis Report

In 1999, the Recreation Workgroup, a DREW subgroup, completed a final report on the recreation and tourism analysis that formed the basis for Section 3.2, Recreation Use, of *Technical Appendix I – Economics* of the FR/EIS. The Recreation and Tourism Analysis was reviewed by the DREW and the Independent Economic Analysis Board (IEAB), a review board of economists drawn from academia and private industry. It is important to note that this analysis is subject to review and revision, based on comments received as part of the reviews of the Independent Economic Analysis Board (IEAB) and comments received from the public.

Recreation on the four lower Snake River reservoirs is one of the authorized project uses. A recreation survey was developed as one tool to gather information for use in recreation analysis. Results of the survey are incorporated into the DREW's Recreation and Tourism Analysis.

The Analysis Provides:

- estimates of economic benefits of existing recreation and tourism on the lower Snake River reservoirs
- estimates of economic benefits of existing recreation and tourism upriver of the lower Snake River reservoirs and in central Idaho
- estimates of economic benefits of recreation and tourism on the Snake River if the lower Snake River dams were breached.



US Army Corps
of Engineers®
Walla Walla District

Recreation and Tourism on the Lower Snake River

The lower Snake River, its reservoirs, dams, and adjacent shorelines offer both land and water recreational activities. Water-based recreational activities include fishing, water-skiing, boating, and swimming. Two cruise line companies take tourists as far upstream as Clarkston, Idaho. Boat launch ramps, beaches, marinas and other facilities have been developed to support these activities. Land-based activities such as picnicking, camping, hunting, and hiking are also popular and take place at facilities along the reservoirs. The dams and reservoirs are also important recreational sites and receive approximately 2 million visitors throughout the year. Powerhouse tours and adult fish viewing are popular visitor activities at the dams. There are 33 developed recreational sites around the lower Snake River reservoirs.

Effects on Recreation and Tourism

There would be little impact on recreation and tourism activities under the Existing Conditions, Maximum Transport, and Major System Improvements alternatives. Compared to the Existing Conditions alternative, which has an annual recreation and tourism value of \$54 million, draft figures indicate that the average annual value of recreation and tourism on the lower Snake River would have an additional direct \$2 million benefit under the Maximum Transport and Major System Improvements alternatives.

Breaching the four dams would change regional recreation activities. The existing reservoirs would be replaced by a free-flowing 140-mile stretch of river.

Some activities that occur on reservoirs, such as certain types of boating, fishing, and wildlife viewing, could also occur on a free-flowing river.

Other activities, such as mooring boats, sailing, and excursion cruises, and structures such as marinas, would be limited or no longer be possible. Surveys conducted for this study project that new activities may develop, such as drift boating, rafting, kayaking, and jet boating. This could have direct (\$82 million annually, based on survey results) and indirect benefits for recreation. Although some users may be displaced to other recreational sites, others may come to experience a free-flowing stretch of Snake River.

The overall recreation analysis also provides projections for low and high recreation-use scenarios under the dam breaching alternative. However, the high-use projections (which present a net increase in the value of recreation of about \$300 million annually) are not considered realistic because they do not fully reflect the limitations on the system to support recreation and tourism. While the analysis assumed increased benefits from added capacity, the increased costs to create the facilities were not added. This issue will be resolved before finalizing information on recreation and tourism benefits.

Uncertainty is inherent in any future-oriented planning effort. The period of analysis for the economic study is 100 years. It is difficult to predict what will happen a few years into the future, let alone 100 years. Considerable uncertainty surrounds any attempt to forecast results 100 years into the future. A detailed discussion of how the economic analysis addressed the role of uncertainty can be found in *Appendix I^{3/4} Economics*, Section 3.2.5 and Section 8.

