

PUBLIC MEETING

U. S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS DRAFT  
LOWER SNAKE RIVER JUVENILE SALMON MIGRATION  
FEASIBILITY REPORT/ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT  
WITH  
FEDERAL CAUCUS CONSERVATION  
COLUMBIA BASIN FISH "ALL-H PAPER"

SPOKANE, WASHINGTON  
DOUBLETREE HOTEL  
322 N. SPOKANE FALLS COURT  
GRAND BALLROOM

FEBRUARY 8, 2000

THE MODERATOR: I'd ask you if you have props, banners or anything like that, you're welcome to bring them up with you as you make your testimony. And then please put them away so that they're not in the room in general.

We'd ask you again to respect the views of everyone in the room and allow people to give their comment without any cheering, clapping or booing or any of that kind of stuff.

We don't want to have a hostile environment for people who want to speak to the federal officials.

I'll call your name. Please come to the microphone. You can choose any of the microphones around the room. I have four sign-up sheets that you've all signed in on. I'm going to take the number one from each one and move across. Then number two, move across. So that's the order in which I'll call from the sheets.

I'll call the name of the person who is up, the person next in line and the person on deck. And please try and get to a microphone as soon as you hear your name, so we can go from one to the other quickly and get as many people time to speak as possible.

We want you to watch the lights here in front of you. The green light means go, talk. The yellow light means you've got one minute left. And the red light means that your time is up. And I'll help you along with that if it looks like you can't see it.

We'd like to accommodate as many as 40 or 50 people, and to do that we need your help to move things along.

Because the meeting is being transcribed, we have a court recorder here. Please indicate whether you're commenting on the Corps EIS or the Federal Caucus All-H Paper or both. And if you don't know, that's okay. We'll try and direct your comments to the appropriate organization.

Please be sure and state your name and any organization or affiliation that you have as well.

Okay. I think we're ready to start. We're going to start with Chris Lyle. We're going to move to Chris Wokemski. I'm sorry. Please forgive me if I slaughter your name and feel free to correct me as well. And then on deck is Glenn Cavette. Go ahead, Chris.

THE FLOOR: Good afternoon. My name is Chris Lyle. I'm a wheat producer representing the Washington Association of Wheat Growers and the Washington Wheat Commission.

Regarding the Corps report. Wheat growers support alternative two, maximum transport of juvenile salmon. The documentation is clear. Barging works.

We support alternative three, major system improvements. Behavioral guidance structures, collection and bypass systems show great promise for moving smolts passing through dams at a minimum level of harm. Bypass system modifications are based on the proven model of the Wells Dam on the Mid-Columbia owned by Douglas County PUD.

The Wells Dam has been granted an HCP with smolt survival ratios measuring approximately 95 percent.

We oppose alternative four. We oppose dam breaching. The FLUSH model put forth in the PATH process represents a failed characterization of smolt passage. Realtime PIT tag data reveals the limited capacity of PATH as a tool for characterizing the dynamic life cycle of anadromous species.

In contrast, CRI analysis indicates that dam passage Improvements and fish transport measures implemented since the late '70s have likely prevented the extinction of spring summer chinook and possibly others.

Salmon recovery is not a fish versus dams issue.

The executive summary states that alternatives one, two and three result in a slight reduction in extinction risks for listed stocks based on CRI analysis.

Alternative four results in only a moderate reduction in moderate reduction in extinction risks for fall chinook and steelhead.

The small marginal improvement from slight reduction risk to moderate reduction risk does not justify the cost associated with breaching.

Regarding the All-H Paper. Harvest. Science knows very little about the marine portion of the salmon life cycle. If salmon travel from the Columbia estuary and spend the majority of their lives in Canadian waters pursued by foreign fleets, then we might as well go with a no action alternative.

Salmon recovery is not possible without international cooperation. Severe harvest restrictions are necessary in order to preserve genetic diversity.

If salmon were treated the same as spotted owls, harvest would have been banned long ago.

Hatcheries. We'll reserve that for written comment. We support the multi-use river system as authorized by Congress.

February '96 brought severe flooding to the Pacific Northwest. Just as the Willamette River was about to flood the city of Portland, the head of BPA ordered the locks and gates closed on all Columbia and Snake River dams in order to allow Willamette River flood waters to drain unimpeded into the lower Columbia. This disproves the point made by many that Snake River dams serve no purpose for flood control. To the contrary, they played an important role in preventing what would have been the 1996 Portland flood. We feel an economic analysis should include that aspect.

Habitat briefly. Many an agriculture have already made significant contributions to habitat improvement and restoration of fresh water habitat. The short list includes the Asotin Creek project, Tucannon River, Touchet River, Walla Walla River watershed restoration, Douglas County HCP and the TMDL pilot project with the Department of Ecology.

Salmon runs are declining in the Pacific coastal rivers without dams. This fact points to a need for greater understanding of marine habitat. Science demands that we understand the big picture before pointing fingers at dams.

We support the Corps' conclusion that no further study for a John Day pool drawdown is necessary. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Chris. Chris Kopepski. I'm sorry. Is Chris still here? Okay. Len Cavette and then next is Hal Miele. Miele (Phonetic), maybe. And then Celmic Bock.

THE FLOOR: I'm Len Cavette. I'm a resident of Spokane, Washington. Have been for 75 years. I fished and hunted the Snake River basin, particularly the area between Lyons Ferry and the Ground Rotten River for the better part of 50 years. This includes Mainstay, Clearwater, and Grand Ron Rivers with the regular sorties to the salmon. I watched the runs of migrating fish diminish as each succeeding dam was completed and brought to reservoir status. This loss of fish was accompanied by a corresponding loss of resident gain fish. Most notably the transpondeous white sturgeon. Having a successful fishery also required running oxygen rich water and clean gravel for successful spawning to take place.

30 long years ago, I and eight other individuals, mostly members of Northwest Steelheaders and Trout Unlimited, representing many genuinely concerned sportsmen and conservation groups brought suit in federal court in an attempt to halt construction of Lower Granite Dam. It was very apparent to all informed observers that the wanton destruction of the resource, as well as the attendant preparing areas must be halted. Even at this late point in time, competent biologists, both fish and game, questioned the reversibility of this horrendous mistake.

As Tom Foley told us in one of our many meetings, fish can't pull the handles on voting machines. We subsequently were unsuccessful in stopping Lower Granite Dam.

We were successful, however, in getting a decision with stipulated mitigation by the Corps of Engineers in the forms of access, habitat reservation and fishery enhancement.

Our suit also initiated long overdue scrutiny by Congress as to the totally absurd numbers used by the various federal agencies to justify the cost benefit ratio for this boondoggle.

Also looked at were the multitude of forgotten or ignored items subsequently needed to complete the project and appropriate extra cost.

We have watched the years since Lower Granite's completion. Hatchery enhancement, collection draws and channels, fish routes, travelling streams, barges and truck transport and who all knows what other schemes supposedly improved the fishery.

Accompanying all of these above efforts as well as those attempted solutions on lower Columbia dams were extensive, very costly studies carried on by the various agencies. This river system literally has been studied to death.

The cold hard facts instead reflect massive failure in recovery efforts of this once self-sustaining resource. In reflecting back there is very little if any sense of pride or accomplishment for society who in less than one half of the century has transformed a tremendous resource into today's catastrophe. We have managed in our wisdom to substitute a priceless, nontax consumptive asset into a 600 million dollar annual liability.

THE MODERATOR: I need you to wrap up, please, Glenn.

THE FLOOR: Okay. All mankind has an obligation to pass on family, friends, and allegiance to follow the fruits of the earth. Balance between those naturally occurring and man's feeble efforts to improve any unbalance invariably results in conditions paralleling today's dilemma in regards to this system.

THE MODERATOR: I'm going to have to ask you to stop now, please. Thank you.

THE FLOOR: I'm going to send a copy of this in.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Glenn. We appreciate that. Hal, could you pronounce your last name for us.

THE FLOOR: Would I do what?

THE MODERATOR: Your last name please.

THE FLOOR: I'm Hal Miele from Cheney. I can start out by saying I've got three minutes to focus on the main problem facing the Senate. If we leave all the dams up the Columbia River, up the Snake River intact, and we go about business as usual, the salmon are going to nose-dive.

If we breach one dam or more dams than one and go about business as usual, the salmon run is going to nose-dive even faster. Behind each dam we got a mountain of silt, metals, of muck. And when you breach a dam, that goes down the river and it covers your spawning beds. It covers your fishing holes. And maybe five years later it will end up in the slack water behind the next dam.

Dams are not our big problem facing the salmon. You know, I read out there increased opportunities for angling if you've breached the dams. Angling is our big problem. We've got a lot of fisherman that are taking a lot of fish out of the rivers. We should eliminate all fishing. Remove all the commercial fisherman. If we take the Yakamas and Umatillas out and have a little conference and we say, hey, we'll frequent your casinos, but you pull your gill nets. They'll probably do it. The Indians will go along with us. A big problem is fishing the river. We've got more fisherman every year. We've got less salmon every year. How did that happen?

You know, the diehards are going to say, I want to go fishing every week. Let them go fishing every week. We open the fishing season one day a week, Saturday, when the salmon run is on. They fish four days a month. The salmon swim unharassed up the river 26 days out of the month. You don't think that's going to make a difference?

If you've got any smarts, if you're a pheasant hunter and take your dog out there and run pheasant in the spring when the hens are on the nest, what happens? We've got another endangered species. You don't pull the salmon out of their salmon beds.

The Corps of Engineers can take some barges and they can take some gravel downstream and they can develop spawning beds and let nature take its course, let ecology take its course. I love that fish friendly term. If they had lights along one side and a lot of free water and the fish move up the stream through the turbine down the stream through the turbine, I think we've got it made.

The Corps of Engineers are doing one hell of a job. Breaching the dams, if you want to -- you won't breach more than one dam. You won't breach more than one dam because you'll see what it's going to do. If you go up to the Coeur d'Alene River and look what happens up there when they dredge, or up to Clearwater River, you're going to see what that silt does. I used to fish Moose Creek when I was a kid. Five years the silt was so thick in that water you had six inches of water going down that creek. One kid actually went to dive in there all day and his body wasn't even covered with water.

THE MODERATOR: Hal, I need you to wrap up, please.

THE FLOOR: I'll save my good points.

THE MODERATOR: I know it's frustrating to leave your comments to three minutes. But we can't figure another way to accommodate. So I appreciate your cooperation. Cal McElvoy is next. Leonard Ross is next. While those folks are coming up, I've been informed by security that they'd prefer no signs or banners at all even during your testimony, please, thanks. Go ahead.

THE FLOOR: Hi. My name is Cal McElvoy. And I'm a resident of Spokane at the Cannon Hill Edition neighborhood.

I'm very concerned about the salmon and the Snake River. One of the reasons or -- one of the things I always look at, economics aside, just looking at the biology and the fish runs on the Columbia and the Snake River is the Hanford Reach fish. And those fish, they're migrating out to the ocean and back to the Hanford Reach area past four dams on the Columbia River. And they don't go to the Snake River, but they spawn right after the fourth dam on the lower Columbia. And they're going through all the same, they're going through the same ocean conditions. They go through the same tribal gill netters, they go through the same commercial fishermen, the same anglers on the Columbia. Yet they're very healthy. And they return in numbers. They're not listed as endangered.

And the Snake River salmon who have to pass through those dams on the Columbia, they have to make a dam to go up four more. And it seems to be four too many. And as you all know, some have already gone extinct and others are on the endangered species list and they're not doing well.

And even though they go through the same predators and the same ocean conditions and all that, which seems like definitely that plays a part in salmon recovery and how they return, but with those Hanford Reach fish and also some others, they're doing well.

So I guess I just strongly believe that it is those four dams that are causing the problem for those fish, either with smolt migration out or adults returning. And if salmon recovery needs to be done, which it does, then those four dams need to be removed.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Cal. Okay. Leonard Ross, Leanne Tieren. On deck is Jim Bradford.

THE FLOOR: My name is Leonard Ross. And I'm -- we're scientists, engineers.

THE MODERATOR: Can you speak a little closer to the mic. Thank you.

THE FLOOR: I've worked in the paper industry for 35 years where scientists, engineers, and operators who perform they have and BPA in solving the salmon crisis is, are usually let go. I'll give you some quotes to show you why I say this. In 1995 Judge Marsh ruled on this. It said, "Not in accordance with the purposes of the Endangered Species Act."

He also mandated inclusion of state and tribal expertise in fixing the problem. In August 1997, the northwest Director Willstead in Boise testified that "We are to get into federal process to seek agreement among state, tribal, and federal authorities on resolution of the situation and to be facilitated to ensure objectivity and prove effectiveness and the prospective analyses will also provide the hypotheses about management alternatives."

Some federal agencies in the past have tried to misdirect the signs and discredit the findings.

For example, last March the Corps Walla Walla's, wrote "Recent research results have shown that past model results are grossly in error." That was an error. Others have called these agencies on their actions last January. Earl Webber, "This has been another unfortunate example of (Inaudible) has been forward. They clearly undermined this effort and in my judgment are not consistent with the duty of a public agency who facilitates the solutions that are in the public good.

To paraphrase the past 1998 final report, "For all species breaching options produce higher biological benefits than the other actions. Subsequently NMFS in their EIS appendix assumed uncertainties and new possibilities to avoid past conclusions. NMFS established the CRI and the All-H and now we have a federal caucus and they want more time to resolve or at least prove that transportation will work. Idaho Fish and Game said "Their combination of assumptions is not scientifically supported." The ISAB comment about CRI, we (Inaudible) implicit argument that the uncertainties supports a decision to delay the real hydro power decision in hopes that future research will reduce uncertainty.

In the private sector, managers know how to prioritize and determine what's necessary. And they use the 80/20 rule to determine what's sufficient.

If you really want to recover the Snake River salmon, start listening to the scientists and heed the criticisms of Chairman James Oak who recently said the --

THE MODERATOR: I need to you wrap up.

THE FLOOR: -- at extinction levels for next 100 years.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you very much, Leonard. Leanne Tieren, Jim Bradford. On deck is Pete Wyman.

THE FLOOR: Hi. My name is Leanne Tieren and I'm the Associate Director of Save Our Wild Salmon. We're finally glad to have a chance to comment on the urgent and critical decision that's before us today, whether to remove four dams that don't make sense or to share the Columbia Basin with wild majestic Snake River salmon.

Save Our Wild Salmon is a coalition of 50 separate organizations including sports fishing groups, commercial fishing organizations, business associations, environmental groups and energy activists.

Our various member groups come to this issue from many different angles with many different perspectives. But as broad and diverse as our coalition is, it still doesn't incorporate all of our individuals across the region and nation who support removing these four dams.

I couldn't begin to list all the entities in my three minutes, but I'd like to read you a short and partial list. Four are local Spokane groups that have endorsed taking out these four dams. The Spokane Mountaineers, the Pan Handle Trout Unlimited, Washington Wildlife Federation. Spokane Canoe and Kayak Club. Spokane Audobon Society, the Lands Council, Washington Environmental Council, and the Kootenai Environmental Alliance.

Other national and regional organizations include American Rivers, the Association for Northwest Steel Headers, Columbia River Inter Tribal Fish Commission, the Earth Justice Legal Defense Fund, Friends of the Earth, Idaho Wildlife Federation, Idaho Rivers United, Idaho Steelhead and Salmon Unlimited, the National Resources Defense Council, the National Wildlife Federation, the Northwest -- the Northwest Sport Fishing Industry Association, the Oregon Natural Desert Association, the Oregon Natural Resources Council, the Pacific Coast Federation of Fisherman's Associations, Pacific Rivers Council, Salmon For All, Taxpayers for Common Sense and Trout Unlimited.

Just these groups alone represent more than 6 million members and supporters who believe that taking out these four dams that don't make sense is the best way to restore our salmon runs.

But that's not all. Individuals from all over have been making phone calls, writing letters, signing post cards and petitions and sending e-mails. Over 96,000 people across the nation support removing these four dams that don't make sense.

It's just the beginning. More and more people are making their voices heard every day. The science is in. The economics is in. We know the right thing to do. All we need now is to generate the political will to do it. And like it has been and always will be, the people must lead for the leaders to follow. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Leanne. Jim Bradford. Pete Wyman. And on deck is Les Wygen.

THE FLOOR: Hello. I'm Jim Bradford. I'm from Idaho and I'm a member of a number of different conservation organizations.

I think the question is when, not what we need to do to save Idaho salmon. The overwhelming body of evidence says that the action most likely to save the salmon and bring them back to harvestable quantity is to bypass the four lower Snake River dams.

The past studies have said that. The independent scientific analysis board has said that. The Idaho Fish and Game Department has said that. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has said that. Even the National Marine Fisheries have said that.

So I think we know what needs to be done. We have to partially remove the four dams on the lower Snake River. This is the only choice likely to bring fish back because of timing.

The time line most often quoted before the salmon are extinct is 17 to 20 years. That is a terribly short period of time considering the lead time required to do the planning and the implementation of breaching once the decision is made. We can't simply go on studying the possible result of other options than breaching. We're out of time. We have to act now or there will be no fish. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Jim. Pete Wyman, Les Wygen and on deck is L. Wood.

THE FLOOR: My name is Pete Wyman, I'm an economist at Spokane Falls Community College. I've been involved in trying to save fish for about 30 years.

To give you a little historical perspective might be helpful because I remember the days about 30 years ago when a couple of Army Colonels I overheard them saying they didn't know what the big fuss about salmon was, they're all going to be gone anyway. And that exactly was their attitude.

Remember this is the days that they had plans for damming every single river on the northwest including the Salmon River. The Army Corps of Engineers had a long long history of overestimating benefits and underestimating costs.

The former head of the Tennessee Valley Authority wrote the book From Dams to Disasters. It well documents that plus the absolute lies as he called it in the long history. I remember the Dworshack Dam which was a fish disaster.

They said in order to put in a power plant they had to put another dam on the Lenora dams to reregulate them. That way they can screw up another river.

That, too, never made any cost benefit ratio. I remember the Ben Franklin proposal where the Army Corps of Engineers said it would be favorable, but citizens analyzed it and showed their calculations and they agreed that the dam should not be built. It did not have a favorable cost benefit.

In fact, the resources for the future, which is quoted in the EIS, pointed out that most of the benefits historically have been "illusionary".

I should point out that groups like the NRDC, Sierra Club and Academic Economists oppose the WPPSS fiasco that only cost us 15 billion dollars.

I also was at the hearings to try to oppose the Lower Granite Dam. In fact, I said it was nothing but a subsidy to the barge owners. It cost 60 million dollars to replace the railroad. And I said it would end up in the destruction of salmon. So it seems to me that the academic economists and environmentalists certainly should have a little more credibility than the Army Corps of Engineers and the other federal agencies, the Bonneville Power Administration, etc., etc.

In fact, if our proposals have been followed, we wouldn't even be here today. There would be salmon in the river. We would have kept faith with the tribes. There would be more economic growth and we'd have a better quality of life and we would have saved about 25 billion dollars in bad investments.

Yet the Corps unbelievably is still pushing barging which I said six years ago at a hearing was a failure and I haven't seen any great results yet.

Instead I would suggest that you look at some of the reports by Dr. Ed Whitelaw which I have great respect for in which he says in these days the Corps underestimates the benefits of breaching and overestimating the costs.

For example, the salmon in the EIS estimates that there will be about 400 jobs and 7 million dollars in benefits.

On the other hand Dr. Reading's report in 1997 feels that there would be 2,100 jobs and 72 million. So I guess what I'm trying to say, I'm not impressed and I don't think anyone should be with the Army Corps of Engineers.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Pete. Les Wygen and L. Wood. And on deck is Warren I think it's Koontz.

THE FLOOR: Hello. I'm Les Williams. And I want to take my hat off to the Corps of Engineers. I served in the U.S. Army back in the 50's with the Corps of Engineers and I have a lot of respect for what they've done on the Snake River system.

I grew up 15 miles from Central Ferry. I watched Little Goose and Central Ferry come on line and I watched the Granite Dam come on line. You guys have done a good job and I think you deserve a lot of credit.

But I don't think the dam should come out. I want to save these dams. We can save our dams. We can save our salmon. We can save our recreation. We can save our hydro power system that we've got. It's the cleanest environmental safe that we have. We've regenerated four times going down the river. Until somebody can bring us some sound science and instead of what I call junk science, then let's leave these dams in until we solve the problem.

The problem isn't the dams. Number one, the Corps, my suggestion is go town down to Rice Island. Put 100 hawks out there and get rid of the Caspian terns. You're spending 500 million dollars to get rid of those terns.

From what I see, and I know a lot of guys would work for the Corps of Engineers. A lot of guys who live in Whitman County. Go down and take Rice Island out and -- and then I say go out into the ocean and get rid of those ocean nets. They're raping the ocean. That's what's going on. It's not the dams that are taking our salmon out of there.

I know the project engineer that runs Lower Goose, Little Granite, and Dworshack. I was at that dam. I saw 500,000 go through that dam every day during that system. Two percent lost between Granite dam and the ocean. What's wrong with two percent?

The same night that I took a tour through that dam, NMFS made the decision to spill the water and when you spill water you're going to lose 15 percent of every smolt that goes over there. The draw down in '92 was a joke.

Whitman County spent 400,000 dollars on that river road that goes from Lewiston up to Awaie. If you guys decide to take these dams out, that road is gone. It will be shut down to traffic. And when you get up to Central Ferry, the Oak Bridge is still laying in the middle of the Snake River and you're not going to be able to water ski on that river.

And then you take a look at the 43 ports on this system. All the ports on this system, you're destroying jobs. You're destroying recreation. You're destroying our culture. I say leave these dams alone. They're the greatest asset that we have to Whitman County, to Garfield County, to Asotin, to Franklin, all the rivers down through the system.

The county commissioners of the State of Washington have passed a resolution in opposition to breaching the dams 100 percent. It's on record as of last June. And I'm very proud to have started that out in Whitman and Asotin and Garfield County. These are our dams. Leave them alone. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Les. L. Wood. Warren Koontz, and Bob Dunnigan.

THE FLOOR: I'm Orie Wood and I represent the Spokane Canoe and Kayak Club of nearly 300 families. We strongly support bypassing the dams in an effort to restore the salmon to the lower Snake River. Both the Corps of Engineers Environmental Impact Statement and Columbia Basin Fish All-H Paper show that the Corps structural alternative involving partial dam removal must be the cornerstone of any recovery plan.

Any plan short of bypassing dams will not meet recovery goals.

The document also shows that bypassing is the least expensive and most cost effective plan because it would protect most existing jobs and create new ones.

The fishery study concludes that bypassing dams is the only option that wouldn't violate federal law. Other alternatives which don't bypass just don't make sense.

Our organization doesn't have a single wheat farmer, barge operator, water irrigator, power operator, or dam operator, each of whom have an economic interest in the dam's status quo. Yet none of us want to damage our economy through bypassing the dams just so we can run the Snake like Lewis & Clark saw it. It will be another generation's time to see the fish population that the explorers saw, however, not mine.

One doesn't need to be a river runner to stand on top of a Lewiston grade and look upon the impounded river in amazement and dream of seeing that drainage in its natural state.

To those of us enamored of rivers, however, the prospect of some 60 newly exposed rapids, 70 islands and miles of new river banks with access to and from those banks already in place at four well-spaced intervals well boggles the mind.

It also is mind boggling to realize that taxpayers are paying a total of 30 million every year year after year to keep that treasure locked and buried.

In the past ten years more than 3 billion have been spent on failed salmon recovery systems. 30 million annually in damming so that barges can get three miles beyond what the Pasco port provides. It just doesn't make sense when road and rail, the original carriers, would provide competitive pricing to Pasco. That 30 million dollar subsidy provides only one cent per bushel edge for the farmer over rail and truck.

Can bypass bring back the fish, the fishing industry and the recreationalists? Perhaps the answer can be found in a rephrased statement from the movie Field of Dreams: "If you unbuild it, they will come." Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you. Okay. Warren Koontz and Bob Dunnigan. And then we're going to take a quick break. Before we break I'll tell you who the three people are to go next so that you can be ready to start again right on time. Go ahead.

THE FLOOR: I'm Warren Koontz. I'm a member of the United Power Trades Organization. The hydro electric power of the four Snake River dams is very important which had the capacity of 3,483 megawatts. Seattle or the whole states of Idaho and Montana use about 1,000 megawatts. The general manager for Emerald PUD near Eugene, Oregon says the dams produce an average 850 megawatts. American Rivers says 950 megawatts. The Corps official study says about 1,250 megawatts. And Uptill Limited research says 1,600 megawatts. And a representative testified last year in front of the Oregon legislature. The night before that testimony, the four dams were generating 2,500 megawatts. Granted this was during spring runoff, but electricity was being needed, sold and used and made about 1.2 million for one day at the wholesale average price of 21 dollars per megawatt.

The hydro electric dams produced the cleanest and most environmentally friendly source of mass produced electricity in the world. There are also news articles out in just the last week again that say Northwest Power Planning Council studies shows we are near electrical load capacity and have a one in four chance of having brownouts over the next four years in our region.

Also there is a constant environmentalist claim that the four Snake plants have no flood control. Granted, the Snake plants or Snake dams weren't originally authorized for flood control, but there is a Lower Granite Flood Control Plan. That plan shows that river control on Lower Granite on February 10, 1996, during the huge Willamette Valley Portland flood. And they asked Lower Granite to help hold back water because the Columbia River is full.

One four ton barge can carry the equivalent of over 500 semi truck loads. There are an average of seven tows a day that come or go through McNary dam. Additional truck loads on the roads would greatly increase congestion, road maintenance and risk of accident, death and injury.

Many of the return trips that barges make up the Columbia and Snake rivers carry gasoline and diesel fuels. Fuel efficiency on one gallon of fuel equals a ton of commodity can move approximately 500 miles by barge, 200 miles by train, or 60 miles by truck.

Eliminating barge transportation would greatly increase hydrocarbon, carbon dioxide and nitrous oxide emissions. All of these highly important factors must be included in the formula about whether to breach the Snake River dams or not.

The above factors and many others, including the recent gains in returning fish that appear to be at least partly to do with an improvement in ocean conditions, strongly make the case of breaching the Snake River dams is not the best approach.

THE MODERATOR: I need you to wrap up.

THE FLOOR: A problem that is already turning the corner on its way to being corrected. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you. And Bob?

THE FLOOR: Good afternoon. My name is Bob Dunnigan. I'm president of Idaho Trout Unlimited. I'm a member of the board of Save Our Wild Salmon. I'm also a grandfather, a resident of Idaho and a tree farmer.

I remember when prior to these four dams -- when these four dams were proposed. Of course we were assured they were necessary and good, that there were no down side to their construction, the fish would be fine.

However, like many other activities undertaken by well meaning people both in and out of government, this did not prove to be the case.

The one almost unique issue in the case of these dams were the justification studies that Congress required. The first time these studies were completed, the cost benefits for at least two of the dams proved to be less than one to one.

No problem. The studies were rewritten and the cost benefits rather magically became positive and met the criteria for building large dams. It should come as no great surprise that two of the most powerful Senators in the United States were from Washington State and Mr. Magnuson was the chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee.

It now comes time to make a decision about the impacts of these four lower Snake River dams. And we as a society need to answer one very complex question. Are we willing to lose fish species from Idaho. Are we willing to lose the icon species that identifies the Pacific Northwest. Do we want the short term benefits that accrue to a sector of the regional population, or do we want a landscape for my grandchildren that will support plants and animals that I knew in my youth.

You see, I no longer fish for salmon and steelhead on the Columbia system. I now take my grandchildren to Canada and Alaska.

My purpose is not to keep fish. To the contrary. My purpose is to let my grandchildren see a life system function.

I believe that the science and economics are overwhelmingly in favor of breaching the four lower Snake dams in order to support the ecologic system that will save wild fish because it is worth it to me to correct the legacy effects of these dams for future generations.

I come down hard on the side of saving money, saving fish, breaching the dams that make no sense, saving Idaho water and saving the cultural and religious heritage of the Native Americans who have lived along these rivers for time immemorial. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Bob. Okay. We're going to give our panel and our moderator just a quick break. When we come back in exactly ten minutes at quarter after three, Lyle Picket will be up. Dan Polsen next and Jim Baker on deck.

Let me commend you for respecting the ground rules. I appreciate it very much. Thank you. We'll be back in ten minutes.

(Break taken).

THE MODERATOR: I have a lot of inquiries about where we are on our list. And I can tell you with some confidence that we're not going to get through all the names that signed up before our break today at 5.

So I just want to remind you that you have the options of coming back this evening and signing up for this evening's session, of going next door and taping your comments in the open house area or submitting your comments in writing.

And again I want to assure you that all comments are treated equally, whether you make them here, next door, or submit them in writing.

So you can feel sure that your comments will be considered. Okay. Lyle Rile, are you ready? Rile. Thank you for being here. And Dan Polsen is next and then Jim is on deck. Go.

THE FLOOR: I'm Rile Picket, retired year round sport fisherman. My father and my uncles have fished the Snake River and I fished it all my life.

Now, the fishing in the Snake River is continually declining. I've heard all kinds of stories about fish friendly turbines. I don't think there's such a thing as a fish friendly turbine. And I don't think you can make one. I think a lot more of your fish are being destroyed by the turbines. And what's really agreed to, the sea gulls, the sturgeon, and the channel cats are having a field day just below your dams. And you can see them and go sit and watch them. And as soon as you turn the turbines on, you'll see them eating the fish that are probably crazy after they've gone through the turbines and swimming around in circles. You'll see the sea gulls and the fish eating them.

Now, I see a lot of pollution behind your dams in all of your reservoirs. There's a lot of pollution collecting. If you go out and fish at night, in the morning at dawn, you get up, you'll see pollution on top of the water, you'll see it coming out of the Snake River and you'll see it coming down the Clearwater River. I believe both Lewiston and Clarkston are polluting at night. I also see a lot of warm water, behind your dams, in the summertime especially.

Your fish are declining, not only your steelhead and your salmon, but also your other fish are declining in size. I notice that the steelhead we're catching now are much smaller. And I don't believe they're near as strong as they used to be.

Even your natives are not near the size of the fish they used to be. We're not catching as many of them. And we're not catching them near as thick. They're running five, six pounds. They're not near the fish that we used to catch.

I see an awful lot of carp. I don't know how they affect. But the carp population seems to be really growing in your river. I think they eat the greens and the algae and so forth. I don't think they bother the other fish.

Basically what I'd say to you is I've attended several of these meetings over a period of years. And I really believe that unless you start doing something and do it right away, I think you're going to lose the game before you even get off the bench.

I can't really say much more other than I believe that you have to have a free-flowing river in order to bring your fish back to where they were or even start bringing them back, both natives and what you're putting out of your hatcheries. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Rile. Dan Polsen, Jim Baker. And on deck is Samantha Mays. Dan, are you here? Dan Polsen? Okay. Jim Baker, please. Are you Jim?

THE FLOOR: Yes. Thank you. For the hearing record my name is Jim Baker. I live and work in Pullman, Washington. I live just five miles as the crow flies from Lower Granite Dam.

I'm speaking today on behalf of the 35,000 members of the Sierra Club of the Pacific Northwest and our more than 600,000 members in addition.

One of the things we hear about support for partial removal of the four lower Snake dams is that people simply aren't out there that share our view that it's a necessary action for the salmon.

So I would like everyone in the audience who agrees that we need our salmon, so these four lower Snake dams do not make sense, to please stand.

THE MODERATOR: Could I ask you to refrain, please, from the clapping. Thank you.

THE FLOOR: We represent nobody. On the All-H science paper, I would like to point out that prevention of salmon extinctions is simply not good enough as a standard.

The paper asks aloud is it legal or feasible to hunker down on the other 3 H's of human cause mortality to salmon. I'm here to tell you it's neither legal nor feasible.

And finally the paper points out correctly that these fish are dangerously close to extinction. And the only path that leads to a salmon recovery in the Snake River basin must include partial removal of the four lower Snake dams.

On the Corps's draft environmental impact statement amend phase one study of John Day, I want to remind the Corps that you are the Corps of Engineers, not the Corps of Biologists, and your agency cannot pick and choose which biology to insert into cost benefit analyses.

Turning to the environmental impact statement alone, three of the four alternatives in this environmental impact statement rely upon a fish barging program which has failed in multiple scientific peer reviews.

You did not consider the benefits of mitigation. You did not consider the cost, very high cost of dam retention. And finally you did not consider the tens of billions of dollars that it will cost the Pacific Northwest if these fish go extinct.

And on all of these documents I still have not found the answer to two paramount questions. Number one: What is our goal here? What are we trying to accomplish for the fish? And incredibly nowhere in the thousands of pages in these documents do the agencies tell us what we must do to meet our requirements under law and treaty. That's incredible that so many federal agencies would fail to answer that vital question. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Jim. Samantha Mays, Dick Erickson. And on deck at this time is Guy Gregory. Please be ready. Thanks. Are you Samantha? Go ahead.

THE FLOOR: My name is Samantha Mays. And I am here today representing Idaho Wildlife Federation, which is a state wide sportsman's group in Idaho representing thousands of hunters and anglers who support protecting fish and wildlife habitat to preserve hunting and fishing opportunities. But this is also a real personal issue for me, too.

I was lucky enough to grow up as a child on a salmon and steelhead bearing stream. And I think that every child should have an opportunity to catch a steelhead. And that every child here in the inland northwest shouldn't have to travel to Alaska or Canada to have that opportunity.

People in Idaho stand to gain the most if these dams are bypassed. And we stand to lose the most if they are not. All of Idaho's salmon are on the brink of extinction or threatened. And the science says that the only way that we can restore these fish to healthy, harvestable levels is to bypass the four lower Snake dams.

And what I have found most disturbing from the science coming out in the Corps of Engineers report is that we've lowered the bar. We're talking about what will it take to preserve these fish from extinction. And that should not be our goal. And that should not be the question.

We should be talking about what does it take to restore these fisheries to healthy, harvestable levels, to support communities, to support people in their jobs, and to support businesses.

And the studies that we have seen put the dollars and the job figures pretty high, much higher than what the Corps found. One study done by the Idaho Department of Fish and Wildlife Foundation, which is a nonprofit foundation in Idaho, did a great study looking at the economic benefits of restored steelhead and salmon fishery. And what they found is that if we had a restored fishery, we would see 2,100 new jobs, we would see 72 million dollars in revenue coming in the State of Idaho.

When you include indirect revenues, you're talking 5,000 jobs and 172 million dollars.

We have to save these fish. And we don't want to resent fishery. We want to restore fishery so that our kids can fish and that future generations can also.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Samantha. Could I ask you to hold your applause, please. Thank you. Dick Erickson and Guy Gregory. And on deck is Jim Rieman.

THE FLOOR: Good afternoon. My name is Dick Erickson. I'm manager of the East Columbia Basin Irrigation District. The East District is one of the districts in the Columbia Basin Irrigation Project.

Today I'd like to address both the All-H Paper and the Corps EIS. Regarding the All-H Paper, I'll limit my comments to the flow limitation features of that paper and recommend and suggest strongly that the alternatives and options presented in that paper are not sufficient regarding flow augmentation because they range from maintain the status quo or present levels of flow augmentation or increasing the levels of flow augmentation, neither one of which is appropriate.

Present levels of flow augmentation on the main stem Columbia Snake total about 1,600 feet per year. That target flow has been in place since early to mid 1990's.

During that time period it has been determined that as far as the main stem goes, there is no flow survival relationship for spring and summer migrations. And there is a possible but weak relationship for late summer and fall migrations which is somewhat complicated by temperature conditions and whether it's a flow relationship or a temperature relationship is not sure.

But anyway, there needs to be options and alternatives added to roll back the main stem flow augmentation to levels for the Columbia main stem that are something like a fourth what they are right now. And also reduce them for the Snake main stem flow augmentation.

This flow augmentation is having real impacts. In our particular area of the Columbia Basin, ground water is limited. The flow augmentation program is tied up about 85,000 acre feed of Columbia Basin project water. It was previously authorized for use by agriculture, municipal and industrial purposes.

There is a scarcity of ground water in our area. This lack of surface water which previously authorized as being available is impacting local communities and local industries. And whatever flow augmentation continues on needs to be based on actual relationships, not on emotional relationships or just on the fact that you have the water. It needs to be rolled back.

Regarding the Corps EIS, the East District opposes alternative for dam breaching. You saw the costs earlier today. The costs are huge and they're measurable. The benefits are at least 40 years out there and not near as measurable. And the costs and potential benefits we don't feel warrant moving ahead with dam breaching at this time.

Before the end of the comment period we will submit written material that will support some of these positions with some of the statistics and some studies backing it up. Thank you very much.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you. Okay. Guy Gregory, Jim Rieman, and on deck is Tom Pullman.

THE FLOOR: I'm Guy Gregory. I'm a geologist from Spokane. Life long resident in Eastern Washington.

I appreciate being able to provide input on this. The first part of what promises to be a massive effort in the northwest that's going to effect everyone here.

In terms of just the Snake River part, it's clear that picking the alternative in the EIS is only the beginning. Any decision will certainly be followed by lawsuits. And then that will require Congressional action and ultimately funding.

Of course the outcome of those processes is by no means certain. If you don't believe me, ask Senator Gorton's representative here. They do take time.

The document, the DEIS, does a pretty good job of acknowledging the biological situation. Even so it never really states clearly that the sockeye are essentially dead now and that the rest of the wild fish will follow in short order.

The biology of these fish tell us that if we are to act we must act soon, so there's much work to do and not very much time.

What the document doesn't do well, the DEIS, if at all, is describe the consequences of failure. What will the disappearance of salmon cost us in dollars?

What happens when Helen Chenowith's can of salmon disappears from its shelf, as it has already disappeared from Cecil Anderson's home town stream. And what will it cost to compensate the commercial and sports fishing disappearance. And what are we going to pay the Indians when they'd rather have the fish anyway?

I know who's going to do it. It's us, the federal taxpayer. We're going to pay the way. But until the costs of failure, the costs of letting the fish die are detailed, it will remain difficult to explain to anyone why an effort to save them is important.

I believe the costs of failure are astronomical in comparison to the cost of any proposed action. And these costs of compensation will continue for years and years long after the salmon are forgotten.

Given the time limits of biology and the costs of failure, it's clear there's no time to experiment. The preferred action must be the one that most certainly accomplishes the goal, saving fish.

Given the time available and the consequences of failure, I believe the only legitimate alternative likely to accomplish the stated goal from an engineering and scientific perspective is alternative four, dam breaching.

I support issuance of a record of decision on that basis. I also support conservation fishery levels to the All-H Paper. And I fish. Happily selecting alternative four is also consistent with the requirements of the Endangered Species Act, it's not only technically, scientifically and morally right, it also complies with federal law.

The political and legal question of whether or not we should save salmon at all is beyond the scope of decision making in the EIS. It should be left to our politicians. They alone will decide if removing this species from the planet is in the national interest.

THE MODERATOR: Can you wrap up, please.

THE FLOOR: Thank you very much.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you very much, Guy.

THE MODERATOR: Can I ask you, please, not to clap. Let me tell you what that's about. I can't allow booing because obviously it establishes an atmosphere of intimidation. And if I can't allow booing, then I can't allow clapping either. So that's the position I'm in. So please refrain from clapping.

If you agree, you know, make a comment either on tape next door or put your name on the list to make an oral comment. Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Okay. We have Jim Rieman and then we have Tom Pullman and on deck is Lupito Florez. Go ahead.

THE FLOOR: My name is Jim Rieman. I represent the Washington State Potato Commission. I'm also a potato grower in the Columbia Basin. The Potato Commission represents Potato Growers throughout Washington state.

Most of the potatoes in Washington State are grown in the Columbia Basin and rely on irrigation water from the Columbia and Snake River.

Potatoes are the second largest crop grown in the state with an annual farm production value of approximately 500 million dollars.

The Columbia area of -- basin area of Washington State including Umatilla County, Oregon, is the number one french fry producing area in North America.

Washington State accounts for nearly 1/3 of all the potatoes, including both process and fresh exported from the United States. This export value totals nearly 500 million dollars of exports in the ports of Seattle, Portland, and Tacoma in 1999.

In the summer Washington State potato growers, packers and processors create thousands of jobs locally in Washington State and generate approximately 2.5 billion dollars annually to the State's economy.

Because of the devastating impact the dam breaching would have on Washington State potato industry and the rural communities in Eastern Washington, the Potato Commission wants to take this opportunity today to provide comments on the federal caucus All-H Paper, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers draft environmental impact statement and other salmon recovery efforts.

First let me say that I believe today we are here to talk about how to save the fish. This is what the debate is all about or what it should be about. We are not here to find the rationale for taking out the dams.

I think most of us that live in the Pacific Northwest can say that we care about our national resources, including salmon. I know I do.

But I also care about having a healthy economy. And a healthy Washington State potato industry. The fact is this is not a fish versus economy issue. Fish are important. The economy is important.

Since both are important, I believe we need to take seriously our responsibility to protect both. Take seriously our responsibility to do what is right.

It seems to me that a lot of people are trying to make this an either or situation. I believe the salmon, the economy that maintains our lifestyle and that the people of the northwest will end up the loser if we go only one way.

We continue to focus on alternatives for fish recovery that are too narrow. We don't have the science to back them up and at this point to divide us.

In reality we should be considering options that address the entire complex life cycle of the salmon and weigh the consequences of the choices we make.

As an example, the Corps's draft environmental impact statement is too narrowly focused and worse it asks the wrong question. The question is not, should we breach the dam. The question should be, how do we save the salmon. All the alternatives in the environmental impact statement refer to only one piece of the puzzle. Hydro power.

THE MODERATOR: Jim, I need you to wrap up, please.

THE FLOOR: The impact statement is concerned, we oppose that. Why do we oppose it?

THE MODERATOR: Jim, I'm going to have to cut you off. Thank you very much. Appreciate it. Tom Coleman and Levito Flores and on deck is Rusty Nelson.

Let me also say before you start -- excuse me. It's Tim, isn't it? Tim. Before you start, Tim, we've had a couple of Northwest Power Planning Council members join us. Tom Carrier and John Eckhart? Are you with us? Okay. I just wanted to acknowledge their presence. Go ahead, Tim.

THE FLOOR: My name is Timothy J. Coleman. I'm Executive Director of the Kettle Range Conservation Group in Republic, Washington. And I'm here representing 700 members of their family who believe that salmon are the symbol of freedom, the symbol of wild nature in the northwest. They are an icon like no other in the northwest.

And we believe that we should do everything possible to bring them back because they are on the verge of extinction. Humans on the other hand are not on the verge of extinction. I think we just passed 6 billion. And I know there's some strong arguments about the extinction of humans and the threat to people. But we know that that's not true.

We know that we can barge grains. We know that we can give the farmers water and we can still have wild salmon. And we can try an experiment that hasn't been tried even though the rest of them have been tried, and they haven't worked. We can experiment by breaching the dams. And we can see if it works.

We can do tests. We can do research. And if we're wrong, we can put the dirt back and we can put the dams back in to function. But I don't see that we are risking a lot.

We're already spending millions and millions of dollars. The people of the northwest, the people of America, the people of the world ask that we do something.

And shall we succeed, we shall forever reap the rewards of our actions. Salmon are unique in the northwest in that they live in both a salt and fresh water. In the inland northwest they teach us that the ocean is a life giver; that it's there. It gives us our water.

It also gives us a source of food that has fed generation upon generation of Native American for an unknown time. And I ask that in our huberous, in our willingness to bow down in this economy that is so strong, that we take the time to do what's necessary to pull them back from extinction by breaching. They're reaching out to us and we need to reach down and help them. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Okay. Lupito Flores. Then Rusty Nelson. And on deck is Bob Lawn.

THE FLOOR: Hi. I'm Lupito Flores. I live in the Tri-Cities. Some people might not care that wild salmon are a critical part of our environment. And define the northwest like the bald eagle defines America.

But more than that a healthy restored salmon and steelhead fishery would bring 3 billion dollars annually to northwest and about 38,500 jobs.

I urge you to take action now without delay and remove the earthen portions of the four lower Snake River dams and make the river run more like a river.

An overwhelming majority of biologists support removing the dams. For 300 scientists, the PATH teams, tribes, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife agree that it is the key step to recovery, along with aggressive measures to address the other H's.

You should be focusing on returning salmon to a healthy, harvestable level, not just avoiding extinction, which is the only thing that the All-H Paper addresses.

You have a legal obligation to restore the salmon. The ESA, the Power Planning Act, U.S. Canadian and tribal treaties all require a sustainable fishery. By ignoring these huge legal obligations, you underestimate the cost of salmon extinction and exaggerate the cost of dam removal. Breaking the tribal treaties alone would cost billions of dollars.

Forget the techno fixes. Barging fish around the dams does not work. It never will work. And the small amount of electricity lost from dam removal, it's about 5 percent or less than 5 percent of the entire electricity in the northwest would be lost.

That can be easily replaced with conservation and renewable energies. You need to better analyze and mitigate the economic impacts like improving the roads and rail service for farmers. The barging industry has a monopoly on the transport of commodities. They make about a 200 percent profit without paying to use the waterway.

They don't pay any maintenance of the navigation lots or anything. 8 million dollars is lost every year in energy due to barging.

One last thing. I heard that a representative from Senator Murray's office is here, and I'd just like to urge the Senator to take the lead and be a strong voice for salmon recovery. Thanks.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you Lupito. Okay. Next is Rusty Nelson and then Bob lawn. And on deck is Scott Yates. If you can get up and get close to the mics, I'd appreciate it. Go ahead.

THE FLOOR: My name is Rusty Nelson. I live in Spokane. I want to apologize for my glasses. I lost them awhile ago and when I found them they were in the street. They looked like they had been through a dam turbine.

I'm a cause oriented person. I chose twelve years ago to work for the Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane rather than to continue in another career because I'm passionate about causes, life and death issues, controversial decisions that affect the future of civilization.

But the cause of saving salmon is not enough to keep me awake nights or alter my lifestyle. I like salmon a lot, but the decline of salmon is far down my list of issues, except for one thing. That is the connection of the decline of salmon to the decline of human beings.

Saving humans is what winds my watch. Even if that means saving humanity from itself. Salmon in the Snake and Columbia rivers is not just a canary in the mine issue. There is the matter of great rivers themselves and their connection to life and the quality of life in the northwest.

For our land to be healthy and have a future as the home of healthy communities, these rivers must be healthy. And when these rivers are healthy, fish abound.

Breaching dams on the Snake River is not an attack upon people who want these dams. It is an attack upon one of the diseases threatening the life of the river.

A woman who chooses to have a mastectomy does not make her choice out of emnity for her breast but out of concern and care for the health of her whole body. Breaching four dams in Washington is much less radical surgery for this region than a mastectomy for a woman with breast cancer.

Just as a woman needs scientific information and an encouraging prognosis to make a decision to give up part of her body, we need to know what to expect if we remove these dams.

And we do know. The science is there. The prognosis is clear. Life will be more abundant when the dams are gone. Salmon will have a chance, and salmon will give the river a chance. And the river having a chance means my children and grandchildren have a chance to enjoy life in the northwest as I have.

Breach the dams for the salmon if that works for you. If you don't find that compelling, breach the dams for the rivers. If that's not sufficient, breach the dams for the people, the people who want the dams and those who don't, the people who scratch a living from the river and those who are wealthy from the river. The people who live on the river and those who never give it a thought. We are all part of the body, the community to which the river brings life. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you. Okay. Next is Bob Laub and Scott Yates and then on deck is Seth Williams. Bob, are you here? Bob Lawn? Okay. Scott Brooks. We have Scott Yates and Senge Williams. And on deck is Dave Thomas.

THE FLOOR: My name is Scott Yates. I'm a member of Trout Unlimited national staff. I work out of our western conservation office in Portland. I'm here on behalf of our over 100,000 members in the United States and particularly the 8,000 members here in the northwest.

The reason we hired Dr. Gretchen Userhoff, one of the foremost experts in structure (Inaudible) she identified (Inaudible) names of CRI modelling efforts.

I'm going to enter this critique into the record, much like we did in Portland. I don't have time to go into all of these critiques, but I'd like to mention one briefly.

The CRI is focused on extinction risks which is important and necessary analyses, but it's chosen quasi-extinction threshold of one fish or fewer. This has enormous policy implications.

Obviously if you're using a standard of one fish, it makes the extinction rate seem further off and we don't think that is the case here.

Second, one more comment. I appreciate Rick's answer to my written question earlier today about establishing recovery standards for the Snake River fish. I kind of broke the cardinal rule of leaving a question that couldn't have a yes or no answer. He was nice enough to answer that.

I want to emphasize the importance of this. The CRI was focused exclusively on avoiding distinction. To be honest I don't think I've ever seen recovery standards identified under the 1994 proposed Snake River salmon recovery plan.

The bottom line is the region needs to know what your alternative is to recover fish, that it provides the best chance to recover wild, naturally sustaining harvestable fish. That's what's required by law. That's what's required by treaty. We need to know that to make a decision. Thank you. Appreciate the chance to come here.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Scott. Seth Williams, Dave Thomas, and on deck is Pamela Taske.

THE FLOOR: Hi. I'm a third generation grain farmer from --

THE MODERATOR: Can you state your name, please.

THE FLOOR: Seth Williams. Sorry. I'm a third generation grain farmer from Edwall, Washington which is just west of town here. I'm an organic grower, and throughout the years I feel like farmers are learning to adapt to what's needed from society and from their environment. And that's what I've done on my land.

My father was an organic farmer. My grandpa was a conventional wheat grower. Now I'm trying to plant trees and stop erosion. And I feel like with the dams that one of the things we need to look at is that farmers and the people that use the hydro electric power and the barging, you have to realize that times are changing and we can't just stay, you know -- we can't just go with the old paradigm that that's how our grandparents did it.

This is what society wants, to save the salmon, to let the river go. And I feel like, you know, we can do that. Our economy is in a place to do that where we can support the people. We need to change lifestyles. And I feel like this is the best time to do it. And so we should go ahead and take out the dams and save the salmon. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Seth. Dave Thomas, Pamela Taske. And on deck is Bob Crump.

THE FLOOR: Good afternoon. I'm Dave Thomas, Pulp and Paper Workers Resource Council. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak.

I got into this for a personal reason. I have a pleasure craft that I run from Pasco to Lewiston every year. I spend a week doing it. It's a beautiful river. I go through four dams that are very well kept. We use those for our energy.

I'd like to defend the Corps on the way that they've tried to protect the salmon. Barging does work. We get fish out to the river. What we're not getting is the fish back. I think the National Marine Fisheries should be held accountable for a lot of that. They're not doing what they should to control the predators.

As far as the turbines go, the fish and wildlife department has not done a lot except put a bounty on squaw fish. Squaw fish eat a lot of our salmon. Put a bounty on the terns if that's your answer. Thank you very much.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Dave. Pamela Taske, Bob Crump. And on deck is Richard Rivers.

THE FLOOR: I'm Pamela Taske with the Public Power Council in Portland, Oregon. And my message is very brief. Did you happen to see the front page of yesterday's Wall Street Journal? There's a very interesting article about losing fish. Fish managers have a difficult problem for them. We understand the problem and we'd like you to understand it, too. Taking out the dams does not solve this problem. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Pamela. Richard -- sorry. Bob Crump. And then Richard Rivers and on deck is Paul Lindholt.

THE FLOOR: Good afternoon. I'm Bob Crump. I'm the general manager of Kootenai Electric located in the Coeur d'Alene area in Idaho. We have about 16,000 customers.

We serve primarily in the rural areas of the community. Our customers for the most part are in the lower economic portion of the scale. Many of them have been significantly impacted by the changes in the mining and timber industries in the region.

We have concerns about what's being done with the salmon recovery as far as the costs go. We're the ones who are paying the bills. We are the ones who are buying power from Bonneville Power.

Many of the people in this room that are from Spokane who are not customers of a public utility are not paying those bills. So obviously they haven't got the same concern that we do. So if we're going to spend money on salmon, let's make sure it works.

Now, Pam Taske referenced the article that was in the Wall Street Journal yesterday. Well, I'd encourage you to take a look at it. Basically a hatchery in Oregon that was costing 400,000 dollars a year to run was so successful that they were having coho salmon come up the Lost Creek. And as a result they didn't want those fish there so they were killing them off, clubbing them to death. So what kind of effectiveness is that? So something is all mixed up here and we need to get that fixed.

And I agree with Mr. Baker. What are the goals? What are you trying to achieve? How will we know when we get there? Those are all the most important questions. Not the things that we've been talking about which is what are the intermediate things that we are going to do and hopefully something works.

So after all what are we left with? If you think it's, let's bring back the numbers of fish to harvestable numbers, that in itself I find to be somewhat of an oxymoron, a bit of a dilemma. Why do you want to bring back fish to numbers so that we can harvest them so that we can hook them and catch them in nets and kill them that way instead of killing them in the turbines. I'm confused. I think we've got the wrong sort of objectives there. So that needs to be examined. Basically we're opposed to the breaching concept. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you very much. I appreciate it. Richard Rivers and Paul Lindholt and on deck is Jamie Martin.

THE FLOOR: Good afternoon. My name is Richard Rivers. I have lived and worked as a physician in the Pacific Northwest for the past 25 years. I'm a past president of the Spokane Audobon Society, a group of approximately 1,000 members.

And what I have to say represents the position of that group. Our focus has been on the long term spiritual and ecological well being of our region including quality of life issues for future generations.

We are also impressed with our obligations to maintain salmon under the 1855 and other treaties with Columbia tribes. Treaties by which we took 14 million acres of their land and in return guaranteed them their fishing rights forever.

We are also impressed with the eagerness of nonnatives to unilaterally break those treaties whenever there appears to be a buck to be made.

We're impressed with the economic benefits that restoration of the Snake River salmon and steelhead to harvestable numbers would bring to a region that would stretch from central Idaho to the gulf of Alaska.

We're also impressed that there is a consensus among fisheries, scientists, both agency and independent scientists, that whatever else we do the one step most likely to recover the Snake River salmon and steelhead is to bypass the four lower Snake River dams.

Therefore for ecologic quality of life, economic, ethical and legal reasons, we support alternative four of the draft DEIS which includes the bypass of those four dams.

Finally, we wish to point out that a large part of the almost 1 billion dollars being spent per year now just trying to maintain the salmon at their current level of near extinction comes from taxpayers nationwide. This is not just a local issue, contrary to statements from the Spokane Chamber of Commerce and many local politicians. This is not even just a national issue. It is an international issue. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Richard. Okay. Paul Lindholt and Jamie Martin. And on deck is Ken Hayes. Go ahead.

THE FLOOR: Yes. Hello, I'm Paul Lindholt. I'm a member of the upper Columbia River group of the Sierra Club which has 1,200 members right here. I'm also a professor at Eastern Washington University.

But I am not speaking for those groups. I'm giving a personal memoir of growing up in this area.

As a native of this State I traveled to Vantage with my parents to fish, camp and hunt. There before the dam flooded we found sage grouse. When water covered that magical landscape my sadness in losing it diminished. I had faith in my technical leaders who claimed the dam was necessary to generate electricity and control floods.

When the fish runs began to decline, doubt briefly touched my faith, but I drowned that doubt. Few engineers had a plan to retrofit Columbia River dams with fish ladders to aid the upstream struggle of the fish.

Later I learned that those hundreds of miles of slack water reservoirs created by the dams take a lethal toll on the young smolts heading downstream to spawn, downstream to the ocean.

The fish lose velocity. They lose time. They grow old before they reach the sea. They get eaten by squaw fish, now pike minnow that thrive in that water and sometimes they die from nitrogen saturation when they plunge over the spill ways of the dam.

But you had an answer to that problem, too. Pack the fish in barges and take them around the dams in slack water and so it came to be. Never mind the absurdity of the thing, hundreds of tons of steel toting tiny minnows passing millions of concrete built up in their way.

When you kicked off the jaw fish bounty program, I thought it was good. Doing my civic duty, caught a few squaw fish myself. When you dredged the silt and made islands I believed it was right to be intervening in nature that way.

My reason told me to disbelieve, but faith stood in my way.

Now I'm growing older, more numb. I've heard the promises come and I've watched the fish runs go. It's getting harder to hold this faith.

Recently you've proposed to cover with plastic the silt island you built or plant bushes to discourage the terns or to build new and better islands out of harm's way, out of the ancient salmon path.

Today when vested interest continues in the dams, when they claim Eastern Washington will revert to sage brush if we retire the dams, when they argue electricity rates will sky rocket and we can't afford to save the salmon, I don't believe them.

But even though my trust in experts has been shattered, I can't break the habit of believing technology can save salmon. One technical fix on the table still might work. You could bypass the same dams you built. You can give the river back its current to let the salmon run free again.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Paul. Okay. Thank you. Can I ask you to hold your applause, please. Jamie Martin and Ken Hayes and on deck is John Osborn.

If I could ask you, too, when you hear that your name is next and on deck, just come and stand by a mic so that we don't lose any time at all waiting for people to find their way to the Mike. Thank you.

THE FLOOR: Hi. My name is Jamie Martin. And I'm part of the Gonzaga Environmental Organization. I just came today to say that I'm an Idaho native and what makes me most sad about this whole issue is that I've been to Red Fish Lake almost every year of my life. And I've never seen it red with salmon. And that's why it received its name.

Scientists from the EPA Fish and Wildlife Service, NMFS and lots of state departments of fish and game have submitted a petition stating the only option now is to breach these dams. They will be rebuildable if we need them later. And that's the only option left.

The barging and the ladders and the hatchery fish, it's not working. That's why there aren't fish returning to Red Fish Lake anymore.

So I just came today to say this is our last chance to save the fish is if we breach those dams. I don't know if it's too late. Maybe we can get some fish back to Red Fish Lake and it can be red again in 100 years for generations like me. Thanks.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Jamie. Okay. Ken Hayes, John Osborn, and on deck is I think it's Neil Kiplin. Go ahead.

THE FLOOR: I'm Ken Hayes. I'm on the board of trustees for the Spokane Mountaineers. We're a group of about 800 people here in the Spokane area. And the board of trustees of the Spokane Mountaineers endorse the breaching of the four dams on the lower Snake River in order to provide the best opportunity to restoring wild salmon and steelhead with the minimum cost and impact for economic activities.

The cost of mitigating impacts to irrigators, those shipping products on the Snake River and to power costs should be fully borne by the federal government as part of their legal obligations to restore the salmon runs. Thanks.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Ken. John Osborn and it could be Nick Kiplin next. And then on deck now we have Eleanor Hunter. Thank you, John.

THE FLOOR: My name is John Osborn. I'm a contractor and lifetime resident of Spokane Pacific Northwest. I'm also a fisherman, a son of a fisherman and a father of a fisherman.

We're in the throes of an emotional debate that will have a significant life changing effect on everyone present in this room, assuming we all live long enough.

There are arguments for and against breaching that are backed by apparent science, genuine conviction, thousands of years of culture and of course personal, economic, and lifestyle considerations.

I'm opposed to breaching for many reasons. Some ideological and some selfish. However, in the midst of all the research and emotions, one paramount reason not to breach has to my knowledge not been discussed.

If we breach those four lower Snake River dams tomorrow, and if all the salmon runs that are recovered in a year, there's one clear reason not to breach would still tell us that it was a poor decision to have breached those dams. Breaching is not a transferable solution.

The problems on the lower Snake River exist on rivers throughout the United States and the world. Hydro power, flood control, irrigation, barging and other benefits are generated on those same rivers all over our planet.

We will never breach all those dams. So we must create a solution that gives us hope to save fish runs throughout the United States and the world.

I have observed and helped work on fish bypass systems at Rocky Reach, McNary, Bonneville, John Day, the Dalls, Priest Rapids, Wanapum, Rock Island, as well as all four of the lower Snake River dams. There is hope with this work. And the successes that we have achieved with these systems and successes that we will achieve in the future are transferable.

This is a solution that works and that we can share with the world. If we do anything less than save those fish with those dams in place, then we are being short sighted and foolish.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, John. Nick or Neil, I can't tell which one it is, Kipler. And then we have Eleanor Hunter is next and Marci Reed. I can't tell.

THE FLOOR: My name is Mike Kipler. I'm a Washington State resident, have been all my life.

I'm here to say I fished with my dad over on the coast, on many coastal rivers and over here on the Columbia and the Hanford Reach. Many, many good memories. I hope my kids can enjoy the same.

Don't let the demise of the salmon in the Snake River -- excuse me. I'm not used to public talking here. Don't let the demise of the salmon in the Snake River be your legacy.

Your decision will not sit well with some people, but you are not committed to making recommendations -- I'm sorry, but you are committed to making recommendations that best serve salmon.

I'm here as a Washington State citizen to ask you to take matters into your hands and take a strong, positive step toward permanent salmon recovery in this state.

The National Marine Fisheries currently permits and facilitate the harvest of salmon, even though the agency itself has listed the salmon as a threatened and endangered species, yet it allowed the increase of harvest over last year's numbers.

Don't make the same mistake here. With the dam breaching proposal, the salmon are not governed. Be sure that the salmon are not governed into extinction. Oh, boy.

The Northwest Power Planning Council recommended against funding 42 million dollars in the salmon recovery projects that had failed to meet an independent scientific review. This is one-third of Bonneville's 172 million dollar recovery budget.

I was wondering if this money cannot be allocated to compensate the impact of businesses and individuals along the lower Snake.

I think all four facets of the 4 H paper need to be addressed. Steps should be taken to fix the problems and solutions acted upon. Competing interest groups, agency, indian tribes, commercial fisherman, utility and the aluminum industry, Columbia River barge owners and operators, farmers, conservationists, environmentalists, civil groups and many, many others, we all seem to have our own private little agendas.

Since I can't read that, I'll just talk. We all pit ourselves against each other instead of working for the better of the species of the salmon. And I see my time is up. I had a lot more. I'm not very good at public speaking. Thank you for your time.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Mike.

THE FLOOR: Can I throw in one more little thing.

THE MODERATOR: I'm sorry. I have to cut you off. Maybe you can do your comments over at the tape. That will be great.

THE FLOOR: Thank you very much.

THE MODERATOR: Okay. Eleanor Hunter. And I think it might be Mary Rude. I'm sorry if I got it wrong the first time. Alice Parker. Go ahead.

THE FLOOR: Can you hear me? It sounds like it's way up in the air.

THE MODERATOR: Maybe you could step a little closer.

THE FLOOR: Is this better? I'm Eleanor Hunter, and I'm a member of the American Agriwomen and I have a cattle ranch in Eastern Washington.

The WWA opposes the breaching of dams. That radical approach in an attempt to increase the number of salmon is without consideration of it being a big step backwards in the progress of our nation.

We need dams for irrigation and the production of food for an increasing population. And we need electricity to meet the demands for the use in modernization.

You all love the modern style. You love your electricity. You want it now. If you have an ice storm, it goes off. You can't hardly wait until the crew has the lines fixed and you have your electricity again.

And this electrical power provides convenience. And for everyone in our homes, in our schools, in modernization in public places, and industries.

We need dams for flood control as well as for barge transportation. That has been talked about prior. Remove the dams and many more complications will rise from a chain reaction come events that will result in affecting established communities, the agricultural industry, our economy and the environment.

Man cannot change the powerful, uncontrollable force of mother nature. Man can control the amount of fishing in our rivers and the oceans and without the killing of salmon species like in Oregon, because they are not of the wildlife variety.

The in depth information pertaining to this issue that is obtainable on internet may be impressive. But common sense must be used in decision making. Decisions must be made at the local level. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you. Mary Rude? And then we have Alice Parker and on deck is Nita -- I think it's Shugler. Go ahead.

THE FLOOR: We urge that Patty Murray take a stand to --

THE MODERATOR: Can you state your name.

THE FLOOR: Yes. My name is Mary Katherine Rude. I live in Sprague, Washington. I'm a retired teacher and I like to fish. I'm here to discuss this too narrow issue of economic impact of breaching our dams.

I decry the narrowness of the debate. The politics are powerful that try to limit the debate to economics. Even then I believe that the facts are on the side of breaching the dams.

My son Martin taught school on the St. Lawrence Island in the Bering Straits. He met a lovely girl. I call her my Eskimo princess and she is now my daughter-in-law. I go to Nome every year. We go fishing on their jet boat.

Far back into the penninsula a pathetic thing happens every year. My son who is so in love with that country will glimpse a salmon and call, mom, there's a salmon. This might happen two or three times in a three-day river trip on -- three days out there on the boat.

I have caught lots of huge northern Pike, but I have yet to see one salmon caught. Granted these particular salmon don't come where we're talking about. But the results of man's activity have produced that same scenario where we are and what we're discussing.

The Corps must put a price on this type of impact. My daughter-in-law's Eskimo parents spend the summer fishing north of the penninsula. They're truly discouraged because even their poor catches get even lower prices. It leaves them impoverished.

Then in the winters Eskimo impoverished natives sit in the bars and drink their pain away. Outside on the sidewalk they puke that poison in the hip high piles of frozen gunk.

How would the Corps put a price on the way of, on the destruction for the way of life that we have treaties with.

Meanwhile up the Columbia behind our dams a new business is evolving. We have hatcheries which affects the price of the salmon for the native fisherman in Alaska. It's only fair that the Corps improve the prior to the Alaskan fisherman when we talk about whether to breach or not. These morally compelling issues must be dealt with.

Which economic cuts are included in the formula? Indeed how do you put a value on a clean life giving environment? How do you put a price on the difference between catching and fishing. Catch and keep fishing and no fish fishing.

We must breach. We have a moral obligation to honor our treaties.

Now, understanding the current direct benefactor will not bear the cost if we don't breach and if we break those treaties. All the United States will bear the cost. So while trucks and trains haul huge amounts of cargo along both sides of the Columbia we're told we have to have a third method, barging. Does that honestly make sense? It doesn't make sense. We have viable -- we must develop viable alternatives to all of the objections that are being raised and breach the dams.

THE MODERATOR: Mary, you need to wrap up, please.

THE FLOOR: Yes. I've got about four lines. Will efforts be made to obscure the scientific findings? You bet. We have all kinds of science detractors. We have the DDT, save society, confuse the science, make the bungle and let the superfund tax paying suckers pick up the tab.

THE MODERATOR: Mary, I'm sorry. Thank you very much. Okay. Alice Parker. And Anita, I think it's Shugler, but I'm not sure. And then in the wings is Gayla Golt.

THE FLOOR: Good afternoon. I'm Alice Parker, executive secretary of the Columbia Basin Development League and a retired farmer in the Columbia Basin project at Royal City.

On behalf of the members of the Columbia Basin Development League, I speak today to oppose alternative four dam breaching. We support and believe in saving salmon, but we believe the debate is about taking out dams, not saving fish.

We do believe that salmon is a part of our heritage and we need a strong economy for northwest to do so. A strong economy is the force that enables citizens to implement good environmental practices.

A look at the third world countries show that how the lack of a strong economy is not conducive to protecting the environment.

Conflicting information abounds regarding salmon recovery. The intent of the All-H Paper addresses habitat, hydro power, hatcheries, and harvest. And the role each plays in the recovery.

The solution to recovery must be a comprehensive plan that encompasses all the H's and not just hydro. As we continue to see data, showing numbers of returning salmon are increasing rather than decreasing tells me that conditions are improving to assist with recovery.

Individuals and entities are working hard and spending huge amounts of money to make changes to support that recovery. Improvement in ocean conditions is making a difference.

Why do we want to take drastic measures such as breaching dams that will have tremendous economic impacts to the northwest before we give these improvements a chance to prove that they will work?

If the dams are the reason for the decline, then why are rivers and streams that have no dams in trouble? History shows that salmon go through cycles of large numbers and low numbers.

As a farmer I know what it is to have a crop when weather, disease, or other factors destroy a crop. When this happens, we have to tighten our belts and often do without until we have the opportunity to grow another crop.

What is wrong with asking those who use salmon as their crop to do the same by stopping harvest for a short time for the salmon to reproduce? Will there be efforts to amend or change current laws to protect the predators of salmon? I hope so.

We believe that we can save salmon and still have a strong economy here in the northwest if a comprehensive plan is put into place. Common sense must prevail. All citizens of the northwest and their livelihood must be a factor in the decision-making process. Not just a certain segment of the population. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Alice. Okay. Is it Nita? Do we have -- I'm sorry. I can't read the name any better than that. So if that's not enough to give somebody a sense of who I'm wanting, then we'll move on. Gayla Gold. And then Joyce Alonzo. And on deck is Bart -- I think it's Hagen.

THE FLOOR: Okay. Hello. My name is Gayla Gould and I'm a Nez Perce indian and I would just like to say that the federal government needs to commit to --

THE MODERATOR: Can you speak up, maybe a little closer to the mic.

THE FLOOR: The federal government needs to commit to presumptive PATH to breaching the Snake River dams. The Corps needs to respect the tribal priorities. The technology that the Corps is using currently is leading to the demise of sockeye and coho while trying to save the chinook to minimize the impact of the status quo.

The Corps needs to focus on increased use of surface bypasses built technology and improvements in adult passage with compliance of the Clean Water Act.

Many indigenous people who depend on the fish from the Columbia are poor due to lack thereof.

Please support the watershed. I believe we only have 17 years until the last fish dies. I also believe that the only way to save what is left of the salmon is to breach the four lower Snake dams and leave some kind of legacy for our children.

Greater returns for ceremonial subsistence, commercial harvest and restore 140 miles of river and improve water quality. Opportunities and a variety of sectors in the economy, fishing, environmental restoration, construction, transportation, recreation and tourism.

And I'd just like to finish with, due to lack of fish, my people really depend on fish. And a lot of my people are lost because there is no fish. I mean -- that's why there's so much alcoholism and, you know, abuse on the reservations. Because what are we supposed to do? There's nothing for us to do because there is no fish for us to catch. And thank you very much and have a good night.

THE MODERATOR: Could I ask you to please hold your applause. Thank you very much. Joyce Alonzo and Bart Higgins. And then we move on to Chris Kapinski. Thank you.

THE FLOOR: My name is Joyce Alonzo. I'm a private citizen who has been a resident in the State of Washington since 1965.

I don't belong to any group that will either benefit or be negatively economically impacted in a major way by the results of this decision.

However, I have four reasons for my commitment to the alternative four in breaching the dams. Pardon me. I'm going to get emotional probably.

They're Sarah, Patrick, Brianna and Lia. And they're my grandchildren. They are my future. And we're talking about our future. Our future, ecological, philosophy and our future regional character in the Pacific Northwest.

We humans are responsible for the current crisis that we're addressing here. Our alteration of the natural river systems for our economic and transportation convenience has had a devastating effect not only on salmon which are important enough but also on a great variety of animal species, some of which we are considering here.

We the people of the Pacific Northwest must have the courage to face up to our mistakes and implement without delay the project that will come the closest to restoring the river to its natural state. And that's breaching the dams.

Stuffing fish into trucks is not a reasonable solution. Running more water over the dams in drawdowns has been proven not to solve the problem. And stopping fishing won't solve the problem at its source either.

We do need to work together. We need to be willing to listen to and respect the opinions of other people. We need to be prepared to give financial assistance to people who really will be negatively impacted in a significant way. But most of all we need to quit procrastinating by doing another study or another seasonal experiment. We need to listen to the highly informed scientists who have agreed and do it. Breach the dams and do it now.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Joyce. Please, please, folks. If I could get you to not applaud. Bart Hagen and then we go to Chris Kapetski and Paul Dreckers on deck. Thank you.

THE FLOOR: My name is Bart Hagen. And I'm president of the Lyons Council here in Spokane with 1,200 members.

I'm speaking for them in the sense that we feel a strong commitment for breaching the dams. I hear the proponents talking about the dam breaching as if it's something that it's too bad about the salmon. It's kind of like Michael Jordan complaining that he's having a bad hair day.

My point is that nobody wants to sacrifice anything in order to preserve the salmon. The point really is that many of the people that are proponents of the dams, they don't want those dams taken out even if it would ensure that the salmon were able to survive because of it.

They want to keep the cheap, subsidized transportation. They want to have the recreational facilities behind the dams. They don't want to do away with the dams even if it would cure the salmon problem.

So I think what we have to look at here is how much sacrifice, and there's going to be sacrifice in order to maintain the salmon population and to bring it back to where we think that it should be. And I'm not sure that anybody wants to face up to that fact.

It's going to be painful no matter what. We know that if you don't breach the dams there's going to be a lot of pain and a lot of the people that are opposed to breaching the dams are not willing to sit -- to face up to the pain of not breaching the dams.

So I would just urge you to think in terms of the fact that this is the greatest salmon run in the history of the world. The Columbia River basin salmon runs from the past. And that what we really need to do is to think in terms of protection and respect for the natural world. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Bart. Okay. Next is Chris Kapinski. And then Paul Drecker. And on deck is Bill it looks like Sapino.

THE FLOOR: My name is Chris Kapinski. I've lived in Spokane for nearly 52 years now. I have four children. My family and I love to fish.

I have seen a decline of the salmon species over the last 35 years that we've been fishing for them. I've also heard these arguments because my grandfather was a commercial fisherman up in the British Columbia coast for over 35 years in my family.

And they all come down to finger pointing of who -- the ocean -- there's too much fishing. We're all to blame.

We have to look at the statistics of these four lower Snake dams. And we have got to start somewhere and set an example for the world because the entire world looks at what the United States does.

And we are at the brink of extinction with a magnificent fish. If it goes extinct, we all lose. And the price that we're going to pay economically, if it does go extinct is astronomical.

I think the dam breaching is the only alternative we have. The statistics show that 2/10 of one percent of the smolts survive in the trucking that has been going on for 20 years. And that makes as much sense as shipping Canadian geese in trucks down to Mexico. And that's long enough to show that it has not worked.

There were 16 million salmon at the beginning when Lewis and Clark came here. We have less than -- there's 250 salmon now that make it up to the Hanford Reach. And the only reason they do is because the river is free-flowing up there. The BPA's entire output of these four lower dams is only 4 to 5 percent and irrigates 12 to 13 farms.

And my God, looking at the mortgage paper for the amount of money that President Clinton set aside for more studies, and I've been listening to these studies for 35 years, they're going to spend 21.4 million dollars to continue these studies.

Buy the farms and breach the dams and try this because it's not really tearing the concrete down. It's letting the river flow free so that the salmon do have a chance.

Again in my conclusion, reviewed that the United States assembles for the rest of the world. We've got to take care of a resource. This Columbia River and the Snake River are the greatest salmon producing rivers in the entire world. And I've traveled the world many times and I've stepped on every continent of this ball that we live on. And I can tell that you this problem is not just isolated to the Pacific Northwest.

There are over 6 billion people. We've got to have the courage to stand up and make a decision and right or wrong and admit -- quit denying it. Eight dams on the Snake River are four too many for these salmon to survive.

The extinction is forever, people. And the economic cost are going to be far less to take those dams out than to leave them there. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Chris. Paul Decker? Are you Paul?

THE FLOOR: Yeah.

THE MODERATOR: After Paul is Bill -- I'm sorry. You got it. Great. Thanks, Bill. And Harry DeWitt. Go.

THE FLOOR: I'm Paul Decker. I'm a sixth generation northwesterner. My family came here on the Oregon trail.

And never mind the economics of this. Forget the friggin fishing. Forget all of the extraneous stuff. You're messing with my heritage here when you're messing with the salmon runs. They're very important. We're not the northwest without that. It's our identity that's at stake here. That's what sets us apart from the rest of the nation.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you. Thank you, Paul. Bill?

THE FLOOR: Hello. Yes. My name is Bill Zapronic. I've been a resident of Spokane for 40 years for the most part.

I endorse the breaching of the dams. The scientific evidence for breaching is overwhelming. The argument against breaching it is based on economics, particularly short term economics.

But the argument that breaching the dams will bring economic hardships to certain people must be seen in context.

In recent years I have lived abroad in various developing countries. In China, Egypt, the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe. It has made me particularly conscious of how much in material goods we have here in the U.S.

Surely we can breach the dams and buffer the negative economic effects on those who will lose because of that. If we can't handle a situation like that, what other country in the world can? This is the time. Let's do it.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Bill. Harry DeWitt and Eddie Domarrow and on deck is Julie I think it's Delsano. Harry? Are you here? Okay. We'll move on to Eddie Domarrow. Is Eddie here? Okay. Julie.

THE FLOOR: I'm Julie Delsaso. I live in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. And I'm here as a citizen. I support breaching of the four dams, alternative number four of the DEIS.

And I would like my comment to be part of the record for the All-H Paper, please.

I'm going to talk about this briefly in the context of an American Heart Association CPR instructor, past volunteer.

In the context of CPR I see this as a great restoring of the life blood for the salmon. C stands for Corps of Engineers and conservation of river systems.

In the Corps of Engineers cost versus benefit analysis, they modeled their figures over a 100-year period. And I would like to encourage people to widen the horizon both in the legacy behind us and what can lie ahead. Expand our vision.

I encourage people to look at a book written by Jack Nesbitt, the name of it is Sources of the River. It talks about the history of the fur trade and the role of the salmon as a prime protein source for large mammals.

The development of small towns in conjunction with harmony with indian tribes across America.

P stands for persistence, for protection from extinction. American Rivers recently researched 24 case studies where dams have been breached successfully. I encourage people to look at the history of the Conestoga River in Pennsylvania which is part of the Chesapeake watershed.

And what's similar about that issue and river is that they breached seven dams and they were looking at a decline in the American shad species. And their cost and benefit analysis showed that the seven dams that were breached according to the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, fish passage coordinator Scott Carney stated there was a dramatic change in stream habitat within one year of each dam removal.

The stream conditions greatly improved on the Conestoga. There have been 24 studies of breaching dams. The stream banks are stabilized and no longer eroding. Stream gradient is greatly improved. River flow is restored and moving sediment downstream and stream organisms have returned. All which suggest a much healthier river system.

So there are some cost benefit analyses within one year.

R stands for removal equals recovery. Removal of dams equals salmon recovery. I envision a great green economic dam wall. And the science that is in the slack water behind the dam research sitting, great research sitting and slack nonmoving water.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

THE FLOOR: Let's do something with that. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you. Sharon Shumate is next and then David I think it's Duecksel. And then John Bentley on deck.

THE FLOOR: I've never used one of these before.

THE MODERATOR: You need to step up quite a bit.

THE FLOOR: My name is Sharon Shumate. I'm from Republic, Washington. I'm the chairman of the Ferry County Natural Resource Board. I'm here to testify to save the dams.

Did you know that it's going to cost 809 million dollars to breach these dams? This money is taxes that we take four and a half months to raise to pay the federal government so they can take out the dams, take our land, stop our food, erase our agriculture and destroy our industries. 809 million dollars in taxes.

If we breach the dams did you know that we will lose enough electricity per year to light and heat the city of Seattle and its industries each year?

Did you know river navigation will cease, rail and truck will transport 126 million bushels of dry land wheat grown on dry ground. Fossil fuels will be used for trains and trucks. This in turn will cause air pollution. Fossil fuels are not renewable, not in our lifetime.

Did you know that you will eliminate 5,370 existing jobs. Is one of these jobs yours?

Did you know 37,000 acres of irrigated farm land will be taken out of production? In America today each acre of farm land produces food to feed 120 people. 37,000 acres of irrigated farm land feeds 615,125 people of the world. The amount of people in Spokane and Coeur d'Alene combined.

Did you know that you are planning an experiment for 12 years? Your figures yourself told us it was 10 to 12 years to see if this would be effective.

I ask you, are you willing to let your children, your grandchildren and yourself go without milk, without bread, without potatoes? All of the food we take for granted that's in the grocery store.

Are you willing to live with kerosene lanterns instead of electricity? No TV, no computers, no microwaves, no electric heat or air conditioning.

This is not about saving the salmon. It is about control of the people and the destruction of the greatest nation on earth.

THE MODERATOR: I need you to wrap up, please, Sharon.

THE FLOOR: Okay. I have some information that I wish to offer. We're talking about best available science. When it's not available to you, I understand you don't use it. This is from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife, National Marine Fishery Service. And I would like to enter this.

THE MODERATOR: All right. Thank you very much, Sharon.

THE FLOOR: Where do I enter that, ma'am?

THE MODERATOR: There you go. David, go ahead. After David is John Bentley and on deck is Jim Kyle.

THE FLOOR: I'm David Strickel. I'm a small grain farmer in Whitman County. I'm president of Whitman County Farm Bureau. And I'm speaking on behalf of myself and the farm bureau through our local area.

A couple of years ago we passed a resolution and policy in our local area that we were opposed to any breaching of the dams on the lower Snake. It provides transportation for our commodities.

Before the dams were in we had railroad, but they're gone now. If we breach the dams, we don't have a way to get our products to market. Trucking would be about the only alternative. And as I understand it, it's about a 50 to 1 ratio between fuel consumption, what the barges use and what trucks use.

You talk about wanting clean air. I don't see where using 50 times as much fuel in the air here would provide clean air.

You folks in Spokane are crying about smoke. The pollution from the trucks contributes to that as well.

With the dams there we have clean power. It's renewable. The lakes behind the dam provide recreation. The comment that if you breach the dams it's going to increase tourism. For the life of me I can't figure out anybody who would want to go see a big mud hole.

It's been mentioned before here that the power that's generated by these dams will light a city the size of Seattle. We all like the conveniences that have taken place with the technology, microwaves, TV's, computers. Folks cry like everything when the power goes off for a little while.

Well, how about shutting it off all the time. That's what this would amount to.

In closing I'd just like to say and reiterate again that I'm opposed to breaching of the dams on the lower Snake. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you. John Bentley. Jim Kyle and then Brett Roberts. Go ahead.

THE FLOOR: Yes. My name is John Bentley. I'm retired. I represent just myself. I live over in Post Falls, Idaho.

I used to face a small section of that river down there southwest of Colfax down in an area called Benewah. That river at that time ran in the spring about six miles an hour. It was cold and highly charged with oxygen and there were a lot of fish in that river.

There were a lot of fishermen on the river. We would cool the dogs off and fish that river.

The river and the fish were doing just fine until you and I got there. I don't want to bore you with all of the facts that you've heard and heard and will continue to hear through these hearings.

But the fact is and it's simple that those fish were doing just fine for 10,000 years before we come along and started plugging concrete dams in there.

I do not see how we can expect man and his techno trappings to go in there, and we are very adaptive and we can adjust very fast and we've shown that by our growth on the face of this planet, and expect these fish to turn around and adapt to our technology as fast.

It obviously has not worked. I'm sorry. There's some of the finest eminently qualified professionals up there at that table. And there is nobody better equipped, trained and educated to do the job that you've done.

But so far what I've seen in 40 years is a terrible, tragic decline in the fish coming up that river. You've all heard the figures. And that perhaps two percent are left coming up there.

So I think obviously that we are at the brink of a total disaster. I share Mr. Jim Baker and Bob Crump's concern that I do not hear a real clear crisp sense of direction in the sense of things that have to be done and also a declaration of exactly what our goals are.

Are we going to save the salmon or not? Saying that I would thoroughly promote programs that would mitigate the economic disruption that will happen if we dewater those dams.

The American farm family is in a desperate condition now and we cannot abandon them. But I am not for continuing to exacerbate the problem by saving a mistake for those dams.

Bypass those dams. Take care of the people who are going to be impacted. Let's get back down to ground zero and getting the salmon back.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you. Jim, are you here? And then Brett Roberts and then we move on to Marylou Reed.

THE FLOOR: Good afternoon. My name is Jim Kyle from St. John, Washington. I'm from a small farming community about 50 miles south of here.

I'm here today as a farmer and as a member of the board of directors of Cenex Harvest State Cooperative. A large regional cooperative based in St. Paul, Minnesota, owned by its 320,000 farmers and ranchers and their 1,050 cooperatives in 18 states.

Cenex Harvest states markets and distributes energy products and agronomics to rural America. 1999 revenues exceeded 6 billion dollars with a net income of 86 million and 43 million of that was returned to local cooperatives and farmers throughout our system.

In the Pacific Northwest for approximately 90 local cooperatives will represent 40,000 farmers and ranchers. Cenex revenues from those sales to local cooperatives are in excess of 500 million dollars.

The total sales of these cooperatives in the northwest exceed 1 billion dollars. Cenex transports approximately 63 million bushels of grain, 23 million gallons of refined fuels and thousands of tons of plant food on the river system each year. Our river system has proven over time that it is the most economically efficient, safest and environmentally sound transportation system that exists today.

This is evidenced by the fact that four barges move the equivalent of 140 jumbo rail cars and 583 semi trucks.

Losing our water way system will increase transportation expenses thus costing consumers more and puts our commodities at a disadvantage in the global marketplace. Other countries in the world are trying to build up their infrastructure while it seems we're trying to tear ours down.

Global warming has been a big talk about what happens. My belief, my personal belief is the Snake River dams are only the beginning. We've heard a lot about the Columbia River dams. Can you see the effects of fossil fuels when we are taking products from -- because I believe the Columbia River dams are next, all the way to Portland.

I think it's extremely important. Common sense, sound science and economics drive this process. Knowing that the judicial system, the judge instructs the juries after all the testimony is heard that their decision must be based beyond a reasonable doubt. There is no question in my mind is that the issues presented on salmon recovery such as ocean conditions, predators, harvest both in the rivers and in the ocean and loss of habitat plus dam removal that there is more than a reasonable doubt to show that dam breaching is not the answer.

On behalf of Cenex Harvest States, your 90 local cooperatives and 40 local producers, thank you for taking your time in consideration for this important matter.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you. Brett Roberts and then Marylou Reed. And on deck is Daniel Hart.

THE FLOOR: Brett A. Roberts. I'm councilman for the city of Republic. I'm also the coordinator of the Ferry County Action League.

THE MODERATOR: Can you step just a little closer. Please.

THE FLOOR: General Strock, you're in the middle of a real good cross fire here. You're starting to hear some of the other sides. We're very pitted against each other. A lot of it comes from the fact that I've been -- this is my third meeting to the federal caucus BPA and all the rest of it.

We have a problem with getting the message out to meetings and things, very moving target. You go out to in the Methow valley. There's not a lot of real certainty in the whole lot of this.

One of the things that we've been able to produce is a document called the production of salmon from the mid Columbia River tributary streams. This document is pre Clinton. It's pre political science. We had to FOIA it three times, but didn't get it. So it was acquired.

Knowledge is power. I'm going to turn this over to you. Hopefully you'll be able to read this. There's some other information, a book. The book is Undue Influence by Ron Arnold.

What we're facing here in this operation is just one small cog in that wheel is they're looking for a wilderness area to be turned over. They've tried through getting this turned into a biosphere. This area ranges from way up into Canada between the Rocky Mountains and the Cascades and it goes all the way down into Utah.

Water is life. End of sentence. And without it farmers here aren't going to be able to produce. The people that work at Kaiser Aluminum aren't going to be able to produce. So these people are going to have to move from here. And we talk about the small number of jobs that are effected. But when you look at the economy, economy of a dollar turns over 12 or 13 times.

So how many of the restaurantuers are going out of business and all the rest of that? Okay? You're involved in a war. They're destroying our infrastructure. You were a SeaBee. You've been there. You've seen it. You've done the real deal. Please fight for our country.

THE MODERATOR: Marylou Reed. Daniel Hart. And then next I think it's Mark Lynch. It's difficult for me to read.

Let me also say before you start, Marylou. We've got about ten minutes left and we have more than 15 people still on the list. So we're obviously not going to get through everybody today.

So I just want to remind you one more time that you have an option to go tape your comments next door in the open house room or get your comments in in writing or come back this evening. Thanks. Go ahead.

THE FLOOR: Good afternoon. My name is Marylou Reed and I've lived in Coeur d'Alene for over 40 years. I wholeheartedly endorse partial removal of the four dams on the lower Snake to allow the river to flow like a river once again.

I believe the fish scientists who say the collars of concrete that are choking the rivers flow are also killing the salmon.

I join the thousands of people who are telling the Army Corps and the National Marine Fisheries Service that the dams don't make sense. And that extinction is not an option.

When I was a child my mother took me to see the fish ladders in the Bonneville dam which stretch across the mighty Columbia River and which, contrary to the urging of Woody Guthrie, had lost a lot of its roll.

Mother shared with us the wonder of the salmon's migratory cycle and proudly marvelled at the new technology. Fish ladders meant to help the salmon on their long climb back up the river to the spawning grounds.

Mother trusted technology. She believed the engineers. When our children were small, we took them to see the salmon reds in the Salmon River and shared with our children the wonder of the smolt's trip back to the sea and the adult salmon's onward trip 900 miles upstream to spawn and to die.

We wondered if the salmon could survive technology and the engineers. And that was 30 years ago.

Now I have small grandchildren. I cannot take them to see salmon on the Salmon River. The reds, their spawning areas are silted in and deserted.

How can I explain to these grandchildren that powerful people believe large piles of concrete are more important than the mighty salmon whose predecessors following uncanny instincts have for 10,000 years been following their persistent path to the ocean and home again to Idaho.

The scientific arguments for removing the earth and parts of the four lower dams are increasingly irrefutable as are the mounting economics to remanufacturing concrete to make way for salmon.

We cannot afford monetarily, ecologically, morally, and spiritually to avoid the real truth. Technology, be it barging, hatcheries, fish bypasses, or fish friendly turbines will not save the salmon. The only hope for saving the salmon is to let the river recover its free-flowing current.

I join others in urging the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to recommend bypassing the four lower Snake dams and to recommend aggressive efforts to protect and restore fish habitat.

I join others in urging the National Marine Fisheries Service to do the same. Let us save the salmon. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Marylou. Daniel Hart. And then I think it's Neil -- Mark Lynch and then Madonna Lewis.

THE FLOOR: Excuse me. My name is Dan Hart. I'm from Colfax, Washington, which is about 18 miles from the Snake River. My comments are directed towards the draft EIS and the federal caucus.

I have recently read about current PIT tag data showing improvement in smolt survival rates through the lower Snake River system.

Clearly there are issues which must be addressed in a broader eco system wide approach which would let present system improvements have time to work while attention can be shifted to harvest including predation both in river and in the ocean as well as hatcheries and the streams.

In the meantime these four dams in this rather small part of the Columbia drainage should continue with their current configuration. Work should continue on down past the survival improvements and on small transportation improvements.

If you remove any of the Snake or Columbia dams between Lewiston and Portland or operate them below minimum, minimum operating pool, my employer will cease to exist rendering me unemployed and displacing my family and me.

I think that it is too easy for dam breach advocates who seem only interested in a polarized fish or dams debate to offer dam breaching as the only alternative when they themselves are not facing certain unemployment and economic displacement from such drastic measures.

I urge you to select alternative three as a preferred option in the draft EIS. I also support the multi species frame work alternative six and I also support the Corps's recommendation against further study for a John Day draw down.

If you want to help Snake River salmon, why not install fish passage systems at the Idaho dams on the upper Snake and the Clearwater rivers. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you. Is there a Mark Lynch? Am I reading that? I'm sorry. I can't get any closer than that with what I see here. Okay. Madonna Lowers, are you still here. Great. Thanks Madonna. Paul Quinette and Beuhl Hollister. Excuse me.

THE FLOOR: My name is Madonna Lowers. I'm from Chattaroy, Washington. Change in any economy brings losses and gains. Those whose methods of doing business are lost can and do shift gears and gain other methods.

Human economies can do that. We have options. Not all fish and wildlife species do. Not all adapt. And once they're gone, they're gone.

In economic terms the opportunity cost of not breaching dams, the opportunity cost of not giving salmon their best chance of survival by all the best available science, the opportunity cost is allowing future generations that very option.

We can always build another dam. We cannot ever reconstruct a fish species once it's gone. I think all of you know that we should at least preserve that option for future generations. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Madonna. Paul Quinette, are you here? Okay. Mr. Hollister?

THE FLOOR: My name is -- is this coming through?

THE MODERATOR: Yes, it is.

THE FLOOR: My name is Beuhl Hollister. I live in Post Falls, Idaho.

I have a personal consideration and attachment to the fish. In 1949 I went with a group down to Solila Falls on the Columbia River. And witnessed the extraordinary and I might say spiritual experience of watching those magnificent creatures trying to ascend those falls.

And the Indians were out there on the platform. And I was awe stricken with a number of fish that were trying to climb those falls. Their perseverance, that driven compulsion to make that falls. And it's had an indelible impression on me.

And I think of that in the context of what we have done to the tribes by taking that birthright, that cultural heritage away from them.

There were 16 million, this has been said before. But I think this is important to emphasize the fact that the populations have been decimated.

It can be directly attributed to the construction of dams and particularly the four dams on the lower Snake.

We keep refer to those rivers as rivers. The only part of the Columbia River that is a river anymore is that short segment that constitutes the Hanford reach. It is now a series of lakes.

And we can say the same thing about the Snake River. The impact of breaching those dams will certainly affect a lot of people. But that's one of the realities that we have to deal with.

There are some positive aspects of breaching the dam obviously. And that is invigorating the communities that were dependent historically on those fish runs, salmon, Idaho, Challis, Riggins, and Lewiston to a great extent.

You know, Lewiston is a port community. But in fact Lewiston has not thrived at all as a result of those dams.

Mr. Crump talked about the fish are going to die anyway. You know, I was a hog farmer. And once in a while a sow would roll over and lay on one of her babies. And I didn't realize that by saying, well, it was going to be butchered eventually anyway.

The problem with the farmers is commodity prices. As simple as that. It has very little to do with transportation. As long as Arthur Daniels Midland and Cargill can grow the commodity price, the farmers are going to struggle. That's a fact of life.

We have an arrogance about our association with nature. Theodore Rosack the psychologist, theorizes that a lot of our problems today, the fact that we are such a drugged society is the fact that we are lonely because we are separated from nature.

We are depriving our children with the assets of their connection with nature. And what better could we do for our children than bring this wonderful species back to some semblance of what they were before these dams were constructed. We owe that to them. We owe that to the tribe.

THE MODERATOR: We need you to wrap up.

THE FLOOR: We owe that to ourselves. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Beuhl. The panel is willing to stay so we can hopefully accommodate all of you who want to speak today. The next person is Wally -- I think it's Weisher and then Mike, Mihelich M I H E L I C H. And then Tom Flint. Any of you here?

THE FLOOR: I'm Wally.

THE MODERATOR: All right. Great. Wally. Go for it.

THE FLOOR: Wally, that's my name. I live in Odessa, Washington. That is in Lincoln County out here. And I'm a farmer, just retired, forced to retire sort of. Commodity crisis, the guy was right.

But years ago -- I'm 71 years old. And so I used to fish the Snake River down there for steelhead mostly.

I am in favor of breaching those dams. I know that there's a lot of other causes for the decline in salmon. And I believe that maybe in time if we breach those dams we can bring those fish back.

Now, the farmers, it would put a little hardship on them. We ship our wheat from Odessa down to Pasco and also to Windruss which is on the Snake. But -- Rufus it is. They could set up their receiving station in Pasco. The Palouse farmers would probably have to pay higher shipping costs.

So irrigation, I irrigate. I raise every irrigated crop there is. And deep well irrigation, you have to bring it up as high as some of those farmers out there, a thousand feet.

Now, it just takes, to me, somebody said, I don't see any reason why the farmers down at Pasco where the irrigation is on the first part of the pool down there, I guess that's where most of it is, they should be able to extend their intake pipes clear to the original river and just -- it might take a little more power to get it out, but they can still irrigate.

So I don't see that as a problem. And I'm a fisherman also, I've got to admit. I love sport salmon fishing. So anyway. Anyway to help those salmon. I, I believe in that. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you. Is Mike still here? I think it's Mihelich, M I H E L I C H? Mike? Okay. Tom Flint, are you still here?

THE FLOOR: Yes, sir.

THE MODERATOR: Great. After Tom, Chris Moore.

THE FLOOR: Thank you for this opportunity. I'm Tom Flint. I'm a fifth generation farmer. I'm a second generation farmer to the Columbia Basin.

I kind of want to key a little bit on what we've talked about at the very beginning and that was a balance. I think that we can have both salmon and dams.

I have a degree in industrial technology and I'm standing before you to tell you that technology works. We have lights here from our lamps. Everybody has been fed pretty well today, I think. And that's another major accomplishment from agriculture.

We have some quality of life issues that we take for granted. And we need to realize that nothing is free, that there's pros and cons to everything.

What I want to do today is to let you know that I'm the founder of the Save our Dams Coalition. And that we have gathered 83,000 signatures for saving our dams.

Now, what we support is option number one and number two of your plan. And we oppose the number four option of breaching dams. And we also oppose the John Day draw down studies.

In this issue, which is very complex, it's very easy to focus on everything that we can physically see. We can see dams. They're easy targets. They're there. And they're not really pretty.

But we need to realize that there's a lot of other factors that people don't see. Probably one of the biggest factors that we haven't seen in this issue is ocean and climate conditions, the Pacific oscillation, which is a 30-year water pattern.

We also need to look at fish conservation. We want to have both fish and we ought to have all the benefits of the dams as well. But essentially through the Pacific Northwest Fish Council there really is no voting membership for fish conservation.

And it seems rather ludicrous for us to be able to harvest an endangered species when at the same time the people that are trying to save them don't have a vote in this process.

I would like to address one issue that I haven't seen in the economic study. And that is the economic loss of 600,000 acres of irrigated farm land in Idaho through flow augmentation. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Tom. Appreciate it. Chris Moore, are you still here?

THE FLOOR: Yeah.

THE COURT: Great. Chris. After Chris Scott Levy I. And after Scott, Mike LeShock.

THE FLOOR: I'm a fourth generation north westerner. I am also a wind surfer. The Columbia River reservoirs are world class windsurfing areas, but I would not hesitate to endorse breaching any dam that harms the salmon run.

Dam breaching is the most logical and intuitive solution.

Hatcheries, hydro power farming supplanted an age old eco system which was free to anyone, a free protein rich resource that did not create revenues for the government or greedy fat cats was not attractive and therefore eliminated.

In fact, the new system enriched a few people and made the rest of us poor. To add insult to injury, the subsidized water and transportation cost the taxpayer millions.

The Corps estimates a 250,000 dollar annual cost. What is the true cost? We are so electricity rich in the northwest that we sell power to California. We can afford to breach these dams and retain the regional heritage the Europeans stole from the Native Americans and stop selling power to California.

If the residents of the northwest 100 years ago had been told that salmon would be fighting extinction in the year 2000 they would have laughed uproariously.

Let's do the right thing. These dams were boondoggles in the first place. Our farmers produced surplus crops at subsidized prices for water and transportation. The Corps says that 700 jobs would be lost by breaching dams. I prefer paying welfare to those lost jobs in order to have salmon runs continue.

The inland northwest has been severed from its regional heritage by dams including Spokane. Further decimation should not be considered. The heritage of the Eastern Washington farmer may be 100 years old, but the heritage of the salmon is thousands of years old.

Let's respect our elders. Remember the ages will trump this argument. Within 100 years or so, the dams will be filled with silt and we will be forced to deal with this issue again. Of course salmon will be extinct. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Chris. Scott, are you still here? Scott Levy? No. Mike LeShaw? Are you Mike?

THE FLOOR: I'm here.

THE MODERATOR: Okay. Thanks, Mike. Then we have lad Mitchell after Mike and Larry Wood.

THE FLOOR: I'm Mike LeShaw, third generation farmer. I want to thank you guys for taking the time, or the extra time to stick around here.

I have a thing or two that maybe needs to be thought of is the sediment behind the dams when you breach them who knows what's in there. Back years ago before EPA was around, it's anybody's guess.

Another thing, when you have gill nets in the river, you take the big fish out and you let the runts go up. There's no farm that's going to keep the scrub calf for breeding stock.

So there's maybe one way to get some stronger fish is to change the way the fish are caught, go back to a dip net, if that's how you got to do it rather than the gill nets.

Another thing, if the dams come out you're going to have, I've heard about 700,000 trucks on the road. With myself and my brother and my dad, we're going to put about 40 or 50 trucks out there. The carrier, he's going to have that insured. So if he comes in and runs into somebody head on, kills somebody, whether it be your wife, your family, yourself, and they don't come home, I'm going to get paid for my crop that's spilled on the road. You guys might get 100,000 dollars of life insurance for your family member. I'll be satisfied with what I get. Will you guys be satisfied with what you get?

I don't understand a population that values fish more than your family members. Ice storm here a little while ago in Spokane, we had places that were without electricity for up to a couple of weeks. And you should have heard some of the hardships that were put on them.

Ice storm or what we went through with ice storm without electricity will be a glimpse of what we'll have without the dams.

Another thing, streams up in the mountains, they've been putting logs in there to cool the water down. Why does dams, if it can cool water up in the mountains, how can the dams warm water to change habitat in the slack water behind the dams.

One guy alluded to the fact that the fish are being killed from the hatcheries. Jim Jessernig, at one of the wheat grower meetings did allude to that. He left before I had time to ask him about that.

Apparently those fish are being killed, packed up the river and dumped in there. They're used for feeding the smolts that are being ran down.

A lot of people want the dams out. I want them left in. I figure barging the smolt is a way of meeting people halfway. It's the same as when you go to purchase a car. You want to buy it at this price. The seller wants to sell at this price. Barging them will meet us halfway and leave the dams there. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Mike. Lad Mitchell, are you still here?

THE FLOOR: You bet.

THE MODERATOR: Great. After Lad. Larry Wood and finally Ben McKinnon.

THE FLOOR: Okay. Well, thank you. I guess I really appreciate the panel being willing to stay over through this marathon. This is a kind of a long run.

I'm going to try to address some things that I don't think have been addressed. And I think -- I am a retired ag educator and a grandpa and a very concerned citizen.

One of the things that's been stated here is dam breaching is going to bring the salmon back. That seems to be the attitude. And that is not true.

That's a huge, huge experiment. Everybody needs to really understand that. Okay.

There's a few things that haven't been covered that I'd like to talk about. And of course one of the things is that hydro power that's produced by the dams is sustainable. And it's an annual renewable natural resource. So losses of power are annual losses. Okay?

I'm trying to put this into terms, I put down some figures here. The four dams, if they're taken out, now, this is using 300 homes per megawatt. Okay? And that's a good figure that the power people have told me.

Okay. That involves 254,400 homes, that's families of four, power for them would be taken out for the whole year long. The ability of those dams to support peak loads is 1,444,000. So just a huge amount of power.

And understand that's every year. Okay? If you put that in dollars at the national average, that's about 445 million dollars of power at six cents.

Okay. I need to move on here real quick. The 35,000 acres of irrigated ground they're talking about losing with that. Okay, Washington average on crops is 900 and -- okay. The average gross income from Eastern Washington crops is 954 dollars. That doesn't include livestock. Okay?

If we take out that 35,000 acres, that means a reduction from the farm of 33,565,000 dollars. If we take a multiplier of five to try to get some estimation of what the off farm costs would be, that figure goes to 167,800,000. The total is over 200 million dollars. Excuse me. I've got to get my decimal point in the right place here.

There's a couple of other things, I tried to look at this in terms of food. You take that 35,000 acres and plant it in potatoes as an indicator of the potential of that land. Okay. It would take -- and then I took that to a calorie point on the dinner table. I took salmon to a calorie point on the dinner table and compared the two.

Okay. It will take an average of about 2,233 salmon, that's average salmon, to replace the one acre of potatoes in terms of food calorie at the table production.

THE MODERATOR: I'm going to have to ask you to wrap up, please.

THE FLOOR: I'm sorry. I just got started.

THE MODERATOR: Maybe you could finish next door.

THE FLOOR: Yes, I will. I'll do that.

THE FLOOR: If you take the 35,000 acres, that's something like 80 million salmon will be needed to replace that 35 acres.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

THE FLOOR: This document will be in your basket. I hope you'll take a look at it.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you. And I must say it's refreshing to see a man who counts calories. Larry Wood? Are you still with us? No. How about Ben McKiernan. No, you're not Ben.

THE FLOOR: I am Ben McKiernan.

THE MODERATOR: Great.

THE FLOOR: My name is Ben McKiernan. I live in Moses Lake, Washington. I represent just regular people who go to work every day. And they're there right now. That's why we're all environmentalists right now.

Dam removal is popular with extremists, but we know it's not really an option. There are 6 billion mouths to feed and soon there will be a water shortage to face. The pipe dreams of some that have their own view of a perfect world would destroy the economy and way of life for many people.

We're using an economic system and we need to include all aspects of life on earth. We cannot afford to be microscopic in the management of our global community.

The salmon must be saved from extinction. But so must our lifestyle. There are many examples that illustrate how modern society has overcome obstacles that were once thought to be insurmountable.

We are at the brink of a Civil War here in the northwest. We are now one region against another. One race against another. And one species against another.

But the answer is not dam removal. And I'm terrified. The case can be made whether or not it was a mistake to build the four dams on the Snake River. But since their construction many communities have grown up around them and have become very dependent on these power plants.

The science is not all in. We're pointing fingers at one another as if it is one person's fault. Look at the satellite photographs on the NASA web site. See that the ocean is large and that the reason for any change in our journey are not to be found only on the land and in the rivers.

We must look far beyond the horizon and stop blaming each other. It's possible that El Nino, La Nina, global warming and over fishing in international waters, we may have a bigger picture to look at.

The Pacific Northwest salmon should be managed responsibly. We must assure that the tributaries are at the best condition possible for spawning. The main rivers have to attract the run and be smolt friendly.

Whether that requires dam breaching, barging or any other method of bypassing the turbines, the scientists can decide.

But there's one last thing that has to be considered. The life of the fish at sea. Isn't it wise to protect our investment? Do we know where these runs are at sea? Are we keeping track of our -- are we keeping our catch out of the hands of others while they pass through international waters?

Is it possible to claim a school of fish as our own because we produce it? Should we extend U.S. waters out even more.

Before we remove these dams, we should consider opening up the navigation locks several times a year, thereby letting the smolt go down the stream unimpeded and attracting the returning salmon to the cool, swift running waters conducive to spawning. The barges will not like it. The PUDs will not like it. But consider the entire loss of the dams.

We cannot expect an entire region to dry up and blow away because it has become fashionable to some people that are comfortable with their lives.

We in Eastern Washington depend on the Lower Granite Dam, the Little Goose dam, Monumental Dam. The only way I would go along with dam removal is if Bonneville dam goes first.

Our current struggle will pale with what we're facing with population growth. As I stated before, there are 6 billion mouths to feed and in the not so distant future we'll be fighting over water and salmon will become trivial.

THE MODERATOR: I need to you wrap up, please.

THE FLOOR: We'll regret taking out those dams.

THE MODERATOR: That's it. We got through all of the people who wanted to comment today and signed up on our sheet. I want to thank you very much for coming and participating. It's been my pleasure to be your moderator today. General, do you want to wrap up with anything?

GENERAL STROCK: We've gone on for an awfully long time so I'll make it brief. Katherine, I want to thank you for your skills in moderation here. We appreciate all you brought to the process.

But most importantly I want to thank you for taking time out of your schedules and your lives to be here with us today. This is a very, very important question for the region.

As we all have recognized here, it goes much beyond this region. We are committed to doing what we must do to save this species. There's no doubt that we must save the salmon.

This is a public hearing. But to me it's more of a public listening. I assure you that we have listened very closely to what has been said today. And I hope that you have listened to each other, because this is not an easy thing. And there are many many perspectives that must be considered as we make our final decision.

Thank you very much for being here and I would encourage you to participate in the other forums that we'll hold throughout the region. And also to remind you that there's more than just this session here. There's lots of information available to you next door and on the web site.

Thank you for your interest. And please stay engaged. It's the only way we can get the right solution on this. Thank you.

(Recess taken.)

THE MODERATOR: There's probably 30 or 40 questions here.

GENERAL STROCK: I hate to knock that out of the program, but I would agree the truth is that the real experts, not for my colleagues here, but certainly in my case, the real experts are next door.

If you really want to get the right answer to the right question, it's certainly more efficient to go that way. I do apologize for not getting to the questions and answer, but I really think it's more important that we listen to each other out here than to ask clarifying questions.

THE FLOOR: They will go through these questions, won't they?

THE MODERATOR: If you could just take your questions next door, I think that's the best way to get them answered.

THE FLOOR: They weren't able to answer them.

THE MODERATOR: We'll find you an answer. I'll talk to you at the break.

GENERAL STROCK: Let me just clarify one thing. Greg Graham is the study manager of the lower Snake River. The questions we receive tonight, whether they be written or submitted, will the people get answers to those? Or is this the only forum in which those answers will be delivered?

THE MODERATOR: Well, there are other ways to answer questions, you can call us up directly at the office if that will help you. Can everybody hear me now? One of the areas or ways you can get questions answered is one at the break try to corner one of the panel members.

Two, you can go over to the open house area and we have a number of people over there, experts and all kinds of different areas related to salmon recovery. You can quiz those people and hopefully get the right answers.

If you don't, I will tell you this. If you've got a question relating to the lower Snake River feasibility study, and we don't have somebody here that can address it, I will owe you that. All you have to do is give me that question and I'll make sure you get an answer. Fair enough?

GENERAL STROCK: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Okay. Let's move on to our oral testimony then. The way this is going to work is I'll call your name to the microphone based on our sign up sheets.

And let me just state that the numbers on the microphones have no significance other than to help you identify where they are, where the mics are in the room. So you don't need to worry about getting to a particular microphone. Just find the one closest to you.

And if you need us to bring you the microphone, just let me know by raising your hand and we'll make sure you get the remote here.

I have four sign up sheets. And what I'm going to do is take number one on each sheet across and then number two on each sheet across and move through the sheets that way through the names.

I'll call the name of the person who is up to speak and the person who is next and the person on deck. And I'd appreciate it if you would as soon as you hear your name, if you would get close to the microphones so that we can move very quickly from one speaker to the next. That way we can accommodate as many people as we can.

I want you to watch the lights here in front of you. This is the key for your three minutes. The green light means speak. The yellow light means you have one minute left. And the red light means stop. And I will help you with that if you don't see that.

GENERAL STROCK: We'll stop listening when the red light goes on.

THE MODERATOR: We do want to accommodate as many people as we can. With 60 signed up, we're going to be cutting it very close as it is. So I'm going to really encourage you to stop speaking when the red light comes on.

And I also want to remind you, please, no clapping, no cheering, no booing, no signs, all of that kind of stuff. It really helps things move along, and it helps us to avoid creating an atmosphere of intimidation.

And that's a very important in hearing from as many people and hearing as many views as we can.

So again I want to just remind you of the ground rules before we get started. Ask you to treat one another with with respect, please.

If you don't agree with someone, you'll get a chance to make your comments either here or in writing or next door on tape. Please use that as your avenue for expressing your opinions and refrain from booing or cheering or clapping or anything like that during our testimony.

Please keep your side conversations out in the hall. It makes it easier for our court reporter to hear all of the testimony.

Remember to speak very closely to the mic so everyone can hear you, including our reporter. Be courteous and stop speaking when your time is up. And with that, I think we'll get started.

We're going to start with the first three names. I think it's Doug Vagerness, Callie Palmer is number two, and Mark Pinch is number three. Yes.

THE FLOOR: My name is Doug Vagerness. I am testifying on behalf of the membership of North Idaho Flycasters who at their last board meeting voted unanimously to support restoring the free-flowing Snake River.

Woody Guthrie wrote a song that was standard fare for every grade school music class in the northwest in the 50's, there wasn't a one of us grammar school kids who couldn't belt out the chorus and a versus or two to Roll on Columbia, roll on.

I think the line that dazzled us the most was the one that goes, your power is turning the darkness to dawn. Now, that was really something.

I'm certain though that if Woody were still with us today, there would be some changes made to that old refrain. Woody would have noticed, too, how well we have succeeded at turning the darkest to dawn.

In the process we have also transported the Columbia to a river that scales the senses. It's not surprising that the salmon that have adapted over the centuries are having more than a little trouble surviving the topsy turvy of what they are left with with. My guess is that Woody would press for the Columbia to roll on and he wouldn't for a minute have rolled over to allow for the extinction of the salmon.

He would have wanted our school children as they raise their voices in song to learn about honor and justice as in honoring the legal treaties that were signed with the Columbia River tribes assuring them a perpetual fishery.

He would have wanted our children to learn about economics, as in threatening the extinction of an invaluable resource for the sake of being able to subsidize the cost of barging wheat 140 miles in Pasco. Wheat, a crop we also pay farmers not to grow.

He would have wanted our children to learn about science as in recognizing that science tells us that since the Snake River dams began choking the river, a consistently smaller number of salmon returning to the Snake to spawn each year.

That the findings of the vast majority of all scientific study tells us that restoring the Snake will give us our best chance of restoring the salmon.

He would have wanted our children to learn to have good sense as in to know that fish belong in rivers and not in barges. Even if those barges are painted fancy colors and employ a great advertising agency.

To know that sometimes we make mistakes but that it is a much greater mistake to do nothing about to correct the first mistake.

Finally, I think he would have brought his song up to date by adding a versus or two that we can all sing in sincerity and true very likely something like restore the salmon and unplug the Snake, restore the salmon and unplug the Snake. And to the point of roll on Columbia, roll on. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Doug. Hold, please hold your applause. Callie Palmer and Mark Pinch. And then Amber Yobe and Tina.

THE FLOOR: My name is Callie Palmer I live in Colfax, Washington. I'm a fifth generation resident of the Palouse on my father's side. And my family goes back five generations in the Touchet valley on my mother's side.

My grandfather was a general contractor. And he helped build dams. Both sides of my family have farms since arriving in the Washington territory. Peas, lentils, and alfalfa.

I'd like to know how many people are here today that think that these dams don't make sense and should be removed? If you would please stand up.

If the record could reflect that over half of the people stood up, three quarters, I think.

I understand the fears of farmers. I understand the fears that they have in this area, but I don't think these dams make sense. When you weigh the impact that the loss of the salmon has had on fishing communities in Oregon, Washington, Canada, and Alaska, it doesn't make sense.

When you weigh the obligations we have to northwest tribes, it doesn't make sense. When it's going to cost more in the long run to keep these dams in place, not just to the Palouse but the entire country, it doesn't make sense. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Callie. Mark? After that Amber, I think it's Yobe, and Tina. And Randy Shaber in the wings.

THE FLOOR: Good evening. First of all I'd like to say a very heartfelt thank you to all you panel members for the very difficult job of many nights of getting us through this process. And my hats are off to you.

My name is Mark Pinch. I'm president and owner of a fairly predominant company here in Spokane. I'm also a member of the board of directors of the Economic Development Council and I'm a Republican.

I'm basically motivated by competition, accumulation of wealth, you know, basic greed and proud of it.

And after looking at the science that all of you have worked so hard to generate for us, I've got to say that I am now unequivocally for the breaching of the dams.

Why am I for that? Well, I'm for that because I really believe that it is an economic opportunity of historic proportions, it is an opportunity that's looking us straight in the eye and we're so befuddled by so many other things we're not looking at the basic economic factors in front of us.

You know, companies today are looking for places to locate. And what we want is we want good economic growth as opposed to poor economic growth. And good economic growth means high paying jobs, taking advantage of people.

You know, when we're relocating companies today, we're not looking for situations that are based on natural resource extraction and heavy manufacturing on the river bank next to the dam or the reservoir bank as we now have it.

What we're looking for today is the way to take advantage of our most important resource of all. And that is people.

Companies today, their greatest resource is their employees. And what the companies want for their employees is the best quality of life that they can possibly afford.

Now, let's look at the historical perspective of how these dams got here in the first place.

History teaches us that we came out of World War Two, and, yeah, we beat the hell out of the Japanese and Germans, but it was at a great cost to this country. And we came back from that war with a determination that we were going to be prepared forever more for any kind of conflict.

And we decided we were going to develop energy at all costs and we were going to develop aluminum to build war planes. That was the whole mind set at the time.

But if you look at the mathematics and return on investment, you look at it from a capitalistic point of view, it doesn't make sense because the elevation -- well, say the elevation at downtown Lewiston is about 900 feet. The elevation in Tri-Cities is 300 feet. So what we're talking about a river 140 miles long with 900 feet of total drop. It's no wonder that the reservoirs are 30 and 40 miles long. That's not an optimum situation for power generation. But we did it because that was our mind set at the time.

Now we have an opportunity to reverse it. Can we imagine for a minute what it would really be like to have 140 miles of free-flowing river that. It's not just a good fishery, it's not even a great fishery, it is a world renowned fishery by historical perspectives and could be again.

And furthermore thanks to the Army Corps of Engineers assembling a lot of real estate on both sides of the river.

THE MODERATOR: I need you to wrap up, please?

THE FLOOR: Back up? How far. The other thing that's so tantalizing is the Army Corps of Engineers's real estate on both sides of the river now would belong to the public. I think you should take advantage to the economic --

THE MODERATOR: I'm going to cut you off.

THE FLOOR: I'd like to get a piece of the action. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Mark. Amber Yobe and Tina Plese. And then Randy Shaber is next and Harvey Morrison in the wings.

THE FLOOR: Spoken from one generation to the other, do we not want to save this awesome species at any cost. For her and the generations to come. There are no second chances with extinction. Save salmon.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you. Thank you, Amber, Tina. Randy Shaber. Randy? And Harvey Morrison, if you can come up and be ready at the mic. And the next person will be Bill Clark. Go ahead, Randy.

THE FLOOR: My name is Randy Shaber. I live in Spokane. I am the son of a military man who took me all over the world as I grew up.

I chose to live in Eastern Washington because of the environmental opportunities that we have here, the mountains, the forest, the rivers, the lakes.

I've gotten involved in fishing. I enjoy fishing very much. I taught fishing to my children who have now grown up. I hope that they will be able to have an opportunity to teach their children also to fish in these rivers and lakes.

Particularly the rivers are important to me. When I first came here, the Snake was still partly at least free-flowing. It's a beautiful river. It had good runs of fish.

I hear what the Corps is saying about all the fixes that they've proposed and implemented over the years. And you wonder why we are all here tonight because the general painted such a rosy picture, you'd think that there isn't a problem.

There is a problem. We're facing the extinction of some of the greatest runs of fish in the Columbia River system. And we're wasting our time. We need to be doing something different than what we've been doing for the last 20 and 30 years.

We need to start looking at alternatives that will actually accomplish what the fish need. And that's to restore their environment so that they can reproduce and continue to be a strong species.

I think in looking at the whole system there are a lot of people that are losing on this deal now. And there are people that are afraid of losing something in the future.

I think as Mr. Pinch pointed out, I think that we all have to look to the future. There are changes that are going to happen with all these individual people in this area. And we just have to embrace those changes as they come and seek the benefits that they will present to all of us.

In closing I guess, just we don't need these dams. We can replace all that they give us with alternative fixes. We seem to be trying to apply techno fixes to a biological problem that the fish face. Apply the technological fixes to the technological problems that they can fix, transportation, barging, hydro electric generation, that sort of thing. But leave the biology to nature. Return the river to its natural free-flowing state. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Randy. Harvey Morrison. Bill Clark and then David James.

THE FLOOR: Thank you. I'm Harvey Morrison. I live in Spokane. I've been a fisherman for as long as I can remember.

One of my earliest fishing memories is as a seven-year old boy 50 years ago hooking, fighting and losing a steelhead. To this day I swear is bigger than I was.

As a young man I was fortunate enough to hunt and fish the banks of the Snake River before the dams. I was just discovering the river when suddenly it was gone, gone with the rapids or the birds and the fish.

In the mid 70's I reluctantly accepted the dams and the loss of the river as a necessity of nature. I believed the Corps when they told me to trust them to mitigate the harm caused by the dams and that technology could bring them back, bring back the fish.

The cornerstone of that technology was juvenile transportation. Can you imagine how absurd that will seem to those who will study our history. But the Corps was convincing and how could they not make it work with a virtually limitless money to spend.

With every new hatchery came the promise of more fish. But the technology will reveal the truth was in the fish ladders because it's there that the returning fish could be counted and the truth is that the salmon were not returning.

15 years and countless millions of dollars went by. Me believing the Corps tinkering with the technology. Then in 1991 and '92 the listings of endangered and threatened Snake River sockeye and chinook and the announced extinction of coho, I realized that something was terribly wrong.

I began to pay closer attention, to read and learn about the ecology of the salmon's world. I started to attend hearings and become active in the democratic process.

I have read your DEIS, particularly the summary. On the first page of that summary you state "The Corps's role in the study has been as successful as an honest broker." Then on the following page you say "successful features such as juvenile fish bypass treatment are in place on all four of the lower Snake dams."

The key word that you use as successful as an honest broker, by what standard can you claim that. Juvenile fish bypass transportation programs, bypass ladders are successful. Slowing the march towards extinction cannot be a pleasure of success.

On the contrary, I find these to be costly, misdirected, dismal failures. Enough after 25 years.

The fish can wait no longer. You've offered us four alternatives for options. Honestly the difference between them is this. Each of the first three alternatives promises nothing more than the same old broken problems, promises and problems. And in the end the alternatives boil down to nothing more than a decision of which brand of canned Alaskan salmon we'll be forced to buy because our native fish are gone.

Please look into this. This will be the result of alternates one through three. As a fisherman, as a northwesterner, as a taxpayer, this prospect saddens me deeply.

THE MODERATOR: Can you wrap up, please.

THE FLOOR: I am not naive. But these dams simply didn't make sense. There is no single silver bullet that will save and restore salmon in the northwest. But any plan that doesn't include bypassing the lower Snake dams is shooting blanks. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Harvey. Please, folks, can I ask you to hold your applause. Let me tell you what that's about.

I can't allow people to boo one another because that sets up an atmosphere of intimidation. And if I can't allow people to boo one another, then I also can't allow people to cheer and clap one another.

So I ask you please to cooperate and don't applaud speakers during their speech or after. I appreciate it. It also helps us move along faster. Thank you.

Okay. Bill Clark and David James and Kevin is in the wings. Oh, that Bill Clark.

THE FLOOR: Honored assembly, I'm Captain William Clark, former Governor of Missouri Territory, Superintendent of Indian Affairs.

And with the esteemed Captain Meriwether Lewis, explorer of the once magnificent rivers of the northwest.

Returning to these waters, I am overcome with despair to find the Columbia and Snake River salmon nearly eradicated by a nation I so proudly once served. I'm suffused with melancholy. I have not previously known not only at the breadth of this tragedy but at the purposefulness with which my people have embarked upon this destructive course.

The Corps of Discovery reported 122 unknown animals, none more plentiful than salmon. So plentiful as to make these rivers boil in the manner of turbulent rapids. So plentiful a man could pull ashore and in a single place see 10,000 pounds being cured by the native bands who lived judiciously but prosperously beside these waters.

It is not coincidence that when the salmon river flowed as one of our men noted swifter than a horse could run, it was swollen with millions of sockeye, coho, and chinook. Nor is it accident that because the damming hand of this nation transformed these living waters into putrid ponds, only a few hundred salmon remain.

We first tasted the salmon of the Pacific along the high river when we took fellowship with the Shoshone people. But salmon were the sweetest as we struggled out of the terrible mountains of the Clearwater country an ordeal of such note that my men ate candles.

Fortune provided our greeting by the Nemo Pew, the Nez Perce who fed us salmon and camas root. We were so starved that we ate ourselves ill.

The Nez Perce gave us hospitality as we waited for the melting of the snows in the high country on the return home.

I humbly extend my regrets and apologies to Chief Twisted Hair and his people for the carelessness and selfishness of the people of my nation who later pushed west.

The Nez Perce honored their word. We continue to violate ours in no small measure by our efforts to eliminate the salmon.

Honored assembly, because of the Nez Perce, because of the salmon, we survived to open the great northwest for your forebearers and you. These sacred fish bind our nation.

Should your generation allow their total demise, history will mark you with indelible shame. You have taken from these lands and rivers in every manner possible. Your dams sever the arteries that bring sustenance for the rivers, the streams, the giant white pine and all the animals and plants that thrived here.

Can you not give back in some small measure? Four dams, anyway four mounds of earth are little to ask of those who have profited so much. Honorable President Thomas Jefferson and his Corps of Discovery by Captain Lewis suggests distinguish in yourselves as the Corps of Recovery.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Bill. Okay. David James, Kevin Path and Scott I think it's Bose is next. Go ahead.

THE FLOOR: Thank you. My name is David James. I'm with the Washington director for Trout Unlimited. Trout Unlimited is the nation's leading cold water fisheries conservation group with over 100,000 members nationwide.

I'm speaking tonight on behalf of the Spokane members. I'll make my comments brief. First of all I'd like to thank the panel for being here. I do not envy you the task you take. I've been to numerous hearings such as this. And I always kind of feel somewhat pitiful for the panelists because I know your task is not envious.

THE MODERATOR: What about the moderator?

THE FLOOR: And the moderator, too.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

THE FLOOR: Along with many of the conservation groups in the United States, Trout Unlimited has wholly endorsed the partial removal of the four lower Snake dams as the most practical beneficial and impactful positive restoration tool that we have for restoring Idaho steelhead salmon. That's about the extent of my official message.

I would like to make some personal remarks. I've seen information that you've presented tonight in numerous formats. What I have not seen, what I still have not seen and it's always troublesome from a corporate standpoint is there are no goals here, no objectives.

What I would like to see personally is some hard target goals for the number of fish returning. Does it matter what you're planning to do with barging or techno fixes or even breaching of dams.

What I would like to see is hard target goals for number of fish returning over Lower Granite, fish into Idaho. And when those numbers are not attained, I would like to see a direct tie to the nonattainment of those numbers of fish returning to the decommissioning and funding of the partial removal of the four lower Snake dams.

I, personally I don't believe these dams will be removed within the next five years. I think this is perhaps a means to speed that process. Surely these dams will be removed in my lifetime. No dam in the Pacific Northwest will last another 100 years. They are all hydraulic structures and eventually they will all fail. I've read thousands of words and thousands of pages about salmon recovery. But salmon recovery can be summed up for Idaho fish in four words. It takes a river. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, David. Okay. Kevin Hoff is next. I think it's Scott -- it's either Bose or Bose (Phonetic). And Mike Peterson.

And while you're coming up, I realize now that we've had a couple of other panelists join us since I did the introductions. So let me just introduce you to Lori Bode from EPA has joined our panel and Phil Millam from EPA has joined our panel. Thank you. Go ahead. Kevin, is that you?

THE FLOOR: Yes. I've lived in Spokane my whole life.

THE MODERATOR: Can you state your name, please.

THE FLOOR: My name is Kevin Hoff. I've lived in Spokane since I was born. And I have never seen the Snake River the way that it used to be.

I like going out to rivers. I try to do that as much as I can. It's hard to find the rivers in general that are still in their natural state that haven't been affected in some way or another by what humans have done.

My best friend's dad has always promised me that if he ever got a chance to take me somewhere where there was a healthy salmon population, he'd teach me how to fish salmon.

I've never fished salmon before. I've ate salmon that has been caught up in Alaska because my friend's dad won't catch salmon from here because it's just not as good because it's been -- it's not healthy. It's not healthy anymore.

It's not just about being able to see the river and stuff. I don't know why we have to say one industry, the farming industry, a miniscule amount of the total jobs in our region needs to be maintained at the cost of another industry that could be bountiful, the fishing industry. And when it's at the expense of people like me and everybody else I think most people in this room would like to be able to go out and see that river the way it used to be. I don't know. That's about it I guess.

THE MODERATOR: All right. Thank you, Kevin. Scott. And Mike Peterson and in the wings would be Croyden. Please be ready. Thanks. Mike?

THE FLOOR: My name is Scott Bose. And I represent Idaho Rivers United. Idaho Rivers United is an organization consisting of nearly 2,000 people from across the northwest who care very passionately about protecting our free-flowing rivers and our wild fish.

In 1995 we were the first group in the country to endorse removal of the four lower Snake River dams. That's something that we are very proud of.

I also on a personal level used to be a commercial fisherman in Alaska. And I think that gives me a perspective on this issue that might be a little bit different than the rest of the paid staffers and conservation community because of the four years I spent commercial fishing to pay for college, I experienced what was one of the most beautiful ways I could imagine to make a living.

And I would remind everybody here that those people that live in fishing communities and made their way of life that way are every bit as valuable as anyone who has farmed, who has made a barge, who has shipped grain or any other job that's similar to that.

The way I see it, your mission is very clear. It's not easy, but it's very clear. And the first goal that you have is you must restore salmon.

When I look through these documents that you've published, some of the things I see point to avoiding extinction. Maybe we can have two fish left, three fish left, it's still not extinction, but it might be okay.

That's not okay with us. Because the second mission I believe that you have is to comply with existing laws and treaties. Some of those treaties we made to indian tribes over 150 years ago. They gave up 40 million acres of land. We promised them that they would always have places to fish because the fish were sacred to their culture.

We have the Endangered Species Act which is a promise to the American people that we would not let species go extinct when we have the power to recover them.

We have the Clean Water Act, the Northwest Power Act, the lower Snake River Conservation Act, the Pacific Salmon Treaty. There are many, many laws and treaties that we must comply with.

The third mission which I think we have fallen very far short of is we need to mitigate for those people that would be adversely affected under the damming scenario. And that is something because we haven't done it has instilled a lot of fear in a lot of people in this region.

I once had a person say to me if we can send a man to the moon, we can get salmon down the lower Snake River alive. Well, I say if we can send a man to the moon, we can find a way to get grain from Lewiston to Tri-Cities in trucks and rail cars.

The Snake River system once had 4 million fish. It was the greatest chinook and steelhead fishery on the entire planet. You need to go to Alaska now to see what it used to look like in Idaho.

We've got less than 10,000 fish coming back on an annual basis now. And you've tried valiently over the last 30 years. But we have to admit. You folks have failed.

You failed to recover these fish because time and time and time again we have not paid attention to the science. Look at the PATH process. Somebody locked PATH in the basement, threw away the key.

THE MODERATOR: Scott, I need to ask you to sum up, please. Time's up.

THE FLOOR: Sure. You folks have an awesome, awesome, awesome responsibility. You will control the fate of these fish. It's in your hands. You all have names, General Strock, Rick Fritz --

THE MODERATOR: Scott, I'm going to have to cut you off.

THE FLOOR: Gordon Haugen, please do not let this opportunity pass us by because you don't have the courage to deliver on the promises you made for 30 years.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Scott. Mike Peterson, Troy Chailum and Roger Wesselham is in the wings. Go ahead, Mike.

THE FLOOR: My name is Mike Peterson. I'm the president of the National Forest Protection Alliance. It's a collation of 80 environmental and conservation groups as well as over 100 businesses throughout the United States. The Lands Council and several conservation groups in the northwest are part of that alliance.

A key mission of that alliance is the protection of water quality and habitat on our federal lands. And that's the reason I'm here today.

We believe the habitat, the tributary habitat for juvenile salmon is so degraded and disrupted on the national forests above the Snake River dams, that would include the Clearwater, the Nez Perce, the Walula, Whitman and below the dams on the Umatilla, that the commercial logging program and road building associated with those national forests needs to end as soon as possible.

The protection of those forests would involve a new option, I didn't see that on your three options for habitat protection. But I'll call it option four.

NFPA also believes that the dams, the Snake River dams must be breached. And I've come up with three reasons. There's hundreds of reasons, but the three reasons are the following:

One, Lower Granite Dam is currently a toilet bowl for the Potlatch Corporation. Why do I say that? Their discharge pipe hangs out into the Snake River discharging hot water pollutants so that they can barely pass the law on water quality standards. And that is harming salmon.

Two, juvenile salmon is really a problem of cumulative impacts. We all know there's lots of impacts, habitat, juvenile survival, maybe even ocean currents. A key habitat impact are those dams.

I live upstream up the Columbia River, upstream of Chief Joseph and the Coolee dam where in the 30's millions of fish smashed into those dams in the vain effort to gain the passage that they had had for thousands of years. We're doing the same thing on the Snake River except we're strangling those salmon a year at a time. And those dams are the reason for that.

We've got to stop. We've got to breach those dams as soon as possible. And I want to commend the Army Corps of Engineers because at least we're here talking about this.

And you've made some bold steps to at least write an option into it to take those dams out. So I appreciate that. And I thank you for that.

But we have to move beyond talk. You have to be convinced. And you have to go and convince Congress that it's a way to protect our salmon. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Mike. Okay. Croyden, are you here? Thank you. And Roger Wesselham is next. And on the wings is John Coarse.

THE FLOOR: Good evening. My name is Croyden Challum and I live here in Spokane. I'm a student at Urban Regional Planning in Eastern Washington University.

I think that it's pretty much well acknowledged that we're all here that we acknowledge the importance of bio diversity. And that the salmon of the state perform a crucial function in the ecology of that area.

And that the dams don't make sense. That anything short of breaching the dams would merely give us an excuse in the future to say that we did what we could to save the salmon. And unless we breach the dams, I don't think that we can say we did everything that was in our power. So thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Croyden. Roger, you're up next. Thank you. And then John Coarse. And in the wings would be Jim Hollingsworth.

THE FLOOR: Hi. I'm Roger Wesselham, a wheat grower from Mansfield, Washington.

There's been a lot of talk here of how this is going to save the salmon and other species of wildlife primarily. There's also a segment out there that has fought for this country.

I don't care what anybody says, if you think you can go back and put this in pristine wilderness area as such and feed the country that we have developed, you are sadly mistaken.

We have to balance this out. We don't want to lose our salmon. That breaching of the dams is way far out of whack as far as I'm concerned.

I know of several things up in my country that can be done and I still feel that we could keep a flow of salmon.

The first thing I think we need to do is we're looking at businesses that are going to go down. I don't care if you're a farm or whatever.

There was a comment made on the Corps that there was no economic damage to the recreation that was not put in the study. I have a real problem with that.

What about the current recreation that's there and you're cutting it off. You didn't have that in your study. I don't see where -- you have no dollars of what you're knocking out right now. There is going to be many more boats or are many more boats and etc. on that river right now than there ever will be canoes or whatever you're going to come down this river with. Okay?

The other thing is you're killing out a lot of ways of life. If you've ever been on a farm and put a little bit of dirt under your fingers, you really don't know what that's all about.

The other thing is loss of jobs. You think it's just a few people coming and shooting off those few acres that you call a few acres. Those acres can feed 120 some people. Each farmer, way over that.

And then also the loss of power. And I don't know where you're going to find the most cheap, inexpensive way of power.

The other thing is you're talking about building the railroads and everything else. I do believe there is quite a few people around this state that just voted for an Initiative 695. Go try to find money to build our roads and railroads right now. We can't even find something for short line railroads in Olympia. I just got back from there.

I think you'd better -- you had better look at all these things before you go knocking out everything that you think you can -- you think is going to happen with breaching these dams. There's going to be much more deeper cuts than what you think and if you think you're going to solve this by all the just dam breaching. You're going to cause a lot more trouble than what the cheap power and the cheap transportation that we have and the excellent way to do it.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Roger. John Coarse. Jim Hollingsworth is after John. And Emily Platt is on deck.

THE FLOOR: My name is John Coarse. And I live over in Coeur d'Alene. I work for an outdoor recreation company, but I'm here representing myself.

I'd like to thank the panel for taking the time to let me speak in front of you and tell you what our opinions are because this is really something that effects everybody in this room and really everybody in this country.

I spent four years in college studying western water politics. So I kind of know what you guys got going on. And your track record is not real good in my opinion.

The bottom line of what we're here to do is to restore salmon. There's a science out there that says taking the dams out is our best alternative. Your job is to take that information and go with it.

It's not to continue having these hearings. It's to decide what to do and then move forward.

I'm not a big fan of big government. I think local politics is where it's all at. But we're at an issue right now where the local politics is a national issue.

I grew up on the east coast. I came out to Seattle for the first time when I was 11 and saw salmon for the first time. I never really understood what a salmon was, but my parents paid the same taxes that everybody else did that built these dams.

I have every right to be here to say what I have to say. I'm a voter. And I vote for salmon.

The last election that happened in Coeur d'Alene, nothing I voted for won. But I was out there. I voted.

I'd like to tell you pretty much what I think about the dams. But I kind of have a dream. It's been a dream for about ten years. When I first came to Idaho, actually when I first went to California and started white water rafting. I had this dream that one day I was going to go down a river and as I was going down this big fish was going to jump out and hit me in the face.

That's a dream of mine and I really want to see it happen. Idaho is the place for it to happen. It's not happening in California. There's no way for it to happen. The rivers down there are decimated. There's a way to recover fish up here and I'd like to see it happen.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, John. Excuse me, Jim Hollingsworth, Emily Platt. And on the wings is Peter Grout.

THE FLOOR: My name is Jim Hollingsworth. I'm a stock broker by trade, but I am a historian by avocation. And I would like to tell you the story of Peo Peo Muck Muck. Some people call him Pew Pew Muck Muck.

Pew Pew Muck Muck was the greatest of all of the Walla Walla. He went to California before 1800 with his father and he stole horses and cattle from the California missions. His father was doing that 30, 40 years before Lewis & Clark ever got here.

Pew Pew Muck Muck greeted Lewis & Clark at the mouth of the Snake River at a place called Cossapaw. And he fed Lewis and Clark and traded with them.

And Lewis & Clark traded and gave him a silver sword. He wanted a big pot. Didn't have any pots, so they gave him a silver sword. But those Indians, Pew Pew Muck Muck, one of them, actually invited the missionaries, the American missionaries, the Protestants, to come and preach to them because they wanted the book of heaven.

And Whitman came and Spaulding came and they settled there about 1836. And Spaulding's first sermon, he held up the bible. And he said, this is how God reveals himself to you. This is God's revelation, it is how he speaks to you. There is no other way.

And Pew Pew Muck Muck said that's fine, we can live with that. But please come with me. And he took Whitman down to the river. And he sat him on a rock. And he said wait here. The morning doves have returned and we know that something special is about to happen. And the Indians knew what was about to happen because they were intimate with the environment.

And sure enough Whitman sat on that rock and about 15 minutes here comes a big salmon swimming right up the Walla Walla river and a couple minutes after that there are two. And then there are so many he couldn't count. Within a half an hour there were thousands of salmon swimming up the stream.

And Pew Pew Muck Muck returned and he said to Whitman, this is how God reveals himself to us. And nothing really has changed from Whitman's time in 1836 or Issac Engel Stevens' times in 1855 at the treaty of Walla Walla where they promised these Indians the fish would be there forever.

Nothing has changed. It's the same mentality. We separate spirituality from matter, that God created this, it's a biological living system. It is not an irrigation ditch. It is not a barge canal. It is the same life force that surges through all of our bodies.

It is the water we drink and piss. It is the -- it generates the food that we eat. It has the same elements, the same chemicals. We are it. And yet we treat it like it's a sewer ditch because we separate its spirituality from our existence.

And that is the basic flaw that we have in our western culture. And we have to change that. And later on after Issac Engel Stevens, let me finish here it won't take a minute.

THE MODERATOR: I'll let you finish in a couple of seconds.

THE FLOOR: I'll tell you that in 1855 an indian agent by the name of Nathan Olnor shot Pew Pew Muck Muck in the head with a rifle. This is all documented. That an Army physician by the name of Ben Shaw scalped him, cut off his nose and ears, his fingers and toes, his genitals. He stripped the skin off his back. He crushed his skull and took the pieces for buttons. So I say that we should bring those salmon back for Pew Pew Muck Muck.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Jim. Thank you. Emily Platt. Emily Platt. And after Emily Peter Grub and Leroy Eddy.

THE FLOOR: Hello. My name is Emily Platt. I work as an energy conservation specialist here in Spokane and I'm also a student at Gonzaga University.

And I just came to show my support for bypassing the four lower Snake River dams. And I think it's important that we note that this isn't just about the salmon. The salmon are part of one larger which could be healthy eco system.

The coyotes, the birds depend on the salmon, not to mention the indian tribes and the fishermen who are used to fishing these salmon. So I'd just like us to keep that in mind.

Also of all the human factors that are contributing to the extinction of salmon, the dams are the largest factor. So I think when we look at that, we have to consider that as part of the solution as well and look at breaching the dams because that is one of the major problems that the salmon are having as they move towards extinction.

And removing the dams would give our salmon more spawning habitat, more natural river conditions and a much better chance of survival than any of the other options.

We spent 25 years trying to ease the tensions between the salmon and the dams. And clearly our tactics have been ineffective at best.

We must change our approach and the only approach that makes sense for our region and for the salmon is bypassing the four lower Snake River dams.

Barging the salmon around the dams doesn't work. Scientific studies suggest that barging more salmon would be just as fruitless.

Neither should we focus on untested techno fixes. We don't have any more time to waste. If we're really going to save these salmon. So we must look at what's best for the region as a whole.

Undoubtedly the region needs salmon. We don't need the four lower Snake River dams. We can easily mitigate the effects of dam removal.

For example, the portion of energy that these dams produce, which is very small, about five percent in the region, we can easily replace that with conservation and investment.

So I think we need to look at options like this that make more sense. It's ludicrous to continue removing salmon from the river so that the grain can be transported in the river. It just doesn't make sense. If we truly want to save our wild salmon, and I think we really must, then we need to bypass the four lower Snake River dams. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you. Peter Grub. Leroy Eddy and Liz Allen is on deck. Hi, Peter.

THE FLOOR: My name is Peter Grub. I am founder and president of a white water rafting company. We operate throughout the State of Idaho and Montana.

I live in Coeur d'Alene and I appreciate the opportunity to comment tonight. I'm in the recreation business so I'll speak just for a minute to the economics of this issue.

I recognize that there will be economic impacts if the dams are breached. But for every job lost I'm convinced that there will be another one created.

Imagine the opportunity of over 100 miles of free-flowing river on the lower Snake along with 63 rapids and 70 islands, 34,000 acres of land.

As part of my comments today I would like to formally submit the complete report of Idaho's first natural resource industry which was written by the Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation and have that included as part of my testimony.

This report clearly indicates a high economic value of a restored sport fishery to the Snake, Salmon and Clearwater rivers.

This is not an issue of jobs versus fish but of one kind of job versus another.

By contrast for the fish, it's not an economic issue at all, but a matter of life and death. The survival of the species.

I can't help but think that we're awfully arrogant as another species sharing this earth to be so cavalier about deciding the fate of these fish. And how shameful if we fail.

I wonder when the Army Corps, BPA and NMFS will wake up and accept the vast amount of science that clearly points to breaching the dams as the best chance we have to save the salmon and steelhead and avoid violation of the Endangered Species Act.

And as another part of my testimony, I would like to formally submit the December 1998 PATH report in its complete form which has all the science you need to show that clearly breaching is the way to go.

This report concludes the partial removal of the four lower Snake dams has the highest probability and possibility of saving the salmon runs.

In this discussion we need to be aware of oxymorons like fish friendly turbines and fish friendly dams. It sounds like a people friendly car crash.

Let's remember also from a historic standpoint that these dams have only been in place between 25 and 40 years. That's not much time. And while building dams did dislocate many farmers that were down in the Snake River valley, I don't know who's looking back and worrying about them at this point.

And while the breaching of the dams will no doubt change some farming operations, we'll survive. And again the salmon will not.

So I want to echo a sentiment we've heard a lot tonight, too, which is time is not on the side of the salmon. And I would encourage you all to move swiftly with this decision and encourage you to weigh heavily on that decision and support the removal of the lower Snake dams. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Peter. Leroy Eddy. And Liz Allen and on deck is Justin Bell.

THE FLOOR: Good evening. My name is Leroy Eddy. Resident of Spokane. If we are serious as a culture at restoring wild salmon to the Snake River, there is no other alternative than breaching the four Snake River dams.

That is the only option I see in front of us. And I think it's a great option.

It's an option that still allows us to transport goods to the market. It still allows us to provide jobs. And it still allows us an opportunity.

And a word that's been used a lot tonight. And that is a chance to restore wild salmon to the Snake River. I think it's a great opportunity.

I want to be a part of the generation that has made that decision, that's elected people into office that's going to make that decision.

And I will not stand by and watch the salmon go. Flat out will not do it. I can't tell my 7-year old that I was a part of that. And I won't be a part of it. And that's why I'm here tonight.

There's a lot of emotion in this room and I was thinking back there assessing why am I so emotional about this whole thing. And the answer is so clear. There's something about salmon that means so much to us, mean so much to the people in this room. That we can't let that go.

My grandfather, mostly on the Colville Confederated Tribes, growing up he taught me when we took a fish, we had to thank the fish and we had to thank mother earth. And if he was here today I'm not sure what he would tell me to do about watching a whole -- watching the salmon go.

How do you thank for that? I don't know. I don't know what the words are, and I don't know what he could tell me to say. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you. Liz Allen and Justin Bell and on deck is Allen it looks like Facintall, I think. Go ahead.

THE FLOOR: My name is Liz Allen. I'm here to speak for salmon and support breaching of the lower four Snake dams. I'm a native Washingtonian and I live in Republic.

I grew up in Redmond, Washington where riding my bike along the Gillman trail I saw salmon swimming up the slew to spawn in Lake Sammamish.

It didn't occur to me what a wonder it was to see these fish until they were gone.

What I'd like the agencies to think of in considering removing the dams, is the salmon and steelhead are of national and even global importance. We can not limit our vision to simply local politics.

The other important aspect of removal that makes sense concerns water temperature and the Clean Water Act.

The reservoirs created by the dams significantly raise water temperature which fish species, specifically bull trout cannot tolerate.

Despite timber industry propoganda, we do not have adequate regulations. In Eastern Washington a mere 25 feet is the largest restriction that loggers are required to leave. On federal lands that number is 300 feet and determined inadequate for bull trout.

If the State legislature cannot protect our fish in their habitat, even more reason to remove the lower four Snake dams.

Cadillac Desert, a book that chronicles the corruption of the Bureau of Reclamation and the Army Corps of Engineers as they fought each other to build bigger, better and more dams in more places in the west is an amazing book. I'd like to read one quote from that written by Mark Risner.

"What it all boils down to is undoing the wrongs caused by earlier generations doing what they thought was right. The Bureau of Reclamation and the Corps of Engineers knew that those dams would ruin the Columbia River fishery or most of as the years and decades went by. But they convinced themselves and the rest of the country that all the new power and water was worth the price. It was simply how everyone thought."

I'd like you to consider this as you look to removing the lower four Snake dams. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you. Justin Bell and Allen and then in the wings is Ed it looks like Forslaut.

THE FLOOR: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Justin Bell. I can trace my family back all the way to the Oregon trail. My great great grandfather came across.

I'd like to start by thanking everyone who is sitting up there for hanging out this evening and listening to everyone who's got something to say. And I'd like to thank everyone in this room because I can look around and see a lot of red and I see a lot of supporters. It's a really good energy. It feels great to have so many people out in support for salmon.

I consider myself lucky since I was raised near the Green River. I spent a lot of my time playing down by the river. And I always remember huge salmon coming up and spawning and seeing their carcasses on the banks of the river. And perhaps I never grasped what a miracle it was that these salmon returned to the streams that they came from.

I considered myself lucky because I was a part of that. And I hope that my children who aren't even around yet, and my great grandchildren and grandchildren will be able to enjoy this salmon like I have.

The salmon runs of the northwest have been the cornerstone of our entire ecosystems and the life blood of generations of Native Americans for thousands of years. It's been unchanged.

Just in the last several years though, the last 20 years since the four lower Snake River dams in question have been in place, the runs along the lower Snake River have been decimated to the point where they're almost nonexistent.

Every Snake River salmon species is on the endangered species list. Doesn't that say something?

We've got great habitat above these dams. It just seems like those salmon can't get to it.

We've already spent billions and billions of dollars studying salmon population and the effect the dams have on the population and we haven't come up with any solutions. I mean, millions of dollars, billions of dollars in 20 years and we're still right here.

The only viable biological alternative we even have to save and restore these salmon populations is the partial breaching of the four lower Snake River dams and mothballing the dam facilities.

You know, if this proves an unworthy alternative, we can always return this earthen portion. Consider it another experiment that didn't work in our trying to save salmon.

But we have to do something. Trucking and barging hasn't been working. 20 years of increasing that hasn't been working.

We might look kind of funny when our grandchildren look back and say we took the fish out of the river and put them on the road and took the grain off the road and put them on the river. It doesn't make sense.

In conclusion I support the partial breaching of these four dams because we need to not only stave off extinction, but we need to restore these salmon runs. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Justin. Allen, I think it's Backenthal? Is that even close.

THE FLOOR: That is exactly right, ma'am.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

THE FLOOR: Welcome to the panel. I think I'm probably the lone voice here in opposition.

I would suggest first the Corps of Engineers remove that island, that artificial island at the mouth of the Columbia that supports that terrific tern population that decimates the migration of the smolts to the sea.

And the other little item that you might consider, every one of those barges of wheat will require 75 truck and trailer loads of truck traffic on nonexistent highways to get that down to Pasco.

Now, your job is hard. But you have to look at the overall picture. You stand up there and you're accused of not having the information in front of us.

That is not right. You have given us information. 90 percent of those smolt that are put in that barge get to the ocean. Or they get to the Columbia. And only to be decimated by the tern population, the returning salmon. They run a gauntlet of 100 gill nets in order to try to get home to spawn. How many of you knew that. 100 gill nets in 120 mile stretch of the Columbia River. Any salmon that is able to negotiate 100 nets is really worth eating when he gets there, yes.

But your job, I appreciate all of the information, all of those pictures down there that show this Columbia River salmon going clear up to Alaska. And then they have to run the gauntlet of the foreign fisheries and Alaska fishermen and so forth in order to get their migration complete and come back down and get a chance.

If you could shut off the fishing for four years, if you could just eliminate the fishing in four years, you'd have so many salmon you wouldn't know what to do with them.

If the Indians actually used the catch that they get, you would have a lot more salmon getting up here. Our Indians are not being truthful with us either.

Now, I don't speak from just thin air. I have researched and I have listened carefully. And the Washington State Grange is not in favor of breaching the dams because of the loss of economic and farming. You know, only 11,000 acres of farms, that's all. You know, just 11,000 acres. Just a few farmers. A few jobs. And all you fellows want to do is go fishing.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Alan. Ed I think it's Forsloft. I'm not sure.

THE FLOOR: Yes.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you. And then Pat.

THE FLOOR: Thank you. Good evening, panel. My name is Ed Forsloft. I represent the Washington Wildlife Federation in the State of Washington. The Washington Wildlife Federation bases its issues that it's going to take on upon habitat. Habitat degradation. Issues, anything that bounds on habitat is important, it's beneficial to the federation. It's important to the State and to the nation.

We endorse wholeheartedly breaching of the lower Snake River dam, four lower Snake River dams. We are working hard on that issue. And we hope you endorse that proposal also. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Ed. And Pat, go ahead. And then Derrick Knowles is next and then Scott Levy is in the wings.

THE FLOOR: My name is Pat Baim. I'm a teacher. I live in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. First of all I want to thank you folks for coming and listening and hearing what the people -- the people who pay you, how they feel and what they think.

And these people are good thinkers. They're good studiers. And they believe in things -- in the fact that the earth here is supporting us.

The only reason we're here is because we've got this thin veil of atmosphere. And these people believe that. And this is an important part of that.

I also want to thank the people who are here because most of you like myself who have worked all day. We haven't gotten paid to come out here and talk. But this is very important to all of us.

And I want you to bring that message to Washington that all these people that show up and write and spend time away from their families and so forth, we really feel that this is important, very important.

Historically speaking, salmon have been cultured and a sustenance for hundreds of communities for at least 500 generations on the Snake River. 500 generations. And in the last two generations, we managed to screw it all up.

We managed to dump 500 generations of sustenance to these, and we managed to dump it in two generations. Now science and technology. New technology becomes obsolete very quickly, very quickly. Especially technology that does not work. And the technology that we have used in the dams we thought would work.

It worked for certain things. We put fish ladders in. We built barges. And we have hatcheries. Guess what? The technology is not working. The science is in. The reports have shown.

The technology that we have developed to bring the salmon across these dams that we built 30, 35, 40 years ago is not working. We've had 40 years to figure that out. It doesn't work. The salmon are not returning.

Every year there's less since those dams have been put into operation, less, less, less. Pretty soon none.

Use the technology for us. The salmon have their technology. It works. It's called a free-flowing river. That works for the salmon. If we want technology, we can use our own technology for our power, to light our lights, to move our crops to market, to get water to the crops. That's our problem. Let's not kill the salmon to solve our problems. We're very intelligent. My grandmother was a farmer in Iowa --

THE MODERATOR: I need to ask you to wrap up, please.

THE FLOOR: Okay. Her father was a homesteader. And my message is this: She went to college. She was retrainable. People are retrainable. Salmon are not.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you. Derrick and then Scott Levy.

THE FLOOR: My name is Derrick Knowles and I'm a student out at Eastern Washington University and a resident of Cheney, Washington.

And I believe the four lower Snake River dams should be breached for numerous reasons. Obviously I think the independent science has proven that that's the best option.

I also believe that for economic reasons, including the many lawsuits by many parties that we might be facing in the future, once the salmon do go extinct, if the salmon do go extinct.

I don't think it's being taken into consideration as much as it should be. It's something that's really important.

But I want to talk about another issue that I don't think it's been covered possibly as well. And that is I think letting salmon go extinct is unAmerican.

What I mean by that is I don't believe that letting any species go extinct especially salmon that are important to us now in many ways and were very important to us in our history, I don't believe that that's a good thing and a very American thing just in the name of greed and for a lot of reasons.

I find it disheartening that we as Americans, we consider gambling away salmon by choosing not to remove the four dams in the name of cheaper power. Cheaper power for among other things so our kids can spend more time in the basements watching television or playing video games rather than maybe stepping outside and participating in activities like fishing on the Snake River or rafting down the Snake River or just being outdoors.

I think those are American values that we need to take a look at. What I'm concerned here about, what I mean by America is the way our culture and society is going, what kind of example are we setting for future generations by saying it's okay to let the species go extinct like the salmon.

I don't think that's a message we want to send to our children and grandchildren and future Americans.

To close, the four lower Snake River dams may have served a purpose in the past. But it's time to choose life over money, in my opinion. Life over money and greed for nothing more than the sake of preserving our nation's integrity.

I'd like to close by saying let's not abort the future of salmon on the Snake River. We need to breach the dams and I think that's our only option. Thanks.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Derrick. Scott.

THE MODERATOR: Could I ask you to hold your applause. Thank you. Go ahead, Scott.

THE FLOOR: My name is Scott Levy. I got involved in this issue. I made this film called Red Fish Blue Fish, starting filming 1993. It's a philosophy film, it's playing in public television, universities.

I get to listen to a lot of people, a lot of comments similar to this. I spent a lot of time thinking about the problems that you're now thinking about and I'm really excited being here because I can see a decision that is going to make everyone happy.

It seems like a complex issue when you first come to it. And then it becomes something that you can somewhat simplify. And that's what I'm going to try to do tonight.

I'm going to be able to go to a couple of the other hearings and try to give more details of the particulars. Basically you're going to hear testimony from people that are interested in having the Endangered Species Act upheld. And the law of the land to be enforced.

You're going to hear from a group of people that may seem like they're in a conflict with that. People that are interested in continuing to receive the benefits that they currently receive because of the four lower Snake River dams.

Those groups you can basically simplify into three groups, shippers, irrigators and ratepayers.

Shippers transport about 3.9 million tons of commodities, mostly grain, mostly wheat going downstream through the reservoirs in the four lower Snake River dams. There is a train track along the side of the river. There's an abandoned train track on the lower half of the river. Many people have pointed out the obviousness of that.

The second group, irrigators. Irrigators pump water from the lowest of the dams, Ice Harbor reservoir. They pump the water up generally about 400 feet, some of them pump as low as 20 feet. But mostly the pumping is in the 500 foot level that they're pumping. So basically they're getting the benefit of that actual, around 70 foot pumping head which is a cost to them as irrigators.

They irrigate about 35,000 acres which is an area about three miles wide by 19 miles long. Poplar trees, crops, various things.

The third group would be the ratepayers. Ratepayers of the BPA currently are paying 435 million dollars of fees of their ratepayer fees, their rates goes towards recovery of salmon.

The four lower Snake River dams provide 250 million dollars of power. There's a clear economic statement can be made there as well. 435 million dollars cost for 250 million dollars of power.

These people have valid concerns. And they maybe don't realize that that's exactly what they're arguing for when they try to say various things should be done. But really they're interested in continuing to receive their benefits.

The beauty of it is we can continue to provide those benefits and at a lower cost than we are currently providing them for. I'll be at the next few meetings to try and detail those things. It's really exciting to be here. Some great decisions you're about to make.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Scott. Okay, folks, let me bring you up to date where we are here. We've got about 30 people left who want to make comment tonight. We're going to take about a ten-minute break and let our panelists stretch their legs for a few minutes and then we'll come back. And when we come back, Chase Davis will be up at the mic. And we'll start right at five after nine. So please be back. We're going to start right at five after nine.

(Break taken.)

THE MODERATOR: Let's take our seats and get our panel back if we could: Chase Davis, are you here? Okay. We're going to get started again. Don't know? Okay. After Chase then we had a Troy Taverly and Neil Beaver. Is Troy here? Neil, are you here?

THE FLOOR: Yeah, I'm here.

THE MODERATOR: Okay. Great. We'll get you two lined up. And then third in line would be John Carpeca. Go ahead and start, please.

THE FLOOR: My name is Troy Taverty and I'm here to speak on behalf of the Idaho Panhandle Chapter of Trout Unlimited, myself, and lastly but probably most importantly my brand new four month old son who cannot yet speak for himself.

It is my hope that we have come to a time that we might make right that which we have done wrong.

I have a dream that some day my son as well as others will travel to Red Fish Lake in central Idaho. And that they will not have to ask how the lake got its name, that they will know as the sockeye run thick through the water.

And that some day my son and I will fish together for steelhead along the banks of Clearwater and that my grandchildren and their grandchildren will do the same.

This dream is not easily realized. With its possibilities coming true come tough decisions. Based on the information that's been gathered in the last several years regarding Snake River salmon, I believe that reaching the four lower Snake River dams is the best option both scientifically and economically. Undoubtedly there will be individuals affected by this, and there will need to be mitigation.

With this all comes the realization that the four lower Snake River dams are not the only problem, just the biggest. We will also have to pay attention to the other aspects that have contributed to the decline of the Snake River salmon.

Myself and the people I speak for are tired of seeing millions of tax dollars being spent in the name of saving salmon only to see the numbers decline. It is Time to put into place what science says is most likely to succeed.

If our goal is to ensure that we have salmon for generations to come, we must make the tough decision to breach the four lower Snake River dams. Choosing any other option is making a choice that is not most likely to succeed. It would only be making another mistake that we will later live to regret when there are no salmon.

As I am sure all of you know, making the best choice does not always equate to making the easiest choice. Let's make a choice we can be proud of and one our children will be proud that we made. Let's take the opportunity to make right something we have done wrong.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Troy. Neil? And then John Carpenco.

THE FLOOR: My name is Neil Beaver. And I am a student at Eastern Washington University. And I just -- I had a whole thing written up, but you guys heard it so many times. I think I'll just say I'm for the breaching. The dams don't make sense. And it's just silly to barge wheat.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you. Thank you, Neil. John Carpenco. Are you here? Great. Thanks, John. And then Bill I think it's B O B N I S.

THE FLOOR: Good evening. Thanks for the opportunity to speak. My name is John Carpenco. I'm a civil engineer licensed here in Washington State and Idaho. I live in Coeur d'Alene.

I want to go on the record as for breaching of the lower Snake River dams. And also some of the other mitigating circumstances that can be packaged in with that as far as we heard some folks speak on the problem with the terns at the mouth of the Columbia and the up higher watershed problems with degradation of spawning habitat.

I think we need to work to bring the whole package together. But the breaching of the dams appears to be an issue that would go a long ways towards providing for saving the salmon.

I believe that with the documented death of about 80 percent of the fish that pass down the Columbia and the lower Snake, that through the slack water and the dams, that the poor success with barging of these fish, and we've been trying. We're really left with no other alternative than to try something slightly more extreme.

The cost of extinction can hardly be calculated. And in my opinion it's really not an option at all. So we need to stand forward and make some hard decisions at this point.

The economics of a viable salmon steelhead fishery are real. They can easily be visualized and experienced in places far away like Alaska and even Canada is now reeling from the effects of their salmon fishery being decimated. And they have some hard decisions to make.

The riverside communities and good people of the states of Oregon, Washington, and Idaho deserve the chance to be connected to and benefit from a living river. It's a river that's alive with native salmon and steelhead.

If the thought of a restored fishery contributing to our economies is not enough to sway you, we should consider the cost of extinction and the reparations that the people of this country would have to pay the native people for their fishing treaties.

I'm not naive enough to think that with all the sincere comments the folks have spoken here tonight that we can just swell up and make a difference in Washington because there's a lot of things that happen in the back rooms, in corporate board rooms that really kind of -- I don't know, there's the back door situation that we're not aware of that really lead to how a lot of the decisions that will be made influence your decision.

But I believe that the subsidized barging of goods up and down the Snake and Salmon amount to corporate welfare. And as we are now well aware, we are in an era where we are trying to eliminate welfare as we know it as our politicians have driven the point home. And I don't believe that there should be any exceptions, whether that's corporate farms or tree plantations or pulp producers or --

THE MODERATOR: I need to ask you to wrap up, please.

THE FLOOR: Okay.

THE MODERATOR: I'm going to stop you. Thanks a lot. Bill Bobniss and then next are two people signed up together Aaron Lolich and Rochelle I think it's Lyman. Go ahead.

THE FLOOR: My name is Bill Bobniss. Originally I wasn't going to testify, but this is just too important of an issue not to.

A lot of the stuff that I had written down has been said already. A couple of things, my father fished. I'm currently not a fisherman, but I would like the opportunity in the future if I decide to fish for salmon that they be there.

I'm a white water boater. I love being out on the free-flowing rivers. I think this would be another great paddling resource. I would love to see all the dams gone. But I'm a realist. That's not going to happen.

I'm willing to compromise. I think the farmers need to be willing to compromise. Everybody does. We're just asking for four dams. There are just so many dams in this country that are still going to remain operational.

A few other notes: The power generation, lost power generation. I keep my house at 60. You don't have to keep it at 60. You guys can turn it down to 65. We can conserve. We did it during the oil embargo.

The timetable. You know, it's too important of an issue to drag our feet like we typically do. You know, there's the old saying studying a problem to death. This could become a reality.

I urge our elected officials to breach the dams and do it in a timely and aggressive fashion. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Bob -- excuse me, Bill. Erin and Rochelle.

THE FLOOR: Thank you. Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Rochelle Lyman, I'm president of the Gonzaga Environmental Organization. And I am for the breaching of the dams.

This entire issue seems so clear-cut to me. If we want to save the salmon in the northwest, the only hope or solution is to breach the four lower Snake dams.

The government has already spent over 3 billion dollars on salmon recovery programs that are obviously not working. The statistics prove that the percentage of salmon return is not great enough to continue this species.

If we continue this supposed salmon recovery program, we could lose the species as early as the year 2008.

These dams don't make sense. We need the salmon for our economy. Our northwest economy depends on a healthy environment which means clean water, healthy rivers and abundant salmon.

If you stop and think about it, think about what we're doing. We're trucking salmon and barging wheat. And I know I'm only 21 years old, but to me that doesn't make sense. Someone has to explain that to me. We're trucking salmon around the dam so we can barge wheat. I just don't get it honestly.

As a northwest native, salmon are a symbol of my home and it makes me unbelievably sad to think we could possibly lose this species. I have a lot of pride being from the northwest. And I am willing to make a commitment to save our salmon. And I just hope and pray that you all have the same amount of pride and that you, too, are willing to make that commitment. Thank you.

THE FLOOR: My name is Erin Lolic and I am here on behalf of Gonzaga Environmental Organization as well, I'm a native Oregonian.

We believe in every deliberation we must consider the impact on our decisions on the next seven generations, if our present practice of mass murder of the salmon continue there will be no seventh generation to consider.

Clearly breaching of the four lower Snake River dams is the only hope to restore our salmon population. Long term environmental benefits far out weigh. The northwest does after all pay far less than the rest of the nation.

As a farmer's daughter I understand the plight of those people whose livelihood depends upon agriculture. But as a future educator, I do not want to explain that chinook, steelhead and sockeye salmon are extinct species to my students.

It will be devastating enough to explain that coho are now extinct. As a fisherperson, an avid fly fisher, I can give you firsthand account of the unbridled joy. I for one do not want to be present when my sister learns that wild salmon are extinct. In the words of an agricultural economist from the University of Idaho, said that if they breach those dams, I will be the first one down the Snake River on a raft. For our ecosystems --

THE MODERATOR: I need to ask you to wrap it up, please.

THE FLOOR: For our Native American people our fishing people our rafting guides. Save our salmon.

THE MODERATOR: Tom Merit is next and Chris Nielson is after Tom and Dawn Morrison is on deck.

THE FLOOR: Hi. My name is Tom Merit. And I'm for breaching of the Snake River dams. I guess I have a lot to say too, but the only thing that really comes to my mind is words from Ed Abby is sentiment without action is to ruin the soul.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Tom. Chris Nielson, go ahead.

THE FLOOR: My name is Chris Nielson. I'm a fisherman mainly on the lower river. I'll be the first to say you've got to break a couple eggs to bake a cake, but these four dams would be too far. We broke far too many eggs.

The main reason I want the dams out, there's not very many places to fish right now except for the general proximity of the dams. I'd like to see the river restored as the way it was when I was a child. It was a great place to go when fishing was really good. So I'd say, let's subsidize railway so that the farmers can get their wheat down river. Let's breach the dams so we can get our fish up the river. That's all I've got to say.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Chris. Don Morrison and after done is Jeffrey Perry. And then on deck is Jeff Holmes.

THE FLOOR: Thank you. My name is Don Morrison and I'm a fisherman and resident of Eastern Washington for the last 46 years. My love of fishing was infused by my brother at an early age.

I remember the one time seeing the wild Snake River on a chuckar hunt when I was 14. It was a birthday present. And now that area where we hunted, saw birds and all kinds of wildlife is now under water. I'd like to see that restored.

In discussing this issue with two friends of mine which are Whitman County farmers, between the two of them they have lived in Whitman County for 131 years. They say the biggest thing wrong with the river is that the damn dams don't allow the fish to get up the damn river.

And that's the bottom line. And they have been there. They're life long farmers in Whitman County. I spent a lot of time down there. I no longer hunt along the areas by the dams because it sickens me to see what has become of the beautiful river and habitat.

It's time for us to learn to live with the river and quit trying to conquer it and control it. There's an old saying if it ain't broke, don't fix it. This river got broke and it was broke by mankind. Mother nature was doing a damn fine job until we started meddling with this river.

It's time for us to get out of the way and correct what is going on and what is wrong with it.

28 years ago this month I enlisted in the United States Army and a recruiter what I wanted to do. He talked me into going into the Corps of Engineers, combat branch. I said what do they do. And he said they build a 20,000 dollar bridge to get across and then they blow the son of a bitch up. I said that sounds great.

Well, gentlemen, 30 years ago we built a bunch of dams that aren't doing their job. It's time to get the shovels out and breach these dams. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you. Jeffrey Perry, Jeff Holmes. And then Eleanor I think it's LaRocca.

THE FLOOR: Hi. My name is Jeffrey Perry. And I'm a resident of the Pacific Northwest and specifically Spokane. It is a moral obligation to ourselves and our environment to restore the natural flow of the lower Snake River to ensure the survival of the mighty salmon.

Through our lack of foresight and understanding we have done a great injustice to the rivers and the species of plants and animals that depend on the rivers for their continued survival.

By removing the four dams on the lower Snake River we can help alleviate this injustice.

Many studies done by educated men and women have indicated that partial removal of the dam, of these dams is the most viable option. From my point of view it is the only option.

Must we once again break promises to ourselves by not upholding our commitment to the environmental laws we have put in place for the protection of all species?

By retaining these dams we will have knowingly broken our laws. Must we once again break promises to our fellow man by not upholding treaties created in 1855 and 1856 to the Native American tribes of the Columbia Basin.

By retaining these dams, we'll have knowingly broken our word. Must we once again fail to have courage to not only admit a mistake but also to have the strength to rectify the strength.

By retaining these dams we have also lost our honor. We have before us a grand opportunity, an opportunity to prove to ourselves, the salmon and the world our commitment and to respect the perfect balance of nature.

It is said that the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few. I'm here to point out that as a species we are of the few. It is our moral obligation to tread lightly upon this world.

It is our moral obligation to respect nature and all that is contained in nature. It is our moral obligation to restore as much of the natural flow of the Snake River as possible so as to ensure the natural proliferation of the salmon and all the species of plants and animals that directly or indirectly depend on the salmon for their continued exist inside.

Time is of the essence. We must act now to ensure the survival of the salmon. Thank you for your time.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Jeffrey. Jeff Holmes and then Eleanor. And then Mike Shaunessey.

THE FLOOR: Hi. My name is Jeff Holmes. I'd like to disagree with something a fellow said a little while ago, Derrick Knowles. He said that letting our salmon go extinct isn't American.

I'd like to disagree and say that it's entirely American. Economic gain seems to be our greatest ideal here in America these days. We seem to cherish an excessive gain, comfort and -- it is very American to allow our salmon runs to go extinct. It's the wave of the future. Soon we'll have corporate programs that will replace our salmon runs.

We don't need to worry, sticking federal reservoirs like that and we end up with everything bound for Asia. Consumerism is our highest ideal.

If salmon go extinct then they should have adapted to our changing marketplace. Let's continue to cherish our American ideal of material gain and disregard our native salmon runs. Let's watch our heritage and most importantly our eco system be beaten to death by salmon friendly turbines. The natural world has been updated by progress. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you. Okay. Eleanor, are you here? LaRocca I think it is? No? Okay. Mike Shaunessey, are you here? Thank you, Mike. And then John Major. Go ahead.

THE FLOOR: My name is Mike Shaunessey. I'm a CPA and a principal in a CPA firm here in Spokane. I spent the first 18 years of my profession, working profession in the Puget Sound area. And I'm a conservative, a hard core conservative and I approach this issue from strictly a financial, economic position. Unlike a lot of people here.

My father worked at Kaiser Aluminum for 42 years. I spent my college summers in the pot rooms there. So I understand a little bit about the economics of the region.

My great uncle was a design engineer on Bonneville and one of them worked for the Corps of Engineers. So we have this in our background.

And every one of them would say take the dams out. It's caused me personally these four dams in the range of starting in 1978, 35,000 dollars a year, to 52,000 dollars a year in 1982 and the loss of that service revenue for tax returns and financial accounting, support from and services to the commercial sports fishing industry of the State of Washington.

So I have suffered an economic hardship, if you will. I had an education that I could make some changes. A lot of my friends did not. And their families suffered greatly.

As far as the issues of irrigation, flood control, power, navigation and transportation, there is really only one issue. And that's transportation. We had a gentleman here talk about 11,000 acres that were under production that they were shipping. That's 11,000 acres that produces 35 bushels per acre. And he's saving six cents per bushel in his shipping cost.

My friend in Ritzville, he doesn't ship by barge, but it would be approximately 2,000 dollars a year. Other farmers it's 5,000 a year. How do you match that with 10 times what I lost or what I lose. And I'm insignificant. I'm just a trickle down person.

As far as jobs lost in this state, we lost 30,000 commercial jobs for fishing. Oregon lost 22,000. California lost 10. Washington lost 10,000 guides. A thousand guide jobs have been lost in the 1990's alone.

I'm not going to finish. Power, those four dams produce four to five percent of the power. They represent 10 percent of the total dams. It doesn't make sense. 700 jobs in shipping, transportation. The gross revenue of 62 million dollars. Okay? That's it.

What the B.C. Government did a study in 1990 that said their sports fishing industry was a 1.6 billion dollar industry of which 65 percent or about 1 billion dollars came from Washington residents. That was a loss of sales tax revenue of 83 billion dollars to the State of Washington at the very same time we were trying to find 100 million dollars to pay teachers.

I can go on and on about statistics. But General, the patch on your coat says that I ought to be able to depend on you and everybody in this room ought to be able to depend on you. It's your duty, your obligation in service of your country to fix this problem that your agency created. And I hold you accountable.

I met with and worked with the rest of the people up there and their agencies over the last 20 years and got nowhere. But I expect more out of you because of that patch on your shoulder.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Mike. Okay. John Major and Jeff I think it's H E D J O. I'm not sure. And then Joe Siemens. Is John not here.

THE FLOOR: Is this going to work. It's going to be set up real well for a short person to come up next. My name is John Major. I teach at Eastern Washington University. I reside in Cheney. And I'm urging you to take a long run perspective on this decision and save the salmon species at any cost. It's clear from the information presented tonight that that is going to have to be through breaching the Snake River dams. The salmon have been here a lot longer than the dams, than the farmers, than the barges. And we as a human species do not have the right, in fact, it would be immoral for us to eliminate those salmon just for our short sighted, short run, selfish self interest. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, John. I'm not sure how to pronounce it, H E D. I think it's J O or J E. No? Okay. And then Terry Morgan and then Robert Apple.

THE FLOOR: Good evening. My name is Joanne Seenus. And I am a resident of Spokane currently. I'm also a manager, tenant farmer, if you wish, of 400 acres of farm land between Moscow and Pullman. I am here as a fourth generation farmer. And as a farmer with dirt under my fingernails, too. And I am interested in preserving the wild salmon.

After three years of additional studies that indicate breaching of the dams is critical to the survival of the wild salmon, and after reading about the farmers that are opposed to this initiative, I feel it is imperative that you also hear from the owners of the farm land in the Palouse country that lease their farm land.

If you were to check the records, you might discover that over 60 percent of the land currently under cultivation in this region is being leased or rented out.

How do these absentee farmers feel about the reduction of their farm income? I for one support the breaching of the dams to save the salmon even if it means less money. How do the other tenant farmers feel?

Responsibility is the key to preventing the loss of more salmon. It's time the government and the Army Corps of Engineers assume responsibility for the reduction in the salmon smelt that reach the ocean.

Fish hatcheries have produced fish that don't survive. Hatcheries are not the answer. Barging has decreased the survival rate of the salmon by producing more fish that have no fight, have no method, no fight for food once released into the river.

Barging is not the answer. Turbines kill fish. Dams and salmon don't mix. It's time we curb the daytime watering of the desert land to turn it into crop land.

The government subsidizes the crop lands. Why can't instead we subsidize a railroad system? Why can't we transport our grain downstream by way of railroads. Railroads may be the key to transporting the grain. Railroads may be a key to boosting the economy in our rural areas as well.

I would much rather that my grandson see a wild salmon than a barge load of hatchery fish. It's a little like the difference between seeing a hen house of chickens waiting for the slaughter or an osprey nest high up in the trees. Please save the salmon.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Joanne. Terry Morgan. And then Robert Apple and Dale Johnson.

THE FLOOR: Could I clarify one thing? Who was the last speaker supposed to be?

THE MODERATOR: Joanne Simmons.

THE FLOOR: Thank you.

THE FLOOR: My name is Terry Morgan. And I'm a farmer. And I oppose the breaching of the dams. I prefer alternative 2 or 3. And I oppose the draw down of the John Day dam. I think that that would be very detrimental to the only healthy salmon run we have left.

I'm in a unique position here because I'm not one of the people from Spokane. I lived on the Snake River. We were moved off by the Little Goose dam. When the pool came up, they bought out our property at Central Ferry. Where all the elevators and the park now sit, we used to farm.

I fished on the river when it was a free running stream. These people that talk about white water, there isn't any white water on the lower Snake River worth flowing. I've seen it all years ago. But I enjoyed fishing for steelhead.

And I do not and I don't think many farmers wish to have the steelhead or the salmon go extinct. But the research has shown that you're providing millions of fish a way back to the ocean. But yet they're not returning to Bonneville. If they don't return to Bonneville dam, we won't have a fishery. It doesn't matter how many dams we take out until we get fish coming back to the Columbia, we're not going to solve the problem. We may help it a little bit, but we're not going to solve it.

The gentleman from the marine fisheries I think can attest to the fact that there's a lot more involved than just taking out four dams. If that was all it was, every farmer in the area except a few, a few will never agree to anything, but all of them would agree to take out the dams on the lower Snake. But that is not the answer, not yet.

I would think that the alternative of providing more fish of the selected species as a couple of the plans have set up and barging more, everyone says barging is not working. There's 98 percent survival. We need to know why they're not coming back.

If the barged fish are dying after they leave the barge, we need to know that. If the flushed out fish are not returning, we need to know that. So there's some study that needs to be done, but we need to move faster. The study will be slow because of the turn around of four years before they return. But we can put more fish out there. And we need to do that. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you Terry. Robert Apple. And then Bill Johns and I think it's Jim Berry.

THE FLOOR: I've reviewed a lot of the evidence.

THE MODERATOR: Please state your name, please.

THE FLOOR: Bob Apple. I've reviewed a lot of the evidence presented in the other room. And coming across the same from the history of my knowledge and from the past, I've come to these conclusions.

Your alternatives are not reasonable to the facts of the situation. And we still have too many unknowns beyond your conclusions.

The Columbia River basin in my opinion no longer is feasible as a salmon habitat area and should be removed from the salmon protection area.

Gene specific species degradation is too severe to preserve the area salmon species. The Columbia basin is a fully developed agricultural area and is no longer compatible to salmon survival.

Irrigation existing needs resulting in agricultural fertilizer runoff, silt runoff, herbicide runoff and pesticide runoff have no studies to prove whether they are helpful or probably what some studies would indicate that they are harmful to salmon.

The electrical generated loss from the dam's removal resulting in the social losses of transportation, loss of electricity, which would result in finding alternate electrical sources and would have concern for the environmental costs for those environmental sources and for the electrical and transportation that would be needed to replace -- to be replaced.

I also have concerns for radiation leaching from the Hanford nuclear reservation. The effects on the salmon's survival, the amount of radiation leaching projections, cost of cleanup of radiation leaching. And there are no answers to these at this point.

I suppose it's not possible to really determine other than the fact we know that radiation is harmful to all species. I believe that the two of the species that are in question for potential extinction, we should be looking at an alternative location where these fish can live. A habitat where they can be removed and transplanted to for their survival. And then we should continue studies to determine if some day in the future it is possible to bring them back.

But from all the evidence presented, we just don't have the information to be able to do that. And barging is simply not acceptable.

We're going to have to barge regardless of whether the Snake River dams are there or not. To really protect the species. And I don't believe that hatcheries are the solution because they'll deplete the gene species. So we've been left with a real problem here.

We can take what's left and save it. Or we can try to save everything and lose it all. At this point I think we have to do the most constructive thing and that's to save what we can and continue our society as best we can. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Bob. Bill Johns. And then I think it's Jim Berry and then Lewis Menler.

THE FLOOR: My name is Bill Johns. And I live near Cheney, and I'm a civil engineer. And it bothers me when you say that PATH is science because PATH is not science. Never has been. Never will be.

It's a bunch of scientists with their opinions. So you're basing removing billions of dollars of infrastructure on people's opinions.

Another thing I'd like to comment on is when you have 3,300 megawatts of power you're going to take off line, peaking power, you can't just replace that with anything like wind or whatever these people have in mind.

Because every time you get one of these new type of generation facilities on line, they don't like those either. So what you've got is you've got potentials for nuclear, oil, coal or gas. And gas is the only one I know of that's for peaking. And that's the kind of things you'd have to use to replace this 3, about the 3 gigawatts of power out of the Snake River dams. I'm not for breaching the dams. I'm for alternative number one.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Bill. Is it Jim Berry? No? How about Lewis Menler, is he still here?

THE FLOOR: Yes.

THE MODERATOR: And then after Lewis is Ely Uhdahl.

THE FLOOR: My name is Lewis Mueller. The green light goes on. I feel for the trees that are generating all the paper that all the studies that this thing has taken over the years.

I've only been able to read just a small portion of it. Thank God for the internet, no trees involved there I don't think anyway.

Anyway, in 1950 the United States had roughly 150 million people. Currently we're about 270 plus. And in that same time period the Columbia Basin greater area has more than doubled in the human population. And that doesn't show any signs of slowing down.

So the problem humans interacting with all the other species in the area, it's going to be a tough one for the other species to be able to hang on across the board. It's going to be tougher and tougher.

And I don't think that we should give a sign that they're going to lose a battle coming down the road. So I'm in favor of doing at this point the safest method to try to preserve this species that we're tackling at this point in time. Thanks.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you. Ely Uhdahl. And then after Ely. Vern Clemenson and then Leroy Aliceson.

THE FLOOR: My name is Ely Uhdahl. I'm a student at Gonzaga University and I'm --

THE MODERATOR: Can you stand closer to the mic, please.

THE FLOOR: I've lived in the northwest all my life. Many good reasons have been given tonight why saving the salmon is important.

I want to talk of the reasons saving the salmon is important from the perspective of seeing the earth and life on it as something precious and as far as we are concerned unique in the universe.

In 1800 millions of salmon swam up the Columbia each year. The salmon of the northwest were and could be again one of the great natural wonders of the world like the wildebeast on the Serengetti or the giant red woods.

More than that salmon are a major part of the eco systems of the oceans and rivers that they inhabit and also the forest to which they bring nutrients such as phosphorus.

Biology shows as the environmental impact statement reports while other options might avert distinction of the salmon, only a free-flowing river gives a good chance salmon will recover to the levels to play their important ecosystems roles.

I think that bypassing the lower Snake dams is a good step towards restoring the health of the one system of life on earth that supports us all.

Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you. Vern Clemenson. Are you still with us? Vern? Okay. Leroy. I think it's Aliceson. And then after Leroy Jennifer Elkstrom.

THE FLOOR: All right. Thank you, panel, for sticking it out this late. My name is Leroy Aliceson. I'm a county commissioner in Grant County, Washington. And I'm here to speak in favor of the dams and the salmon.

Because I'm an elected official by the 70,000 or so people in my county, I'm a human advocate.

After spending three years on the Eastside Ecosystems Coalition of Counties Organization, counties represented in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana, giving input on the ice bump, interior Columbia Basin ecosystems management plan, we asked and we waited. There were 12 counties commissioners -- 13 representing all four states. We asked and waited for true science, not just hypothesis.

Words that kept coming back to us, could do this, may do that, some information, some biologists contend, little finite science and supporting data.

My concern is that this language is now reiterated as given fact, referenced in multiple documents, swallowed hook, line, and sinker. This document, the summary sheet has quotes in it. "May suffer post release mortality. Delayed extra mortality is a key uncertainty. Populations may increase. Dam breaching could achieve."

Thank you for the words in this document now that say "both PATH and CRI rely on many assumptions. Since there is insufficient data to make predictions. Pit tag data indicate that spring summer chinook do not suffer substantial delayed mortality from transportation."

Even with its assumptions, CRI analysis indicates that it is unlikely any of the alternatives alone including dam breaching could recover spring summer chinook unless it resulted in very high survival increases in the areas below Bonneville dam, below Bonneville dam.

Ladies and gentlemen, save the salmon, save the dams, save the taxpayers dollars. Before breach and further draw downs, test a simple hypothesis as indicated in your documents by releasing increased smolt below the Bonneville dam and see how many return back to Bonneville. We have the science. We have the resources. Test the hypothesis instead of continuing this federal fish fiasco. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you. Jennifer Elkstrom and then Joanne Semis and then Lola Frederick.

THE FLOOR: Good evening. And thank you very much for the opportunity to testify. My name is Jennifer Elkstrom. I live south of Spokane in the heart of wheat growing country.

My grandfather who I love and admire very much worked for the Army Corps of Engineers for many years and helped to design the Lower Monumental dam. Like I said, I respect him and what he did.

But, however, in light of our recent knowledge and increased awareness, I would like to voice my opinion for the bypass of the four lower Snake River dams. These dams are not necessary. They don't make sense. They don't make sense for many reasons.

They don't make sense because of the detrimental effects they have on biological diversity. These dams don't make sense because they reduce the natural recreational potential in this beautiful area of the world.

In addition, those dams don't make sense because of the unnecessary and undue financial burden that they place on taxpayers. It's corporate welfare at its finest. It's for the benefit of relatively few people in one particular industry.

So I'd like to just thank you again for the opportunity to testify and thank you all for making the right decision to bypass the four lower Snake River dams.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Jennifer. Joanne? Still with us?

THE FLOOR: Let me explain. Is this mic on? My name is Joe Siemens. I think she took my place earlier.

THE MODERATOR: This is spelled J O A N N E.

THE FLOOR: Didn't you call Joe Siemens earlier?

THE MODERATOR: Yes, I did.

THE FLOOR: Yes. And she took my place.

THE MODERATOR: Got it. No wonder you asked for clarification.

THE FLOOR: I am not related to her. My name is Joe Siemens. I live here in Spokane. I am a retired Navy bio scientist. I am speaking for myself.

And I live here because of the environment. I favor breaching the dams. In the past I have farmed in Kansas where we had to transport wheat over 1,000 miles by rail to the Mississippi River.

Let me assure you that Kansas and Nebraska produce a lot more wheat than Eastern Washington and Idaho. Transporting by rail is not economically unfeasible. Let me repeat that. Not economically unfeasible.

Farmers in Idaho and Eastern Washington have had an advantage using the barges. But I assure you they will not go broke using rail.

As a biologist it will take more than just removing the dams to restore the salmon. The dams must be breached and bringing out the silt build up behind the dams, and that will take years to clean that out.

We must also quit polluting the river. And before the salmon can return, we must also clean up the effluent that is put into the river. It must be cooled down so that the river cools down. Lastly, we should not just try to avoid extinction. But we should restore the salmon. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Joe. Sorry for the confusion. Okay. Lola Frederick, are you still here? Great. And after Lola is Carol Ellis and then Jeff Lammer.

THE FLOOR: My name is Lola Frederick. And this is my comment on the Corps's environmental impact statement.

Over the last 30 years there has been a precipitous fall in the Snake River salmon and steelhead stocks. That decline has been disproportionate to declines of other salmon and stocks in the Columbia River basin.

This disproportionate decline cannot be explained by factors such as ocean conditions, habitat destruction or predation. Only when problems created by the lower Snake River dams are factored in does the picture become clearer.

The dams and reservoirs created a crisis with smolt migration and smolt to adult returns. And the counter fixes have created more problems.

Snake River salmon and steelhead stocks continue to decline and the best available science tells us that these stocks have a high probability of extinction within this century.

The PATH and CRI analyses have concluded that further improvements in spill and bypass systems or in smolt transportation will not recover Snake River salmon populations. Only by breaching the four lower Snake River dams can we expect to recover threatened and endangered salmon.

Alternatives are available for the irrigation, transportation, and power generation provided by these dams. That is not to say that the transition will be easy. But I do believe the Army Corps of Engineers has a direct obligation to all Americans to prevent this imminent extinction.

This is not a local issue. I therefore urge the Corps to select alternative four of the draft environmental impact statement. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Lola. Carol Ellis. Jeff Lammer and after Jeff Greg Rupert.

THE FLOOR: My name is Carol Ellis. I'm a teacher, a native Washingtonian. And I can remember visiting Little Goose and Lower Granite when the railroads were being relocated. So it is possible to relocate railroads.

I want to thank the Corps for so clearly summarizing the benefits as well as the costs of each of the four broad proposals. To wit: Only the option -- the only option with a moderate chance of improving survival rates for salmon is the fourth, breaching. All others offer "slight chance". And your charts boldly show this reality.

Without breaching we breach not only the trust placed in us but our obligations to Native Americans, to our children, and to mother nature.

Is this the country ruled by law, are treaties or Endangered Species Act or the reign of the dollar short term. For only a short term will the impact of the dams be irreversible.

As soon as possible I ask that the course of the salmon not follow the path of the Truffilla trees in Dr. Seuss's classic book the Lorax. The Lorax is a creator who speaks for the trees. And he is told, shut up, if you please. And the Lorax says, unless someone like you hears a whole awful lot, nothing's going to get better, it's not.

In the long run our vision of justice requires we make reparations. We made reparations to the Japanese. We med reparations to the tribes. Even possibly to Hanford workers and to our Gulf War veterans.

This is a call for justice. To make reparations to the natives and to the salmon. We can pay now or later. We're at a juncture where the voice of the people is becoming consolidated.

I ask the Corps to listen to the people. And I encourage the people here tonight to prepare a path in the wilderness for this Corps and begin working on Congress.

I'd like to remind you of Abraham Lincoln's words, my great grandmother shook hands with him. You can fool some of the people all of the time, all of the people some of the time, but you can't fool all of the people all of the time. Please listen to the people tonight.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Carol. Jeff Lambert. And then Greg Rupert.

THE FLOOR: Hi. My name is Jeff Lambert. I'm a local businessman here in Spokane. And I appreciate you staying and listening with such obvious interest to all the comments tonight.

I'm the conservation chairman for the Spokane Mountaineers. We have 900 members in Spokane and Idaho.

We are in support of dam breaching. We believe that based on your documents which we reviewed, and by the way we've shoved some paper back towards you to match that three feet you sent us. But we believe that the science as indicated in your documents show that dam breaching is the way to restore salmon runs.

Furthermore, and you have to dig through the numbers a little bit. But we believe that there is a real benefit to the regional economy. We have -- obviously we have treaty obligations. We have regulatory requirements which are important. But more than that many of us who are here are here because of the quality of life, recreation opportunities.

And that's going to bring talented workers, progressive companies that are going to make this economy go. Unfortunately extracted industries and smoke stack industries aren't going to be the basis of this future economy.

It's hard, I know, transitioning an economy. But that's the plain fact of the matter. There's going to be a real benefit to overall ecosystems health. And believe it or not I think there's a good chance that commercial fisheries can be improved. And that could have an economic benefit as well.

With respect to impacts to irrigators and farmers, we want to mitigate those impacts. And we think that it's a large cost, but well worth it. So in conclusion Spokane Mountaineers strongly endorse -- we took it to the conservation committee and to the board of directors, 21 members voted unanimously for dam breaching.

My final comment is I'm an engineer. While I was in engineering school, I had an opportunity to work with the Corps of Engineers in Texas. Very difficult time in the '70s because of the National Environmental Policy Act. The darn Corps didn't know how to write an environmental impact statement. No one did.

So that transition time was a period where as a young engineer I saw the Corps react. And they soon became the leading experts on how to evaluate environmental impacts. No doubt about it. And I think this is an opportunity for a lead role as well because, hey, we're not used to building public works structures and then taking them out when they seemingly are still fully functional.

I had a hard time with that emotionally. I'm sure the agencies that constructed those had a hard time taking out those facilities. But it's the right thing to do. And it's going to be part of your legacy. Thanks very much.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Jeff. Greg Rupert? Still with us? Greg? Chris Meyer. Still here? Thanks, Chris. And then after Chris Laura Ackerman. And then Tom Cohahn.

THE FLOOR: Thanks you all for staying so late. My name is Chris Meyer. I'd like to testify on behalf of the Idaho Conservation League. I'm a member of their board of directors.

Almost a billion of our tax dollars will be spent this year on mitigation with no noticeable improvement in the population of returning salmon. It has become painfully obvious that the status quo isn't working. Change must be made and made now to save the salmon in Clearwater, Snake and Salmon Rivers.

Extinction is not an option. We must breach the dams. The time has come to change our paradigm of progress. When the four lower Snake River dams were built they were seen as progress. What a novel concept. Grain shipped from Lewiston to the world will be the saving grace from agricultural communities in the Palouse and beyond.

In reality the grain shipping activity is a highly subsidized effort that could easily be replaced by rail and trucking.

The financial consequences of breaching the dams on power rates is minimal. The impact on Idaho ratepayers will be only pennies a month even with this minor loss of generation capacity. The Pacific Northwest can still enjoy some of the lowest power rates in the nation.

Agricultural irrigation from the pools behind the four dams could continue with just a fraction of the money spent in vain each year on present fish mitigation strategies. Intake pipes can easily be extended to reach lower water levels. Even a buyout at the agricultural end supported by continued crop subsidies will be more cost effective than continuing the current mitigation strategies.

The restitution costs to the Native American indian tribes cannot be overlooked. The United States gave the Native Americans the right to fish for salmon and steelhead in all their usual and customary places in exchange for 40 million acres of land.

If we allow the salmon and steelhead runs to go extinct we'll be liable not only for the lost fisheries but for the land as well. These are estimated at over 10 billion dollars.

The Caspian terns and foreign fishermen have been made out to be larger than life enemies of the fish. The reality is over the last 25 years the fish populations have decline, while those populations that have to negotiate the four lower Snake River dams have declined over 90 percent.

These four lower Snake River dams. The research has shown that breaching the lower Snake River dams is the only way to restore Idaho fish runs. Idaho gains the most if the dams are removed and lose the most if they stay.

The fishing industry in Idaho is worth 90 million a year. Restored fish runs would almost double that to 170 million. This money goes into rural areas in the central part of our state that need it most. Over 2,800 jobs would be created by restoring a full salmon season. The dams also should be removed so that Idaho's economy, increased water flows, attempting to flush the sediment of 650,000 acre feet of water every year. Economic losses for these increased flows are estimated over 430 million dollars annually. Best solution for Idaho is to breach the dams. It's the only solution for Idaho salmon. Creates new jobs and preserves our quality of life. Thanks.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Chris. Laura Ackerman. Thanks. Laura. And after Laura, Tom. I think it's Culla.

THE FLOOR: Hi. My name is Laura Ackerman. And I'm a citizen who cares about salmon. And I support the removal of the earthen portion of the lower Snake River dams. I was going to talk in detail tonight about the economics of removing of part of these dams. I think it's been well covered. And I think you're all well aware of the economics and it's late.

Suffice to say we can no longer justify spending billions of dollars, most of those dollars picked up by taxpayers on current efforts that have failed. A better opportunity than keeping our dams is for all of us to work together to financially help those farmers affected by removal.

It's a wiser, more sensible use of taxpayer money than continuing on the current course. And I think it's an option a lot of people would support.

Another option, a better option is to put pressure on our political leaders to open up foreign markets for our wheat farmers.

Now, I've testified several times on salmon issues here in Spokane, in front of the Northwest Power Planning Council, etc. And time and time again I find myself mentioning things like the Endangered Species Act, the Northwest Power Planning Act, the Magnuson Stevens Fisheries Conservation Act, the 1855 treaties, the Canadian American treaty, the Northern Northwest Preference Law, etc. I know you are all familiar with those. And it boils down to pretty much three words if we don't abide by them. And that's lawsuit heaven.

And as a taxpayer, I don't want to be a part of lawsuit heaven any more than I think any of you do. You are all taxpayers as well.

Finally on a more personal note, I've spent time in Alaska in the early 1980s and had the opportunity to see salmon. The runs there are tremendous. You could literally probably walk across their backs to get to the other side of the stream. I am a native Washingtonian. I have never seen that here.

My nine-day old daughter is here in the back of the room and I apologize for her disruptions, but that's something that my husband and I want for our daughter is to see those runs. And that may sound like a romantic vision, but it's not. It's a biological reality. At one time it was. It can still be a biological reality.

So we have an obligation to -- it's common sense to make salmon recover, not just the prevention of extinction but full recovery a biological reality again. And thank you very much for this opportunity to testify.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Laura. Is Tim still here? Great. Tim and then Lucy Renner and Chad Fairchild.

THE FLOOR: Thank you all for staying. My name is Tim Colove. And I'm a resident of Spokane. I live in the Down River neighborhood. My family has lived here longer than there's been a town but of course not longer than there's been salmon.

My family are mostly farmers, so I know there's a special connection to the land that farmers have. But I also know there's a special connection that salmon have.

Breaching the dams make the most sense. We all agree that we want to save salmon. I'll bring a couple points here. Restoring the Snake River. 123 million dollars in recreation dollars in every year to our communities. 91 million more than if the dams stayed. We need salmon for a healthy economy. Thank you very much.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Tim. Lucy? Thank you. And then finally Chad Fairchild.

THE FLOOR: Good evening. My name is Lucy Renner. And thank you for you allowing you to comment.

THE MODERATOR: Step just a little closer. Thank you.

THE FLOOR: I don't think that I can add very much to the testimony that's already been given. There's so many people that are so knowledgeable about the rivers and the dams and the salmon. I guess I'm here because I care about our environment and what we've been doing to it. And I want to see that change. I want to make it better.

I have an 11-year old granddaughter that wants to be a marine biologist. And I want her to have a healthy system to be working in. And I really -- some of the testimony here has just been so wonderful.

The one from Jim Hollingsworth about the indian. I thought that was just wonderful. I think we all need to hear things like that and remind us of what's really important in the environment.

I was watching 60 Minutes last Sunday, and they had a piece on this little country that was named Bouton. And they had the tallest mountains in the world. They have the tallest mountains there in the world. And they don't allow anyone to climb them. Because of these people that live around the mountains and they raise Yaks. And there's some kind of a spiritual meaning to the mountains for these people. So they respect that. And I think that we have to start respecting other things besides ourselves. We have to respect that environment. And I'm for breaching those dams. Thank you very much.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Lucy. Chad.

THE FLOOR: Hi. How are you guys doing today. My name is Chad Fairchild. And I've been kind of waiting for a long time to be able to at least say something to say that I was able to say something.

But where does it all start, you know. Why did you choose these four dams when there's hundreds of dams that block the river when salmon used to come clear up here to Spokane. You know. Is that the next step after we fix those four dams' problem then we're going to come up with more problems and we're just going to keep running into all kinds of stuff eventually, you know.

I guess one thing about the farming industry, you know, about a month ago on the news, one of the farmers from down there said, I don't see why we're trying to save a species that's almost extinct anyways. And that's kind of like, well, there's a billion -- there's a million farmers out there, what's a few less farmers.

I'm from a farming community in Nebraska, the same. We're worried about feeding the world as far as the grain, but yet we've got dead rivers where the fish aren't in them anymore.

As far as power is concerned, we are able to have home units of fuel cells to replace any kind of electricity and stuff that's to be made from nuclear power or hydro electric power or anything.

As far as the electrical standpoint is, there's all kinds of alternatives for that. As far as barging is concerned, there's ways around that. I hope that we're able to see a change and see fish restored and our whole wildlife habitat restored back to the way it kind of was, used to be. Thanks.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Chad. Well, that's everybody that we had signed up to speak tonight. I want to thank you all very much for respecting the ground rules. I really appreciate it very much.

It was my pleasure to moderate for you tonight. And I just want to ask our panel if they want to close. General? Do you want to make any comments.

GENERAL STROCK: Well, it has been a very long evening for many of you. And most of us have been through both sessions here.

I want to thank you again for your presence here. I started out by asking you to consider some things. I think that this has been very productive.

One of the most important things is the aspect of listening. This is a public hearing. And we all know there's a difference between simply hearing and really listening.

I assure you that we have listened to what has been said tonight. And that your input will make a difference in the ultimate outcome of this very, very difficult decision.

Thank you for your engagement. I encourage you to stay engaged, continue to ask the tough questions because it is only through our ability to answer these questions that this decision will have the necessary rigor, the scientific rigor, and the legal rigor to stand the scrutiny that it will inevitably face. So thank you very much for participating tonight.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you all.

(Applause.)

(Proceedings concluded at 10:15 p.m.)