Governor's Salmon Workgroup
Public Comment Form

Comments to the Governor's Salmon Workgroup will be accepted in-person or by email submitted to species@osc.idaho.gov

Date: December 26, 2019

Name: Suzelle Burch

Phone: 208-709-1989

Email: suzelle.burch@fallriverelectric.com

Comments:

I work for Fall River Rural Electric Cooperative and the non-for profit electric cooperative serves member/owners in Southeast Idaho, Montana and Wyoming (17,761 meters). Seventy five years ago the nation made the decision to start harnessing the natural occurring, renewable and abundant power of water flowing down hill. That decision was one of the greatest decisions in our nations history and has provided Idaho and the greater Northwest, the energy needed to be a powerhouse of economic production. Idaho benefits from these dams and Fall River's members in SE Idaho directly benefit. The four Lower Snake River Hydros, Palisades, and the other Columbia River hydroelectric plants generate year round, renewable energy. This investment in an hydro infrastructure, has ensured that Idaho and the NW as the region has significantly lower carbon emissions when compared to the rest of the United States. While the rest of the US is moving towards a reduced carbon power grid, Fall River and our members in Idaho enjoy a 97% carbon free power mix with a combined energy portfolio consisting of 87% hydro, 9% nuclear, 1% wind and solar generation, the envy of the rest of the nation. The four lower Snake River hydros are an essential part of that generation and are among the lowest costs resources BPA has access to.

Prior to the dams being installed in the 30's and 40's, salmon populations and returns in the Columbia River drainage were at all time lows. Again, this was prior to the installation of dams and the reason for the decline in returns was attributed to over harvesting at that time. While the dams have an impact on salmon, public power and BPA recognize that impact and have invested $17 billion to mitigate those impacts. Fall River's member contribute $1 million per year for fish and wildlife expense through the Bonneville Power Administration. These investments combined with more favorable ocean conditions have made a difference with overall salmon returns trending upward. We are finding that ocean conditions are the real divers of salmon population health. Studies on salmon returns to pristine river systems in Canada and Alaska, rivers without dams and little to no human impact are seeing very similar salmon returns. The Atlantic salmon populations are nearly identical to the the Columbia River returns. This all points to the fact that removing dams wont solve the problems for salmon, and that Pacific and Atlantic Ocean conditions have a far greater impact on populations than dams. In fact, the removal of dams, which in turn would have to be replaced with carbon supported generation to ensure base load energy is available 24/7, could likely add to the problems salmon are already experiencing.

The $17 billion paid for by rate payers is invested in habitat restoration, fish hatcheries, hydro facilities improvements for improved fish passage and many other activities aimed at improving fish populations. This has created positive long term results for salmon populations and the long term trend has improved for most salmon stock, not declined as portrayed in the media. The four Lower Snake River hydros are lost cost, renewable generation, a great resource. Removing those dams would accelerate carbon emissions and as we have seen in the news taking out a few dams only emboldens the idea of taking all the dams out. Fish are not the only consideration. The list of interests include: a desire to move to a carbon neutral generation mix; flood control; barging and transportation of goods; irrigation; recreation; and economies built to enhance salmon returns including fish hatcheries and other environmental enhancements which are in large part all paid for by the revenues generated by producing energy at the dams some propose to remove.

I believe there are ways to continue to make measured improvements in fish passage and returns by setting goals and then working to manage the already substantial amounts of money dedicated to the preserving and improving a sustainable salmon population. Real solutions must include significant sacrifices from all areas which include addressing harvest, predators, water pollution, and even excessive spill if that spill is not beneficial to returning salmon or total dissolved gas' impact on the health of salmon.

It would be a real shame to abandon the very renewable resources which have been so instrumental in backing up the integration of variable generation like wind and solar in Idaho and the NW. We have a real gem that provides affordable, renewable generation and the dams on the Columbia River drainage and especially the four Lower Snake River Dams are resources worth keeping.

December 26, 2019

Clint Washburn
208-652-7032
Clint.washburn@fallriverelectric.com

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From: Diana Merriman
To: Species Conservation
Subject: Idaho Governors Salmon Group
Date: Thursday, December 26, 2019 10:52:52 AM

Comments:

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Diana Merriman

Fall River Rural Electric Cooperative
1150 N 3400 E
Ashton, ID 83420

800-632-5726

Governor's Salmon Workgroup Public Comment Form

Comments to the Governor's Salmon Workgroup will be accepted in-person or by email submitted to species@osc.idaho.gov Date:

Name: Georg Behrens

Phone: 801 691 6200

Email: Georg.behrens@fallriverelectric.com

In my personal opinion, the current debate on dam removal and the relation of the dams with respect to returning fish to their hatching habitat is not a fact based discussion anymore. It seems that emotional opinions are driving parties to conclusions that are not necessarily beneficial in the global sense.

While I can understand that not a full 100% of fish migrating back to their breeding grounds will be able to pass all the dams and survive this journey, the amount of fish not surviving is a relatively small number. According to the national park rangers at the Bonneville Dam, the survival rate to migrate upstream is more than 97%.

A decline of fish population on the down stream side is the far greater reason for not having the same number of fish as compared to recent years. It seems to be a logical idea that mankind should tackle the problem with far more impact first and not try solve a minor issue instead of the real reason.

Ocean habitat changes and harvest and the resulting predator movement have a far greater impact on fish survival than the dams. We need to focus our efforts on this topic. Global temperature rise and pollution are the main reason for changing ocean habitat.

Dam removal is the most contra-productive approach to even discuss. Hydro-energy is one of the most environmentally friendly sources available to us humans and as such contributes to the regeneration of wildlife. This low pollution generation is the reason why it is not worse today than it could be, had we just relied upon fossil fuel combustion for the past decades.

The balance needs to be considered in the discussion not only the few negative elements of any generation method. I have studied renewable energies and as such also compared hydro energy to all other sources. Hydro has the least economical impact of them all. We are blessed that we have the

opportunity and know-how to harness this nature-given resource and do not need CO2- heavy or dangerous nuclear generation here in the North West.

Please consider the benefits that hydro produces for mankind and wildlife. Those outweigh the negatives multiple times. The idea to switch from hydro to fossil or nuclear is not in the interest of a healthy world.

Georg Behrens

From: John Campbell
To: Species Conservation
Subject: Lower Snake River Dams
Date: Monday, December 30, 2019 6:00:01 PM

To whom it concerns,
I wish my opinion to be heard in support of keeping the lower Snake River Dams. The science seems to support that most of the damage to the salmon population is occurring in the ocean not in the rivers; especially considering the Snake River salmon population decline has been very similar to the decline on the Fraser River which has no dams. It is my hope that good science and good judgment concerning all parties involved will be employed and not just pseudoscience postulated by environmental groups. All the while taking into account the future needs Idaho will have to maintain a thriving economy and a health environment.
Thank you,
John Campbell
Sent from my iPad

Governor's Salmon Workgroup
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Date: December 31, 2019

Name: Rayla Hathaway

Phone: 208-709-1263

Comments:

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