

**Comments for Idaho Governor's Salmon Workgroup
September 4th, 2020**

Fourteen years into teaching high school biology in Idaho, I lectured my students yesterday on "Who to believe on scientific issues."

My bottom line was this--even if you are a Ph.D. scientist in some other field, you have to believe the experts in the field in question. Why? Because science has become so advanced, that only a specialist in the field in question really has a grasp on the science involved. So even a Nobel Laureate in astrophysics will simply trust the salmon specialists when it comes to questions of salmon biology.

And he or she will feel *comfortable* in doing so. Why? Because science is a self-policing endeavor that almost always will flush out bad science and bring the best science to the fore. It's built into the system. It's called peer review, and I don't need to describe it here.

I believe that anyone of average intelligence can obtain a Ph.D. in many fields (well, maybe not those involving higher math:). The main requisite is a lot of drive and years of hard work. And I believe that any citizen of average intelligence could get to the point of being able to critique the "salmon science". The problem is, to do so would take years of study--essentially you would have to become a Ph.D.-level salmon scientist to critique the research on salmon biology. We don't all have the time and luxury for that, no matter how much we care about salmon.

Is this a problem? Not really. I asked my students, "How do you know what science to trust?" My answer was, you base your trust on the source in which it is published. Work published in top-notch journals, is trustworthy. Yes, the "story" changes over time (e.g. cholesterol, fats in our diet), but that is not because any of the science involved was bad science--our understanding of the universe grows over time--this is to be expected.

I suspect that much of the research on salmon and steelhead biology, population trends, and factors affecting the latter, is not published in "Science" or "Nature"--arguably the top two journals in science today. That does not matter. It is published in the top *fisheries* journals, and these journals are the gold standard for fisheries research. And even those reports that remain as agency "gray literature" are top-notch work. Seriously, the average citizen has NO idea how incredibly smart and well-trained agency biologists are. The people doing research in state and federal fish and wildlife agencies these days are so incredibly competent and sophisticated, it would make your head swim.

So, should ALL of us just trust the salmon and steelhead biologists when they tell us how the cow ate the cabbage? Yes, we should.

Can reasonable people disagree about solutions to problems? Of course. But when it comes to specifying what water temperatures must be maintained, how much stream flow must be maintained, etc., we simply have to believe the salmon/steelhead biologists, because they are the ones who know these answers.

As much as I care about the future of Idaho salmon and steelhead, I don't have time to become an expert on the topic. I suspect much the same is true for tens of thousands of other Idahoans. So I hereby designate my vote and my voice in this matter to the salmon and steelhead experts in Idaho Fish and

Game, in the tribes, and in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (I may be forgetting some agencies here). These experts speak for me. Please listen to them and give heavy weight to what they say.

Sincerely,
David Whitacre, Emmett

Attached are our public comments concerning the extension of the Columbia Basin Fish Accords and a copy of the 14 August letter sent to Governor Little on the subject to be included with our comments.

Stay well,

Keith

2018 14th Street
Lewiston, Idaho
83501

26 August

2020
Governor's Salmon Work Group

We former Idaho Fish and Game commissioners urge that you ask the Governor to neither sign nor agree to sign any extension of the Columbia Basin Fish Accords upon their expiration on 30 September 2020.

In a letter sent to Governor Little on 14 August 2020, we urged that he not enter into an extension prior to receiving the final recommendations of your group. The accords would significantly limit the work group's options in achieving the original goals set by the Governor.

The accords, in their present form, would hamper Idaho's efforts to participate in a regional collaboration as suggested in the final Environmental Impact Statement, Columbia River System Operation, by the same parties as in the accords.

The accords would also likely restrict Idaho's ability to join in any legal challenges to the final EIS.

In addition, any consideration of an extension of the accords should be preceded by an opportunity for public input and comment.

A copy of our letter to Governor Little of 14 August 2020 is attached.

Former Idaho Fish and Game Commissioners,

Keith Stonebraker

Will Godfrey

Keith Carlson

Clearwater Region 1976 -1987

Southwest Region 1975 -1979

Clearwater Region 1987 -1999

Gary Power
Salmon Region 2004 -2012

Fred Trevey
Clearwater Region 2007 – 2015

2018 14th Street
Lewiston, Idaho
83501

August 14, 2020

The Honorable Brad Little
Governor, State of Idaho
State Capitol
P O Box 83720
Boise, Idaho 83720

Dear Governor Little,

Columbia Basin Fish Accords Extension

We former Idaho Fish and Game Commissioners are concerned that the Bonneville Power Administration and the other federal agencies are urging the state of Idaho to sign another two year extension of the fish accords effective immediately upon the expiration of the current accords on 30 September 2020.

We urge that you, on behalf of the state, do not sign nor agree to sign any further agreements prior to receiving the final recommendations of your own Salmon Workgroup.

An extension of the accords might well hamper Idaho's participation in any regional effort with the other state's governors, congressional delegations, tribes and concerned parties to reach an ultimate solution for Idaho's fish and even limit the state's role in upcoming legal proceedings.

Any discussion of Idaho's continuation as a party to the accords should be preceded by an opportunity for input from the Idaho public.

Respectfully,

Keith E. Carlson
Clearwater Region 1987-1999

on behalf of;
Keith Stonebraker
Clearwater Region 1976 -1987

Will Godfrey
Southwest Region 1975 -1979

Gary Power
Salmon Region 2004 -2012

Fred Trevey
Clearwater Region 2007 – 2015

cc: IDFG
OSC

My name is Zak Sears and I grew up in Lewiston, Idaho. I am a second generation river/fishing guide, and have worked on the rivers of Idaho for nearly 25 years. I am deeply concerned about the fitness of Idaho salmon and steelhead. I strongly disagree with the BPA Fish Accords and in no way support the extension of said accords. Binding the State of Idaho to oppose dam breaching, and agreeing to never sue Bonneville Power or publically criticizing the way it operates is absolutely not how I want my representatives to take action. The extension of these accords is the quickest way to extinction, clearly. I want my representatives to be more interested in the health of Idaho rivers and fish, than bribe money from the BPA. Why would the State of Idaho accept hush money from BPA only to be leveraged to step aside as their agenda descimates what is left of wild fish populations? I want the future of Idaho to include WILD salmon and steelhead, and will support representatives who support Idaho, Idaho rivers and fish, and the people who live here.

Will Stubblefield
8/27/2020
970-214-0899

Hello, My name is Will Stubblefield, I'm an educator and river guide living in Teton Valley Idaho. I've spent the last ten years living and working on Idaho's rivers sharing the amazing natural resources that our state has to offer with clients. This has included the story of Salmon and Steelhead that are a keystone species for the ecosystems of Idaho and the Pacific Northwest.

I am very concerned that Idaho's Salmon and Steelhead are on the road to extinction and this would be a devastating loss for the people of Idaho. We know that the four lower snake dams are the root of decline in our Salmon and Steelhead populations and that the only effective recovery action is the removal of these highly costly and aging structures. Re-signing of the fish accords with BPA will keep Idaho's Salmon populations in decline and headed towards extinction.

As a river guide I have shared Idaho's rivers with clients from across the country and even across the world. These people have come to Idaho to spend their money and to experience wild rivers that include healthy fish populations. Losing these fish to the stagnant reservoirs of the lower snake dams is creating the end of a crucial economy for Idahoans who depend on salmon and steelhead for their livelihoods as well as the loss of keystone species in Idaho's ecosystems.

The federal government has spent more than 17 billion dollars of taxpayer money on recovery efforts that are not producing results for our fish. Idahoans must be part of a Northwest regional solution that will recover our salmon to meaningfully abundant salmon populations.

I'm urging Gov. Little not to sign to extend the fish accords. Doing so will limit our state's ability to advocate for the health of Salmon populations and will keep us headed down the road to Idaho Salmon and Steelhead extinction.

Date: August 27, 2020

Name: Aimee Christensen

Phone: 208-721-8619

Email: aimee@christensenglobal.com

Comment:

My name is Aimee Christensen and I live in Sun Valley, Idaho and own a Ketchum, Idaho-based business, a global advisory firm where I help entrepreneurs, large corporations, nonprofits and policymakers to deliver solutions for a better, more equitable, healthy, and prosperous world. We began spending time in Idaho in 1978 and moved here full time in 1983 as I entered high school. I fell in love with Idaho's incredible salmonids at about age 10 when I found a steelhead in our irrigation ditch near Stanley. We found a moving box to carry that massive fish to safety in Valley Creek. When I learned about their miraculous lifecycle and strength, I knew I'd work to protect them throughout my life. I have spent my career at the intersection of the economy and the environment - I spent four years at the U.S. Department of Energy helping to open global markets to US companies, to their cleaner technologies to benefit our economy and those of other nations. I advised Google and Microsoft on their climate change strategies, I have owned solar energy projects including those feeding into Idaho Power's system in eastern Oregon, and I advised the Chairman and CEO of one of the largest utilities in the country, Duke Energy. I have seen time and again that we can meet the needs of business and the environment, of economies and communities and wildlife and the air and water. I moved home ten years ago for family reasons, to support my parents as their needs grew. My parents, Ann and Doug Christensen, inspired in me a desire to build a better world, to fight for what is just and fair, for the broadest public interest, to benefit people and wildlife, for economies and communities. As part of their volunteer efforts, they have advocated for our salmon for decades, and we have known for decades that the only way to save our salmon, and to do with the greatest bang for the buck, is to remove the Lower Snake River dams. We all know that the status quo is not working, that billions of taxpayer dollars have delivered far too few results. The science is clear that the only way for Idaho's salmon to come back, to meet the governor's charge, "to develop policy recommendations to restore abundant, sustainable, and well distributed populations of salmon and steelhead in Idaho for present and future generations," is to breach those dams. We have the smarts, the technologies, the common concern for our ecosystem and all it provides, the will to collaborate, to develop a set of solutions to meet the needs of the salmon AND the farmers and all who've used the river's resources, including its irrigation water and the Lewiston port and transportation system. We underestimate ourselves and our creativity when we say it isn't possible. Breaching the Lower Snake dams is the only solution, and together we can meet the multiple benefits the river system provides, for the salmon, for farmers, for recreationists, for business, for the tribes, to meet the governor's instructions and to meet the duty we have to our present, our near future, and to generations to come. Thank you for your work to date, and in the future.

Name: Sammy Matsaw
Phone: 2082448499
Email: matssamm@isu.edu

Cultural genocide through the past and near extinction of salmon (anadromous fishes) has been normalized through maintaining hydroelectric dams in the Columbia River basin. Hydroelectric dams are a result of Manifest Destiny; a legacy of annihilating Indigenous peoples here in our own homelands. The burden of hydroelectric dams and consequential modifications to the basin shall remain on the shoulders of losing our salmon culture from our ancestors to us now, and towards future generations for wheat, for 'green' electricity, and other desires. Contemporary needs for exporting wheat and creating green sources of electricity is a burden that should not be carried by the extinction of salmon and the cultures surviving upon them.

Some questions that can shed light on the overshadowing of Manifest Destiny's effects today are:

- 1) How many federally recognized tribes are there?
- 2) What of the Indigenous languages do you know?
- 3) What is the deeper Thought and Knowledge of a tribe local to you?

Usually a large part of the audiences I've presented to do not have good answers for these questions. Some express, in awe, when I let them guess that there are more than 50 tribes, more than 100, and so on. They are astonished at 572 federally recognized tribes, and there are still non-recognized tribes. If you fall into this group, don't fret, it was designed that way. What you should understand is that your critical analysis is flawed, biased and troubling to what is best for the ecosystem we share.

From my research I've found that we, the Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island (North America), are thought of by peoples of European descent see Indigenous peoples as an earlier, more primitive version of man, Euroman. We are not. We have a wholly different thinking and way of living in our homelands that is in contrast with Euro-western thinking. The difference is important to maintain. I would say more important than green energy and wheat. Sources of energy and wheat are just more of the same, the status quo. Keeping dams is to kill salmon, to kill Indigenous Thought and Knowledge informed by the connections to salmon, our culture. They teach us, they are our professors, our knowledge keepers, thus stocks aka history-holders of the land.

What does this mean? 1) Tribes need to be at the table for decision-making; 2) taken seriously with proportional decretional powers; 3) by actions that takes the burden off our backs and the backs of salmon; 4) ultimately brings salmon back from extinction trends towards self-sustaining populations

Name: Arthur Pratt
Phone: 707-307-3936
Email: livinglegacydesign@gmail.com

Dear Salmon Workgroup,

Extinction is forever. Please do everything in your power to encourage the removal of the four dams so that we can have as great a chance as possible to save the salmon and restore their populations to healthy levels.

I understand the challenge of developing solutions with so many stakeholders in the mix. However, when the potential of extinction of a species is at play, doing everything necessary to promote the recovery of that species should trump all other interests. The truth is, the stakeholders that are against this solution will find a way to adapt, as people always have and always will. The irrigators can redesign their intakes, and the barges can be replaced with rail. Other forms of clean energy exist that don't have the negative consequences of dams. But the salmon don't have the ability to change their migration patterns and biological functions. And if they do go extinct, we all know the dams were a contributing factor, and you will have to ask yourself why you didn't make the decision you knew was best. Please do the right thing and push, again, for the removal of the dams.

Sincerely,
Arthur Pratt