

Comments for the Governors Salmon Workgroup

November 25, 2020

I have been fishing the Salmon River for over twenty years. The major keystone species after which it is named remains in serious decline despite much money spent. It is a keystone species because of the food and recreational dollars they provide, and moreover the high protein source they provide for the flora and fauna in the high wilderness areas. It is also a keystone species in the Pacific Ocean.

It is clear that hatcheries are not a long term solution with fish fed and raised in vats and concrete bunkers with great loss of genetic diversity just when it is needed with climate change, and the hatchery fish compete with the wild fish for resources.

The only clear path towards restoration of abundance is to free these wild fish of the four lower Snake River dams. There are significant human issues that spring from the loss of those dams. They are all solvable with an engaged workgroup. New sources of energy, transport of agricultural goods, irrigation all need to be dealt with to make all in the community whole. The Native Americans and many Idaho communities along the rivers and the wilderness areas have remained on the losing end of this deal for too long now. We need solutions that bring back fish in abundance, not tiny incremental changes that have not been effective to date. Let us not repeat in the Pacific what happened to Atlantic salmon.

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