

A future sans dams

The Nez Perce County commissioners recently endorsed the lower Snake River dams. That got me thinking about the opposite — a future without the dams.

Guided by the city of Lewiston's waterfront future planning graphics, I imagined a thriving riverfront in downtown Lewiston in which the 30-foot-high levees needed to protect Lewiston from Lower Granite Lake had been replaced by an amazing view of two great free-flowing rivers, the Snake and the Clearwater.

Without the levees, I envisioned Lewiston's families enjoying river beaches under the hot summer sun and children frolicking in a newly constructed whitewater park, adding millions of dollars to the local economy.

I visualized Lewiston's restaurants and motels at near capacity with more being built each year, and with visitors enjoying all that Lewiston has to offer, including 140 additional miles of a free-flowing, shallow, narrow Snake River, perfect for the jet boats that the Lewiston-Clarkston Valley is so famous for manufacturing.

I imagined the Snake River returning to its world-class reputation for salmon and steelhead fishing, with angler spending increasing from \$8.8 million to \$52 million per year.

Instead of the dams, I saw revitalized rail transportation heading north, east, south and west, carrying the area's produce and products to market.

I continue to ponder the potential revitalization of Nez Perce County that could be achieved by breaching the four lower Snake River dams. I see jobs, recreation and opportunity.

What do you see?

John Twa

Boise