

May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2017 Letter to the Editor, Lewiston Tribune

## **Dams hold region back**

Historically, the lower Snake River dams controversy has been one of pragmatism vs. idealism. Faced with facts, we can now graduate to a new perspective - pragmatism plus idealism.

North central Idaho's economy lies at the bottom of the pile compared with other regions of the state. Dams have not brought us prosperity. Barging has suffered a 20-year decline. Hydropower from lower Snake dams is insignificant in light of surplus power. Fish runs continue to decline. The costs of dam/lock operations continue to climb. The Port of Lewiston has become a tax-supported property management agency. The Bonneville Power Administration continues to charge ratepayers for unsuccessful fish mitigation. Politicians politic.

A restored Snake River would provide more economic gain for a wider group of Lewiston's population.

Imagine a revitalized waterfront, strong fish runs and new businesses related to the resulting scene.

The only means of presenting this alternative view is by practical people with an idealistic bent. The facts are in bold print. When honestly presented, they can enable the public to draw its own conclusions, creating partners who would benefit from the changes of a restored river.

The budget is not the problem, facts are not the problem, and ideas are not the problem. Lewiston people need to envision a better future without dams.

This is difficult under the present propaganda issued by government agencies and echoed by special interest groups, but perhaps we can do something before this "crisis in place" continues to negatively impact our local economy and environment.

Bill Chetwood

Lewiston