

General Semonite and EAB members,

As we know, the CRSO is currently gauging the effects of long-term dam operations at the 14 federally operated hydropower facilities up and down the Columbia and lower snake rivers. And this CRSO has *at least* a few years and many hurdles to go.

Meanwhile, the Corps is following the guidance of the 2002 Lower Snake River Feasibility Report (FR/EIS) as an operable document governing the lower Snake River Dams. In it, Alternative 4 (dam removal) is listed as the best chance for highest fish returns. Other alternatives were originally chosen and hence the basis for ongoing mitigation actions in which the Corps has spent nearly \$1 billion on Systems Improvements that have produced virtually no gain in overall fish survival or abundance. Especially over the last five years where smolt-to-adult salmon survival ratios have been below the recovery rate of 1%, meaning they are headed towards virtual extinction (see SAR chart).

Furthermore, the impending extinction of Southern Resident Killer Whale (SRKW) population can also be added to the emergency that should trigger deferral of NEPA review (See generally 40 CFR § 1506.11). NOAA has years of tracking data that show the SRKW frequent the mouth of the Columbia (see NOAA tracking). NOAA also released the Southern Resident's Priority Chinook Stock Report that had the Lower Columbia and Snake River chinook within the top 5 (see NOAA priority stocks).

What I would like to know, is why are we still studying the lower Snake River dams?

The science already exists in the 2002 EIS.

I have yet to find ONE benefit these dams offer that would reason enough to put the nail in the coffin for the numerous endangered fish species and orca population that are on the line.

It is clear to those with no special interests that these four dams are no longer needed. They are providing only surplus power that is being sold (frequently at a loss) to CA as well as expensive bills with their expiring turbines and costly dam and lock maintenance. Navigation has never become what was promised to be as it is still being paved with subsidies and it can easily be transferred over to the parallel rail. Idaho's only economic region with a port is by far the poorest performing region in the state. The irrigation can be re-routed with new pipes as the river will still be in existence. All of these mitigation costs were accounted for in the 2002 EIS; they are now magnitudes less than predicted in 2002 and can be covered in the total breach cost that BPA would pay.

Please General Semonite, cease the endless studies and monies wasted on the Snake River dams - the science and data already exists. There is no mandate that the Corps continue to operate the lower Snake River dams. The Corps received only permissive authority to build the four lower Snake River dams. A project "authorization" is not a mandate. The Corps may place the dams in "non-operational" or "caretaker" status. Doing so does not change the purpose of the project, and neither Congressional authorization nor de-authorization is required.

Choose Alternative 4 to bring about one of the largest river restoration efforts in history. One that people from far and wide would come to see, to experience, and to hear that beautiful free-flowing river roar back to life. The Snake River Valley can be home once again to reclaimed agricultural lands, vineyards, orchards, parks, campgrounds, beaches, new jobs, and more (see orchards).

General Semonite, will you continue to be a silent follower or step up and be the bold leader our future generation and planet needs?

Thank you,

Amy Eberling