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From: Orofino Chamber [mailto: [REDACTED] ]

Sent: Friday, February 07, 2003 3:08 PM

To: info@nwppc.org

Subject: Mainstem Comments

The Orofino Chamber of Commerce is submitting comments on the draft proposal

of the mainstem amendments. They are attached:

Sandra J. Medley

Orofino Chamber of Commerce

(SEE ATTACHMENT BELOW)

02/07/03

Comments on the Draft Mainstem Amendments: Document 2002 – 16

These comments are presented by the Orofino Chamber of Commerce in response to the Northwest Power Planning Council's draft mainstem amendments that are due to be adopted this year.

The Orofino Chamber of Commerce is at a distinct disadvantage in responding to the science listed by all the other responding agencies. We will do the best to make comments that are valid and meaningful. Our comments will have bearing on all of the items in the draft proposal.

We would like initially to take issue with the fact that the federal and some state agencies have done their best to impact us in a negative basis with all respects of salmon recovery. The University of Idaho study has shown an impact over a seven-year period accounting for financial losses to the community exceeding \$50 million. This makes it difficult to support a water plan that does very little to affect the draw downs on Dworshak Reservoir and at best may account for possibly 600 additional returning adult fall Chinook salmon.

All of the items that we list are not in any particular order of importance.

Comments on shaping flows from the main stem sources. We believe that water usage should be used for maximum benefits of all of the resources. This would include storage of water for power and recreation while maximizing inflow and outflow rates closer to natural flows. This type of action would allow for gradual filling up until June 1<sup>st</sup>. Considering the inflow and outflow rate would accommodate fall Chinook leaving in early or mid June as they have historically. It is apparent that most of the smolts have left the upper system by the first week in July. What is to say that the slight increase in the number of fall Chinook is not coming from the smolts that leave in late June or early July. High flows in late July and August have not proven to increase the number of returning adult fall Chinook salmon. It is imperative that Idaho Power and Bonneville Power Administration coordinate water usage to allow for flows that mimic historical patterns.

Harvesting by any net systems in Columbia Basin should be totally eliminated. The tribal fisheries should be taken back to their historical harvest methods. Any hook and line fisheries should be closely monitored to not impact the endangered fall Chinook salmon. Money spent on agencies should be put towards mitigating losses that the tribe and communities have suffered. It appears that many actions taken by agencies is done to prolong effective salmon recovery only to keep ineffective programs running.

Running the fall Chinook recovery program needs to be modified to incorporate communities in the planning of a comprehensive collaborative ecosystem management.

There have been many individuals in the Orofino area and in the Tribal Council that believe stream fertilization programs are essential in long-term stabilization of fall Chinook salmon recovery. This would mean shifting away from single species management and would benefit resident species of fish and mammals while maximizing the benefit of the endangered fall Chinook salmon. At the rate we appear to be going we will be driving more species into protection under the Endangered Species Act.

We are opposed to any mention of breaching the four lower Snake River dams. One of the reasons for the drop in fall Chinook salmon has been attributed to the Hell's Canyon dam complex. To complement the loss of habitat it is essential that hatcheries evolve in an efficient manner.

There should be more money spent on researching ocean conditions and the possibility of net pen fisheries to augment the returning adult salmon. National Marine Fisheries Service should be taken out of the land-based management of salmon recovery.

The present biological opinion that we're operating under should be revised, taking into account the actual return of adult fall Chinook salmon. It does not need to be based on a flow-based regime that does not mimic natural hydro-curves.

In conclusion it is important to consider the local social and environmental issues that have been injured due to single species management. As a community we need to be added into the formula of management. The agencies must take responsibility for the communities and the people without focusing on their own personal job security.

The Orofino Chamber of Commerce has always been ready to work with the involved agencies to find the most effective solutions for recovery of the fall Chinook salmon. We ask to be listened to and have our concerns heard.

Sandra J. Medley  
Executive Director  
Orofino Chamber of Commerce