

Gem Irrigation District



Northwest Power Planning Council
851 S. W. 6th Avenue
Suite 1100
Portland OR 97204-1348

Dear Council Members:

The following are the comments of the Gem Irrigation District on the proposed amendments to the Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program. The District believes amendment of the program is due based on the continuing efforts of many people to address anadromous fish recovery and the information we have gained since 1994. First and foremost, the District believes it is time to remove the demand for an additional one (1) million acre feet of water from the Upper Snake River basin.

Notwithstanding the impacts on the agriculture based economy of the area, it remains clear that flow augmentation is not based on sound management or science. It will not recover fish nor does it contribute to recovery. It is simply not a prudent investment either for the region or the fisheries resources. In fact, the absence of any flow-survival relationship brings into question the validity of even using 427,000 acre feet which is currently in the program.

We will continue to monitor and participate as appropriate in the region's efforts. However, we believe that efforts to recover fish must reflect a balance between the needs of the people and the need of the fisheries. Only by adopting a socially and biologically based protocol will we see a sustainable and long term solution. Flow augmentation is not that type of approach. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these proposed amendments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David Van Wassenhove".

David Van Wassenhove
Chairman of the Board