

## **Attacking Snake dams with sorry 'science'**

*March 14th, 2007*

The scraped-together report by Save Our Wild Salmon on the advantages of breaching the four Lower Snake River dams faces yet another dose of reality.

This time, it is the Northwest Power Planning and Conservation Council and the Independent Economic Advisory Board weighing in.

Save Our Wild Salmon assembled what it calls a review of previous dam-breaching reports and found there was money to be made in tearing them down.

In other words, the report found exactly what Save Our Wild Salmon wanted it to find.

The analysis was entitled Revenue Stream.

It's not so much a new report, as it is a different spin on older documents.

"In addition to taxpayer savings of up to \$5 billion, the study finds that increased tourism, new outdoor recreation, and improved sport and commercial fishing opportunities could generate more than \$20 billion in revenue for the region," Save Our Wild Salmon claims.

Ah, if only it were true.

As we have pointed out before, the SOS estimate that Northwest electrical users will see rate savings of \$12 million to \$2 billion over 10 years is like saying you'll spend something between \$1,200 and \$200,000 on your next refrigerator.

The Power Council's advisory board found "the Revenue Stream report to not be credible for a number of reasons."

It's a large number.

The first problem is that the Save Our Wild Salmon analysis is based to some degree on the laughable Rand Corp. report that found tearing down or bypassing the four Lower Snake dams would generate a lot of economic activity.

You bet it would. The Northwest would have to get its power from somewhere else, so Rand and Save Our Wild Salmon count all those new costs as activity.

If you applied that logic to your own life, you would be better off tearing down your house and building a new one because of the economic activity involved.

Among the Power Council's other criticisms of the report:

w "In general, an analysis gains credibility if it is conducted in an open public process, and if the results are subjected to formal peer review. This was not the case for the Revenue Stream report,

and it was not the case for many of the reports which were used as sources in compiling that report."

w "There was no attempt to display the likely distribution of costs and benefits over time or to discount future costs and benefits."

w "The failure of SOS to clearly show how it estimated salmon program cost savings is another major failure of the Revenue Stream report."

w "The biggest component in Revenue Stream's estimate of benefits was based on Don Reading's \$550 million estimate of the benefits of a recovered salmon and steelhead fishery in Idaho ... SOS has severely compromised the credibility of the Revenue Stream report by including Reading's numbers."

Save Our Wild Salmon has come down with Congress' disease -- spending other people's money lavishly.

They as much as admit it.

Consider the cost of tearing down the dams and losing all that taxpayer investment (just so the taxpayers can spend more to replace it) against Save Our Wild Salmon's own words.

"The Save Our Wild Salmon Coalition (SOS) is a nationwide coalition of conservation organizations, commercial and sport fishing associations, businesses, river groups and taxpayer advocates working to restore self-sustaining, healthy, harvestable and abundant wild salmon to the rivers and streams of the Pacific Northwest.

"We believe the most effective method of achieving our goal is by removing the four Lower Snake River dams."

Interestingly enough, Save Our Wild Salmon posts on its Web site editorials and commentary from the west side of the Cascade Mountains lauding them for scholarship and right thinking.

Our previous editorials -- debunking the methodology and "push" analysis that knows the finding before the first number is written down -- don't show up on the Web site.

Probably this one won't, either.