

Wildlife Committees Oppose Dams On Clearwater, Cut In Fish Limit

BOISE (AP) — Committees of the Idaho Wildlife Federation voted Saturday to lay before the full federation recommendations opposing proposed Clearwater River dams and a cut in the creel limit on fish.

The Legislative Committee approved the resolution aimed at construction of the two dams. Earlier, a federal and a state fish and game official urged the federation to fight for the rights of wildlife in natural resource development.

The committee also expressed opposition to Mountain Sheep Dam on the Snake River but asked its resolutions-drafters not to close the door on other dams in the Middle Snake area.

More Study Urged

It agreed to a suggestion of Dr. W. R. Jacobs of Lewiston urging the Army Engineers to give continued study to dams in the area.

The Fish Committee voted to retain the present limit of 15 fish in district 5 and 20 fish in other districts. The Idaho Fish and Game Department has recommended a limit of 15 for the entire state.

The Fish Committee recommended that the 1954 fishing season open June 10, six days later than last year, and close on Oct. 31, the same as usual.

The recommendation was proposed by district 5, which argued that the earlier opening was cutting into the spawning season.

The committee recommended a general \$2 increase in fish and game licenses. Some sportsmen argued against the shortening of the season on grounds it should not be urged at the same time as the increase in license fees.

Other recommendations, which will be voted upon by the full federation Sunday, included:

Recommendations Listed

Making it illegal to use whole fish for bait except in areas designated by the Fish and Game Department, and except for bullheads and salamanders.

A season bag limit of four on salmon and steelhead and setting up a tag system to enforce it. This passed despite one sportsman's objection that it would "kill salmon fishing on the Salmon River."

A storage regulation on fish, including provisions that each parcel be dated and marked with its weight and the name and address of the owner.

Providing that shipping permits be dated and be good for only five days.

Recommending that the Fish and

Game Department place more emphasis on fish habitat improvement.

Idaho Game Director Ross Leonard asked the federation to seek "wise use of our natural resources . . . to maintain adequate hunting and fishing commensurate with the other demands placed upon our soils and waters."

J. T. Barnaby of Portland, regional staff biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, said construction of the proposed dams of Penny Cliffs and Bruce Eddy on the Clearwater "should only be started after detailed plans for the protection of fish life have been worked out in cooperation with the fishery agencies."

Districts 1 and 2 of the federation, both from north Idaho, came to the convention with resolutions opposing the dams, proposed by the Army Engineers.

Ted H. Wegener, federation president, has said he thought there would be strong sentiment against flat opposition and in favor of merely insisting upon fish ladders.

The two committees were among 17 which met Saturday afternoon to recommend resolutions.

Jacobs told the Legislative Committee, "We must recognize that building of dams is inevitable. If we don't recognize the fact, we are butting our heads against a stone wall and we have become obstructionists. We should go along in opposition to these two dams, but we should not close the door. We should ask that further study be made of dam sites and request investigation of dams which will give us the most benefits with the least harm to wildlife resources."

Frank Evans of Coeur d'Alene said the Army Engineers at a hearing in Orofino Nov. 20 used "trickery in every sense of the word and used dishonest methods to sell the dams to the local people."

Frank Cullen of Coeur d'Alene and Morton Brigham of Lewiston said the reservoir sites would destroy winter range for the wilderness area elk herds. Cullen also argued the dams would prevent the flow of migratory fish.

Clayton Davidson of Boise expressed the view that the two dams were "a subversive alternate to Hells Canyon" dam, which he said would "produce the finest fishing in Idaho and Oregon."

The three-day convention will end Sunday, with consideration of resolutions and election of officers.