

Game Dept. Fears Dams On Clearwater

BOISE (AP)—Construction of dams in the Clearwater Drainage would interfere with the spawning runs of salmon and steelhead and "definitely affect" big game winter range, Director Ross Leonard of the State Fish and Game Department said Thursday.

He said that while the department will not take a stand on Army Engineers' proposals for dams at a Nov. 20 hearing at Orofino, it will give a statement on their effect on wildlife.

Harold T. (Buck) Jones, secretary, said the Idaho Wildlife Federation would "have no choice but to oppose" the dams.

Their comments followed a statement by Jim Parsons of Sandpoint, an outdoors columnist, who wrote that the engineers would "bump into a formidable snag" at the hearings.

Leonard said the report was complete on how fish would be affected by a dam on the Clearwater Drainage, which includes the Clearwater, Lochsa and Selway Rivers in north central Idaho.

Block Fish Runs

"A program of dam construction will block runs of salmon and steelhead above the point of construction," Leonard said. "In fact, it probably will annihilate the runs of salmon and steelhead from the Clearwater Drainage suitable for spawning purposes."

He said the big game report wasn't complete, but that the wintering ground for big game animals definitely will be affected.

"We've been notified of the hearing," he said. "We won't oppose or favor the dams; we will only point out the effect of the proposed construction."

Jones said he was sure the federation would oppose the dams "because it will cause us to lose part of the run of salmon and other migratory fish."

"Some of the proposed sites would flood out the heart of the winter feed area that big game use. We must recognize that downstream dams do not conserve water. The money could be spent to better advantage at the source of supply."