

Congress Has Signed Death Warrant For North Fork Wildlife, Brigham Says

Congress has signed a death warrant for unnumbered steelhead, elk and white tail deer in the North Fork drainage of the Clearwater River by giving a go-ahead for construction of Bruce Eddy dam, a long-time foe of the project declared last night.

"The steelhead run up the North Fork will be wiped out," said Morton Brigham of Lewiston, program chairman of the Lewis-Clark Wildlife Club.

'Total Disaster'

"This means almost total disaster for the white tail deer and undetermined but heavy damage to one of the finest elk herds in the United States," he said.

Brigham commented on congressional action which virtually assured authorization of the dam, climaxing a long campaign by those who seek to harness the river for flood control and hydroelectric power production.

Brigham's reaction was at variance with that of the club president, Leonard Baldeck of Lewiston, who said he was "glad to see a decision one way or the other to get the matter settled."

"This will stop a lot of haggling in our area," Baldeck said. He said he is not personally opposed to construction of the dam, although the club repeatedly has taken a position against it.

Brigham placed most of the blame for the success of the authorization struggle on Sen. Frank Church and Rep. Gracie Pfof, Idaho Democrats. Mrs. Pfof, now a candidate for the Senate, was instrumental in obtaining the first planning appropriation for the dam in 1959, he said, and Church had used all his influence in the Senate to gain authorization.

Sen. Len Jordan, R-Idaho, who took office last August, succeeding the late Sen. Henry Dworshak, R-Idaho, had negligible influence in securing authorization of the dam, Brigham said. Senator

Dworshak has been credited as one of the major forces in obtaining planning cash for the dam, somewhat of an innovation for Congress since the project hadn't yet been authorized.

"I would divide responsibility equally between Church and Mrs. Pfof," Brigham said. "Jordan was in favor of the dam, and he put pressure to try and get it in 1953, when he was governor, but he had no important influence this time because he was not on the important committees."

Jordan and Mrs. Pfof oppose each other for the remaining four-year term of Senator Dworshak's seat, to be decided in the Nov. 6 general election.

Brigham said studies by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the Idaho Fish & Game Department bear out his warning that the dam would pose a serious threat to fish and wildlife in the North Fork drainage.

He said the North Fork steelhead run would never survive passage over the 600-foot high

dam or loss of habitat brought about by his belief there would be up to a 155-foot fluctuation in the reservoir level, which he said would leave a mudbank for 20 miles upstream from the dam.

"The Idaho delegation, including Senator Church and Mrs. Pfof, ignored these studies," Brigham said, "and they nearly completely ignored alternate sites which would be much less destructive."

As examples of acceptable alternate projects he cited Pleasant Valley and Mountain Sheep dams on the middle Snake River, Paradise, Libby and Enaville dams in Montana and upper Columbia River dams in Canada.

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