

State Game Commission To Oppose Dams on Snake

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Opposition to the construction of proposed dams on the middle Snake river and its tributaries will be voiced by the Oregon state game commission at a corps of army engineers hearing at Orofino, Idaho, November 20.

Commissioners, at their November meeting Friday, unanimously okayed the rough draft of a statement setting forth the commission's position on the proposed dams. The statement, prepared by C. J. Campbell, chief of basin investigations for the commission, will be presented at the hearing, to be attended by Campbell and Phil W. Schneider, state game director.

Fish Runs Affected

The commission understands that these flood-control storage and hydroelectric power dams are proposed for the upper Mountain Sheep site on the Snake, and for sites on both the north and middle forks of the Clearwater river. As contemplated, all would be more than 500 feet in height, and as yet no method has been evolved of passing anadromous fish successfully both up and downstream past dams of that height.

Except for the dam at the Mountain Sheep site, all proposed structures are within Idaho. It was pointed out, however, that each of the dams are of deep concern to Oregon in that they would affect valuable runs of steelhead, chinook and sockeye salmon which migrate up the Columbia to spawn.

The Mountain Sheep dam would cut off runs of these fish to the upper Snake river and to Oregon's Pine creek and Powder river.

The statement prepared by Campbell said, in part: "Since the middle Snake area is one of the few remaining strongholds of the Columbia river migratory fish runs, all possible effort should be made to maintain the status quo until all upstream possibilities are exhausted or until answers to fish passage problems are obtained. In the instances of these dams, it is not felt that adequate mitigation of losses could be made by such techniques as transplantation of fish runs, artificial propagation, encouragement of downstream main stem spawning, or a combination of these."

Management Increasing Runs

The statement also declared that fishery resource management as practiced over the past decade is beginning to show encouraging signs of maintain-

ing, and in some instances, increasing the fish runs. This trend, it said, can continue if avenues to spawning areas can be kept open.

In opposing the proposed dams, the statement explained that the commission does not object to dams per se, but that it must oppose in this case until current research has provided the answers to maintaining migratory fish in the face of such structures.

Also affected, should the dams be built, would be a gigantic elk herd in the Clearwater drainage, said to be the largest in North America with between 20,000 and 25,000 animals. The proposed dams would flood much of the winter range.

Staff to Study Boat Site

The commissioners also directed the staff to continue further study of a request by the city of Oswego that the commission provide a small-boat launching site and parking space at the mouth of Oswego creek on the Willamette river.

Approved was the purchase of 175,000 lake trout (mackinaw) eggs at \$4 a thousand. The egg take at Odell lake fell short of the number expected, and additional eggs are needed to meet the yearling production schedule for the species.

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