Clearwater Defender

News of the Big Wild

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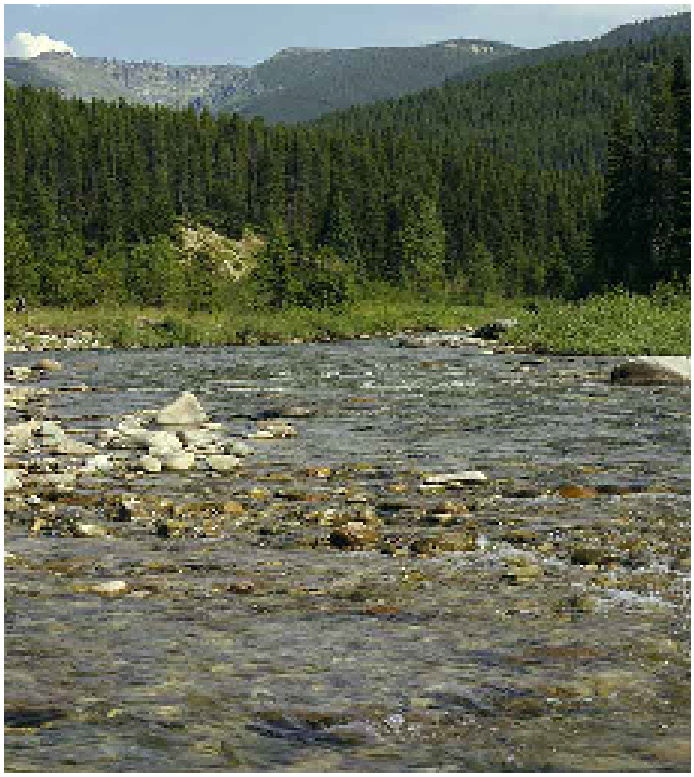

Kelly Creek Feeds the North Fork
Chuck Pezeshki photo

Free the North Fork
Larry McLaud

"This time, like all times, is a very good one, if we but know what to do with it."
- Ralph Waldo Emerson

The North Fork of the Clearwater River is an important fish resource in North-central Idaho.The water volume is the most of any fork, and the B-run steelhead which used to migrate up the North Fork was the biggest, and strongest in the entire basin. With help from the North Fork, the Clearwater River system contributes more water to the Snake River system than any other tributary, and it is colder, and therefore critical to anadromous fish survival.

The beautiful wildlands of the North Fork are rich in history. Native Americans have lived in the watershed, and depended on its resources for thousands of years. Lewis and Clark passed through the drainage over 200 years ago, almost dying of hunger. In 1860, gold was discovered near Pierce, Idaho. Although a railroad was planned and never built, hundreds of dirt roads have been carved into the landscape to extract timber from the rich forests. Violent storms have washed out many poorly built roads throughout the years, with the most recent coming in 1995. Mining claims have had a negative impact on water quality in the North Fork too. The watershed has even survived DDT, which was once widely sprayed in a futile attempt to combat a Gypsy Moth outbreak.

Despite these past disturbances, the greatest negative impact on the North Fork in the last 100 years was the building of Dworshak Dam in 1966-1972. Federal tax dollars built the 717 foot high dam, 3rd highest in the U.S. Over 6.5 million cubic yards of concrete has produced a pool, extending 53 miles upstream. The dam can hold 3,468,000 acre feet of water, an equivalent of 4.5 billion tons.

See Dworshak page 4

Mallard-Larkins Roadless Area needs protection
Gerry Snyder photo

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Friends of the Clearwater, a recognized nonprofit organization since 1987, defends the Clearwater Bioregion's wildlands and biodiversity through a Forest Watch program, litigation, grassroots public involvement, outreach, and education. The Wild Clearwater Country, the northern half of central Idaho's Big Wild, contains many unprotected roadless areas and wild rivers and provides crucial habitat for countless, rare, plant and animal species. Friends of the Clearwater strives to protect these areas, restore degraded habitats, preserve viable populations of native species, recognize national and international wildlife corridors, and bring an end to commodity extraction and industrialization on public lands.

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The Clearwater Defender welcomes artwork and articles pertaining to the protection of the Big Wild. Articles in the Clearwater Defender do not necessarily reflect the views of Friends of the Clearwater.

Publication
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Domestic Sheep Rule the Day
Brett Haverstick

There was a time when over 10,000 wild bighorn sheep roamed the mighty hills and crags of the greater Hell's Canyon ecosystem. Today that population is fragmented, splintered and isolated into tiny pockets of wildness, teetering on the brink of collapse. The main culprits are the corrupt politicans, dishonest scientists, and wool growing associations which lobby the Forest Service to damn the big horn, in favor of grazing allotments for domestic sheep on public lands. Similar to the wolf killing program now at hand, the extermination of the bighorn is based on policy which caters to subsidized ranchers. I doubt it is representative of the views and sentiments of the greater American public.

There appears to be consensus among wildlife biologists that bighorn sheep are highly susceptible to contracting pneumonia from domestic sheep when in contact, or within close proximity to one another. Much of this research has been documented at Washington State University, with Bill Foreyt leading the way for the past thirty years. According to Dr. Sri Srikumaran of the WSU Veterinary School of Medicine, the program is seeking a way to vaccinate all bighorns so they are not susceptible to disease. In my opinion, the answer does not lie in a clinic or laboratory, but rather in the removal of subsidized ranching on public lands.

This summer a Rocky Mountain bighorn was hunted down and killed by the Idaho Fish & Game Department for using its historical habitat, and contracting pneumonia from a domestic sheep herd occupying the same area. Controversial legislation signed into law by Governor Butch Otter this summer called for "best management practices" to be implemented. The new policy warrants the immediate killing of a bighorn by wildlife officials or ranchers when the animal is in proximity to a domestic grazing allotment. The apparent reason is to protect the remaining wild herds from contracting disease. The Nez Perce Tribe summed it up best by issuing a statement," It's unfortunate we are placed in the position of having to kill bighorns to save them. This is not a sustainable strategy".

Governor Otter is currently trying to reconvene collaborative talks with the Nez Perce tribe and conservation groups. The parties pulled out of Otter's Idaho Bighorn/Domestic Sheep Working Group following passage of the legislation. Most groups have said they will not return to the table as long as the law is on the books.

Meanwhile, University of Idaho researcher Marie Bulgin is being investigated for possibly covering up scientific evidence which proves wild bighorn can and do contract deadly disease from domestic sheep on open range. Bulgin recently testified under oath in federal court, and before the Idaho legislature, no evidence exists proving bighorns can contract a deadly disease. However, in June a report was disclosed announcing the University of Idaho's Caine Veterinary Teaching and Research Center in Boise has been sitting on such evidence for over fifteen years. Marie Bulgin is currently head of the Veterinary Research Center, but vehemently denies knowing anything about the research and conclusions found.

To top it all off, Bulgin is a past president of the Idaho Wool Growers Association, and has been quoted by the media as saying, "I'm not against bighorn sheep, I'm just for agriculture".

Lastly, the US Forest Service is working on a management plan which would reduce or permanently remove certain domestic sheep allotments in both Hell's and Salmon River canyon. The plan is due to be released at the end of the year, and was triggered by a lawsuit brought forth by the Nez Perce Tribe and conservation groups in 2007 contesting current management practices.

As usual, the fate of wildness lies in the hands of our courts, legislators and land managers. The problerm is very few of them have the land ethic, or the will to solve the problem.

Bighorn Sheep in the Wild
Brett Haverstick photo

Dworshak cont. from page 1

Dworshak dam fragments the ecosystem, and prevents the web of life from functioning properly. Salmon and steelhead can no longer migrate to the ocean and return to spawn. Bull trout numbers have declined, and important winter range for elk was lost when the reservoir filled. It is ecologically vital for the North Fork system to be connected with the main Clearwater River. There is only one way this can happen.

So, was it worth it for the American citizens to build Dworshak Dam? Many people say no, including former governor Cecil Andrus, who originally supported the project, but has since had a change of heart. Andrus has been quoted as saying his biggest regret while in office was supporting the building of Dworshak Dam. The late Senator Frank Church also regretted his support for the project.

Controversy surrounded the construction project from the outset. Says Cort Conley in *Idaho for the Curious,* "There have always been more politicians than suitable damsites. Building the highest straight axis gravity dam in the Western Hemisphere, on a river with a mean flow of 5,000 cubic feet per second, at a cost of $312 million, in the name of flood-control, is the second-funniest joke in Idaho. The funniest joke is inside the visitor center: a government sign entreats, "Help protect this delicate environment for future generations."

In 1980, the dam developed a "236-ft. long crack on the reservoir side, spraying 7,700 gallons of water per minute past the powerhouse, and down into the river. The cost to fix the leak exceeded $1 million. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers drilled seventy holes into the dam to intercept the crack, relieving pressure on the dam. A plastic sheet was then lowered over the crack. This reduced the flow by half. Additional repairs including a patch made of sawdust, cement and volcanic ash further reduced the flow to an acceptable level." This can be found at http://idptv.state.id.us/buildingbig/dams/dworshak.html.

Dworshak Dam is temporary, unsustainable and possibly unstable. If you live downstream, you might want to get your inner tubes ready. "After getting the proper equipment in place to dewater the unit and conduct an inspection, the Corps found the unit was leaking through the head cover seal in about the same area that had been repaired several times before dating back to the 1980s," according to the Army Corps of Engineers this summer. "We are hopeful that the temporary repairs will last until that time (mid-September), but cannot make that guarantee," said David Tucker, Dworshak's acting operations project manager." According to the AP on October 5, 2008, Dworshak Dam got a "potentially unsafe" rating by the Army Corps. It rated Dworshak a 2 on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the safest.

"Maybe it's time the US Army Corps of Engineers took out the dam. It's not a natural part of the environment, and puts a lot of people in danger." wrote Connie Moen, former Orofino resident, on Jan 17, 2009 in a letter to the editor. "Exactly WHEN are the Corps planning to take the dam down? I think starting this year would be a good idea given it's potential life threatening problems."

Perhaps now is the right time to encourage your politicians to Free the North Fork. Restoring the North Fork would create jobs, help restore salmon, steelhead, elk and bull trout and increase the recreation opportunities, giving a boost to the local economy. What politician would not want to correct a wrong of the past and help the economy and the environment?

Remember, as you are reading this, Nature is tirelessly working to breach the Dam. Water, wind, and temperature change are all doing their part in doing what needs to be done. If we can't or won't breach the Dam, then Nature will do it, and the result might not be ideal from the standpoint of humans.

Dworshak Dam Impounds the North Fork
Larry McLaud photo

Around the Clearwater Basin
Gary Macfarlane

Clearwater Travel Plan
Finally, after many false starts, the Clearwater National Forest officials have released their draft travel plan for public comment. The FOC office will mail an alert about the draft plan and what it means for Clearwater wildlands. A preliminary review is not good. Many key roadless areas are dedicated to motorized use, contrary to sound protection of crucial wildlife habitat and quiet recreation. The Forest Service is also not following its own Clearwater National Forest plan by allowing motorized use in areas that are supposed to be free of motors for summer elk habitat protection.

Lochsa Land Exchange
The Western Lands Project and Friends of the Clearwater sent a letter to the Clearwater National Forest Supervisor detailing serious problems with the process and offering suggestions to the agency to adopt a purchase as its preferred approach to obtaining the parcels. We suggested the agency needed to mend fences with the public, pointing out that, at the public meetings, citizens universally voiced strong support for obtaining the crucial upper Lochsa sections but there is almost no support for the ill-advised land exchange.

Interestingly, not long after the letter was sent, the Forest Service was featured in a newspaper article about the land exchange. The agency seemed to follow our advice and stated that all options were still on the table, including a land purchase, that this exchange was not a done deal, and that the agency had heard the complaints of the public and taken them to heart. The Forest Service stated many of the controversial areas were likely not to be selected to trade away. A draft environmental impact statement is expected this fall.

Logging in the Lochsa
The Forest Service never lets an excuse go by for logging. The Lochsa and Middle Fork wild and scenic river are being targeted for a couple of timber sales. First, is the Saddle Camp timber sale. The logging would take place along the Saddle Camp road, ostensibly for fire protection for an escape route from the 500 route (the Nez Perce Trail that Lewis and Clark took). There are also some prescribed fires being proposed for this area.

The second project is logging between Syringa and Lowell. Again, this is ostensibly being done for fire protection. However, the logging would come very close to the highway and would be far more extensive than is planned for the Saddle Camp road. The Forest Service erroneously thinks logging trucks, landings and helicopters dragging logs are somehow consistent with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

Keeping Wilderness Wild
The Forest Service has proposed several trail projects in the Selway-Bitterroot and Gospel Hump wildernesses. In the case of Garnet Creek near Powell Ranger Station, it amounts to a significant change in character of the trail away from a wilderness route. The Forest Service also plans on upgrading the Warm Springs Trail, the trail from McConnell Mountain to Fish Lake, and is in the process of doing work along a very nice primitive route near the head of Bear Creek, all in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. A field trip to the Bear Creek site was comforting-- the trail work is not as extensive as the analysis led one to believe. Trails in the Gospel Hump are also slated to be upgraded. In an era of tight economics, it makes sense only to do necessary trail work, as the Wilderness Act requires. We will keep watching the Forest Service to make sure the agency keeps wilderness wild.

Motor Madness on Scurvy Mtn.
FOC File photo

Fight For Survival
Round 2
Steve Paulson

In this corner, weighing five ounces and standing 24 inches tall, is the giant Palouse earthworm. And in the far corner stands the combined weight and resources of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Department of the Interior, the Department of Justice, the Department of Agriculture, the Obama administration, the states of Idaho and Washington, and the resource extraction industries.

On June 30, 2009, the Friends of the Clearwater, the Center for Biological Diversity, the Palouse Prairie Foundation, the Palouse Audubon, and the Palouse Group of Sierra Club filed the second petition with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), requesting they protect the giant Palouse earthworm as an endangered species. This native earthworm has been found only four times in the last 110 years, and continues to be threatened by agriculture, urban sprawl and invasive earthworms. All that you ever wanted to know about the giant Palouse earthworm can be found at the Palouse Prairie Foundation website, and if you have an interest in reading the complete petition, please see: http://palouseprairie.org/invertebrates/GiantPalouseEarthwormPetition2009=.pdf.

The first round of this Endangered Species Act petition was filed in August of 2006, soon after a University of Idaho researcher found the fourth specimen of the species in recorded history. This petition was denied by the Bush administration and this denial was upheld in court, under the pretense that substantial information was not provided in the petition to conclude that the species warranted protection. Ironically, that petition presented and summarized all the available scientific literature. The actual rarity of the native worm was never an issue in the denial. In addition, we cited that all of the local, regional, national, and international agencies, organizations, and experts have documented their recommendations that the species receive protected status because of its small population size and the rarity of its habitat.

Not much is known about these mysterious and rare earthworms. The giant Palouse earthworm (*Driloleirus americanus*) is a native species found only in the Columbia River drainages of eastern Washington and Northern Idaho. The currently available scientific information states that it is an endemic that utilizes grassland sites with good soil and native vegetation. Only four positive collections of this species have been made within the last 110 years. Yet, in 1897 it was considered abundant.

Three of these collections were made at sites within the Palouse bioregion, one between Moscow, Idaho and Pullman, Washington, one near Moscow Mountain, and the third at a Palouse prairie remnant called Smoot Hill. A fourth specimen was discovered near Ellensberg, Washington. (It is interesting to note that the Moscow/Pullman collection site has been converted to a parking lot, the Moscow Mountain collection site has been logged, and the Ellensberg site has never been identified.) This represents the entire history of positively identified sightings for this animal in the last 110 years. Other collections have been made of native earthworm specimens, but these specimens were never able to be positively identified past the level of genus because of the destruction of critical parts of the specimens during the collection procedure. Also, the Palouse prairie, which comprises much of the earthworm's presumed range, is considered one of the most endangered ecosystems in the U.S. with less than two percent remaining in a native state. On the positive side, the recent collection in 2005 indicates that the species is still extant.

Soon after our recent petition was filed, one of the authors of several documents cited in our petitions wrote a letter of support to the USFWS which added additional information to what is known about this native worm. Samuel James, of the Biodiversity Institute, University of Kansas, is the only earthworm taxonomist operating in the USA, and has extensive experience in biodiversity inventory of earthworms. His letter offers no doubt that *Driloleirus americanus* is in danger of extinction. He gives three reasons for this, and offers as supporting information that the species is not anecic, as previously thought, but rather is endogeic. Space does not permit a full transcript of his interesting letter, but it is worth reading the full text: http://www.friendsoftheclearwater.org/sites/default/files/James.

In his letter of support he argues, first, that it is almost universally true that earthworms are highly sensitive to habitat disturbance, which is to say that when the habitat is altered drastically and suddenly, such as is the case in forest clear cutting, or conver-

sion of any habitat to agriculture by way of plowing and annual cultivation, the indigenous earthworms are generally destroyed.

Second, in the present case, invasive species pose a potential threat to the native *D. americanus*, something that any reasonable person would conclude, based on the scientific evidence available for other native earthworm species encountering invasions.

Third, a reasonable and sufficient effort has been made to find *Driloleirus americanus* in a variety of habitats within its presumed range. These efforts have failed except in very rare instances, and all of those have been in natural or little-disturbed vegetation. At the right time of year, anyone competent with a spade and able to dig several 30-40 cm deep holes should be able to find this worm if it is present. Even a low population density probably maintains upwards of 5 individuals per square meter.

And his bombshell, that the species is not anecic, as previously thought: "In some of my work referred to in the petition, I speculated that *Driloleirus americanus* is an anecic species. Now that I have seen one, and learned more about the genus, my evaluation has changed. *Driloleirus americanus* is not the same ecologically as the anecic *L. terrestris* (editor note- an invasive Euro-Asian worm species also known as the nightcrawler). *Driloleirus americanus* is pale, indicating a life spent entirely below ground, unlike the surface feeding, pigmented *L. terrestris*. Michael Westwind, as quoted by Jodi Johnson-Maynard, the advisor of Yaniria Sanchez de Leon, reported that *D. americanus* does not make surface castings. The specimen I saw was pale- totally unpigmented, like the other *Driloleirus* species I have seen. If it does not defecate at the surface, and lacks pigmentation in the head, then it is highly unlikely to have the anecic lifestyle, which means feeding on surface plant remains. I have found other anecics very easily because they make a conspicuous heap of castings and vegetation remnants around the burrow openings."

So it is probably an endogeic, meaning living entirely in the soil, on soil resources consisting of organic matter in varying stages of decomposition. This re-evaluation is significant to the petition to list *D. americanus*, because a large endogeic species is probably more susceptible to habitat changes than an anecic.

In the conversion to agriculture, a grassland soil in the central USA will typically lose at least half of its organic matter during several years following initial plowing. Fertilizers and exposure to air accelerate the organic matter loss, and annual crops typically put a small fraction of their total net primary production into root mass. By contrast the perennial grasses of prairies put 50% more or less of their total annual production into the roots, which means a very large resource base for soil invertebrates living on the root exudates and root detritus food chain. After a long time, I am not sure how long, maybe 10 years, the soil organic matter stabilizes at a low level, with only the lowest quality and most resistant organic matter remaining. For an anecic worm this is not such a problem, as long as there is surface litter to eat, and *L. terrestris* can and does survive in corn agriculture in the midwest, subject to the toxins applied by the farmers.

The point is they can survive on crop leaf litter and other surface "trash". An endogeic will only get the depleted and low quality soil organic matter, anything left behind or defecated by any resident anecics, and anything turned under by plowing. If the soil organic matter dynamics of Palouse Prairie are similar to central US tallgrass prairie, then *Driloleirus* could be starved out of wheat fields, even if it could survive the mechanical disturbances, chemicals, etc.

Another difference to the petition concerns the

See Earthworm page 11

Working Snake River
Jerry White
Save Our Wild Salmon
Contributing Opinion

At the time that the Nez Perce Tribe met Lewis and Clark in 1805, the Columbia River saw between 9-16 million fish return annually. The Snake River Basin produced approximately 40% of these fish.

Unfortunately, habitat destruction and dam building took a toll on wild runs. Between 1961 and 1975 four dams were built in Southeast Washington State. Ice Harbor Dam, Lower Monumental Dam, Little Goose Dam and Lower Granite Dam created 140 miles of slack water reservoir between Lewiston, Idaho and Pasco, Washington. These projects cut fish off from 6000 miles of upland rivers with healthy spawning habitat. Upon the completion of these dams, salmon found themselves migrating through 8 massive dams and their deadly, superheated reservoirs in order to get to the ocean. These 8 dams eventually kill between 50% and 90% of out-migrating smolts (juvenile salmon/steelhead). For example, in the 1950s wild spring/summer chinook salmon numbered over 100,000 fish per year. In 2008, less than 20,000 wild spring chinook returned to the Snake River Basin. Three other stocks of salmon have been listed as endangered species and sadly, wild coho salmon were declared extinct in 1986. This collapse occurred in spite of the federal government spending billions on salmon recovery.

In fact, the four dams have cost the American public $8 billion since 1987. Current projections indicate we will spend billions more dollars on these projects in the next 20 years.

Another profound cost to our region is the lost potential for the lower Snake River canyon to add to the quality of our lives here in the Pacific Northwest. This canyon, now inundated by 30,000 acres of reservoir, once supported amazing wildlife resources that are now degraded. River islands and riparian corridors hosted scores of nesting birds, waterfowl and wintering mule deer, all of which would have been an asset to those who travel and enjoy such resources. River bars and beaches that are sought-after recreational assets in the upper Snake River basin have been largely replaced by unusable rip-rap along the lower Snake River.

Although the four lower Snake dams are authorized as hydroelectric projects, the federal government built them to support barge transportation between Lewiston, Idaho and the Columbia River.

Studies have shown that the replacement of 140 miles of barging with short-line rail system would both satisfy the need to move wheat to ports near Pasco for export and allow for the development of new markets in other parts of the United States. Rails could effectively move grain to many places regionally or nationally whereas barges are only functional for few products going to a few larger markets.

On the energy side, these dams produce approximately 1000 megawatts or about 4% of the total power produced in the Pacific Northwest. Studies have shown that renewable sources of energy and efficiency could easily replace this power (www.lightintheriver.org). Efficiency is the most effective way to give 1000 megawatts back to salmon in the Snake River Basin and new developments such as the “smart grid” show a great deal of possibility in saving huge amounts of power. Additionally, a Rand Corporation study stated that the region could see 15,000 new jobs in the energy sector if dams were replaced (www.rand.org).

The lower Snake River landscape once supported the farming of fruits and vegetables, and had river bars, beaches, riparian vegetation, as well as islands that supported rich populations of wildlife. Removing the four lower Snake River dams will restore more than 30,000 acres of rapids, parklands, wildlife habitat

Lower Snake River Before the Dams
Kyle Laughlin Collection

and public access. In particular, the opportunity to raft or boat along a free flowing, 140-mile corridor would make this an amazing resource to those who appreciate the large river experience. Deeply incised canyons and numerous river islands would make the lower river a draw for those who wanted to enjoy watching wildlife, fishing, hunting or just sightseeing as they made their way along boat trails on single or multi-day trips. Such a system could be worth $300 million recreational dollars a year to the region's economy. The renewed sport fishing economy could be worth nearly $544 million annually to the Idaho economy alone. This river would become a significant asset in improving the quality of life in Eastern Washington and Northern Idaho.

Ultimately, given what they have cost us, these dams have simply not delivered on the 1950s promise that they would provide prosperity for the region. The solutions are clear. These four dams should be traded for investments in rail upgrades, clean energy, quality of life improvements and a renewed salmon economy.

The current situation is dynamic and it appears that the region is ready to take a serious look at recovering Snake River Basin salmon and steelhead.

At the time of writing, the federal government's 2008 salmon recovery plan (or Biological Opinion) is in litigation and under review by Judge Redden. These plans are required under the Endangered Species Act and the courts have rejected three prior recovery plans as unlawful and illegal. The latest salmon plan has a number of inherent flaws. The jeopardy standard for recovering a given stock, or population of salmon relies on something called "trending towards recovery". According to this standard, if a given stock shows an increase of several fish, NOAA Fisheries can claim that recovery has been achieved for that population. Under this policy, a given stock could be labeled as recovered even though actual numbers of returning fish are far below what's needed to be biologically sustainable.

Additionally, the latest plan invests over 50% of its actions in habitat recovery when the federal Columbia River hydro system is clearly responsible for more than 50% of the adverse impacts to salmon. This plan reflects obvious political influence in order to avoid considering the science pointing to dam removal. The Obama administration has asked the court for a period of time to review the science, and either support or modify the plan. By September 15, the Obama Administration will have made a decision as to whether they will support this flawed, Bush era plan, or modify it in order to adhere to scientific evidence and sound principles.

In the meantime, several legislators from the Northwest have made public statements supporting the idea of bringing stakeholders together to create a lasting solution to the Snake River salmon crisis. Idaho's Senator Crapo made a public statement earlier this year indicating that it was time to bring stakeholders together and begin discussing a resolution to the crisis with all options, including dam removal, on the table. Additionally, Senator Merkley of Oregon has openly stated that we should follow the best available science in order to recover salmon even if this means removing the LSR dams. This has furthered the idea that real solutions might become a political reality. Unfortunately, the Washington delegation has yet to openly support a successful, long-term resolution via the formation of a stake-holder table. Washington's Senator Patty Murray, in particular, has resisted engaging in constructive dialogue on this issue.

Within this dynamic situation, organizations that lobby for status quo transportation and energy, such as River Partners, are still opposed to any solution that requires removing the earthen portion of the four lower Snake River dams. However, privately many utilities, growers and others are willing to talk. SOS has been meeting for the last several years with wheat growers, utilities, and others to discuss their needs and express our commitment to making sure that if dam removal occurs, plans are in place to ensure these stake holders find themselves facing minimal economic disruption and maximum benefit. We feel it's important that regional stakeholders be put in a position to be successful within the new economic realities presented by a restored and free flowing lower Snake River.

Citizens need to let their senators know they want real, long-term salmon and steelhead recovery that will help the river work for all parties and stakeholders. With Judge Redden's ruling impending and the Obama Administration reviewing the federal salmon plan, the window is open for true salmon recovery and for the creation of a lower Snake River that works for everyone.

Please join SOS in supporting a solution to salmon recovery that benefits farmers, fishermen, local communities and the regional economy. **Visit www.workingsnakeriver.org for further information.**

Shifting Baseline Syndrome Alive and Well in Idaho
Will Boyd

"Our ability to conserve and protect wildlife is at risk because we are unable to accurately gauge how our environment is changing over time."
-scientists at the Imperial College London this year

Nowhere is the shifting baseline syndrome more painfully obvious than in the salmon wars of the Northwest. Prior to 1975 when the last of the four lower Snake River dams was completed, wild Snake River fall chinook populations reached approximately 30,000. They now cannot even meet their recovery target of 3,000. Since that time wild Snake River steelhead have never reached their recovery target of 54,000. Just south of the Clearwater, nearly 40,000 sockeyes once returned to Redfish Lake annually. This year fish fans are throwing parties because just over 1,000 of the reds made it back.

This salmon brief serves as Friends of the Clearwater's salmon report card for 2009. Its purpose is to expose the media's happy talk of thriving salmon and steelhead as nothing more than just that, happy TALK. The situation is far less than happy for the Northwest's premiere keystone species. We will be focusing on the "ecologically significant units" or salmon runs that spawn in the Clearwater's tributaries.

Snake River steelhead
Status: threatened
Recovery goal: 54,000
2009 returns: 22,172, (only 7,527 were wild or 34%)
2008 returns: 23,509
10 year average: 16,130

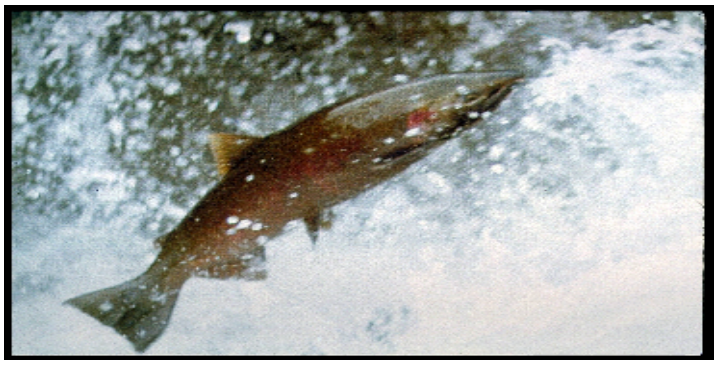
Snake River fall chinook
Status: endangered
Recovery goal: 3,000
2009 returns: 604
2008 returns: 570
10 year average: 242

This year's higher return numbers and weekly (reported by the Fish Passage Center*) totals were attributed to timely spilling of waters for juveniles going to sea last fall. High river temperatures this summer also caused many fish to remain in the cooler downstream water longer before navigating fish ladders to the warmer slack water behind the dams.

Snake River spring/summer chinook
Status: threatened (mainstem Snake River, Salmon River drainage, Tucannon R., Grande Ronde R., not protected in the Clearwater) **
Recovery goal: Snake River spring/summer chinook are broken down into 32 functional populations, each with their own recovery goals!
2009 combined returns: 64,149
2008 combined returns: 72,758
10 year average combined: 65,844

The importance of spawning habitat for these species cannot be overstated. FOC has for over 20 years protected spawning habitat for Snake River steelhead and chinook salmon by limiting road-building and clear-cutting in the backcountry.

This is what Save Our Wild Salmon, of which FOC is a partner, has to say about the Wild Clearwater Country and anadromous fish.: "Central Idaho in the Rocky Mountains contains the largest, wildest, coldest, and best-protected contiguous salmon habitat remaining in the continental United States."



Steelhead in Whitewater
SOS File photo

*The Fish Passage Center (FPC) was established by the Northwest Power Planning Council (NPPC). FPC provides technical services to the fish agencies and tribes impacted by the operation of the Federal Columbia River Power System. For more visit www.fpc.org.

**The Clearwater popluation of spring/summer chinook was "deemed" extirpated because of the presence of the Lewiston Dam which came out in 1972-73. Reintroduction efforts in the late 1960s further cloud the ancestry of Snake River spring/summer chinook returning to the Clearwater.

Earthworm cont. from page 7

ease with which one may catch endogeic worms compared to anecics. We have already seen that Fauci et al. were able to catch the famously fast *anecic L. terrestris* by digging. Endogeic worms typically do not move with great speed. I was able to dig out some 50-70 cm *Diplocardia biprostatica* in dense clay in Oklahoma, in spite of the fact that the worms had many months, or years (I maintained one adult specimen for two years after capture, indicating a long life span), to prepare their burrow escape route and I was going in with a spade over a course of several minutes. It was very hard to dig fast in that clay, but I got the worms. Thus I am confident in Fauci's ability to dig up *D. americanus*. We need not attach much practical significance to the reports of 2+ meter-deep burrows created by this D. americanus.

However, I doubt very much that the species will retreat into the burrows except to escape drought, because their feeding is entirely below ground, meaning that they defecate into their burrows, effectively blocking the retreat. Most of the worm food in a grassland soil is within the top 20 cm, well within digging range. They could range deeper, but Fauci et al. were on the lookout, so I believe that their failure to find is more probably due to absence of worms rather than faulty or inadequate effort.

I am confident of my conclusions and recommendations given the information presently available to me, which I believe is complete and not overlooking important data. The listing of this species as endangered will bring long-overdue attention to the fact that it is not only popular, charismatic organisms that are in danger of extinction. I also do not accept that such a listing will pose any threat to the ability of people to responsibly use their property. As we have noted, 99% of the potential damage to the Palouse is already done. The preservation of this species should be compatible with sustainable land use, sustainable livestock grazing pressure, and recreation.

Preservation will have collateral benefits, not least the protection of habitat in which other, even more inconspicuous life forms continue to survive.

With the submission of this second petition, the USFWS is required to make an initial finding within 90 days as to whether or not the petition presents substantial information indicating that the listing is warranted. So we should hear from them again by the end of September.

Stay Tuned.

Wildlands Advocacy:

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Weitas Creek Is Under Threat from Motors
FOC File photo

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Pot Mountain Roadless Area Needs Protection
Brett Haverstick photo

FRIENDS OF THE CLEARWATER CALENDAR OF EVENTS
FALL 2009

Wild Clearwater Country Photo Documentary *by Roger Ingharam* *Tuesday September 22, 2009* *University Idaho Law School Rm 104* *6:30pm-8:00pm*	*Hike to Grandmother Mountain* *Saturday September 26, 2009* *Leave From Rosauer's Parking Lot 7:00am* *Return Approximately 5:00pm*
ORV Letter Writing Potluck Party *Tuesday September 29, 2009* *Location: TBA* *6:30pm*	*Annual Meeting Celebration* *Saturday November 7, 2009* *1912 Building Downtown Moscow* *6:30pm-10:30pm*

Friends of the Clearwater
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