

STATEMENT OF THE IDAHO CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY  
ON REPLACEMENT OR MODIFICATION OF THE CLEARWATER RIVER MEMORIAL BRIDGE

The Idaho Chapter of The Wildlife Society is extremely concerned over the adverse impacts to fish and wildlife that will result from the proposed action of either replacing or modifying the Clearwater Memorial Bridge.

The Lower Granite Project has already resulted in losses of fisheries and wildlife habitat in the Clearwater River. Extension of commercial navigation above the Memorial Bridge would lead to additional degradation of staggering proportions. If this barrier to commercial barge traffic is removed, it will be only a matter of time until other projects are deemed necessary and the free-flowing river and riparian habitat will be eliminated from Lewiston to Spalding.

To date, wildlife losses resulting from construction of Lower Granite have been only partially mitigated by the development of riparian habitat within the take-line lands of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. These lands were planted with grass-legume mixtures to produce brood pasture for locally produced Canada geese and nesting cover for upland game birds. Shrub-tree plantings were also utilized to produce habitat diversity for the many species of songbirds that were displaced with the loss of the islands and riparian edge under the Lower Granite pool. The shallow areas and low islands from the Potlatch Corporation mill to Spalding are heavily used by migratory waterfowl during fall-spring movements as resting areas.

Millions of dollars have been expended on anadromous fishery programs to maintain the salmon and steelhead runs in the Clearwater drainage. It is possible that annual runs of these species may be approximately 60,000 steelhead and 30,000 spring chinook into the Clearwater River. In order to allow harvest of these fish, we must retain all of the free-flowing river

upstream from Lewiston. Sportfishermen have already lost several hundred miles of free-flowing river downstream and only approximately 35 miles of free-flowing accessible stream remains between Lewiston and the Dworshak Hatchery. It seems inconceivable to us that a project would be proposed that would further degrade the efforts to provide for a fishery on the steelhead run to Dworshak.

We are unalterably opposed to the replacement or raising of the Memorial Bridge because of the severe adverse environmental impacts. In addition, we recommend that the Memorial Bridge be declared the upper limit for commercial traffic.

Submitted by:  
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1/31/79