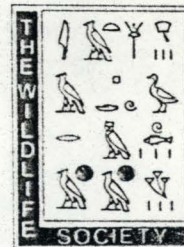


# THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

## NORTHWEST SECTION

2320 Government Way  
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814

March 31, 1981



Dear Sir:

Members of The Northwest Section of The Wildlife Society are vitally concerned about riparian habitat because of its importance to water quality and wildlife. Wetlands and streams have distinct biotic communities with unique and diverse flora and fauna. They function as stabilizing forces of the physical environment by sustaining high water tables to balance precipitation deficits, by retaining excess surface water to diminish flooding, and by serving as settling basins for silt and chemicals to reduce pollution in downstream waters.

In the past several decades, however, thousands of wetlands have been drained or filled for land reclamation, and thousands of miles of streams have been channelized--or otherwise altered--for flood control, irrigation, power generation, and navigation. Many also have been seriously overgrazed. These practices, which are continuing at a rapid pace, have not only irreparably damaged many water areas but also have adversely affected the associated aquatic and riparian biota. Wetlands have become repositories and dumps for upstream drainage programs, lowering their productive capacity. Environmentally disruptive programs of wetlands and stream alteration have been, and are being, subsidized by taxpayer funds in direct conflict with wetland maintenance efforts supported with other public funds. Furthermore, intraprogram measures designed to mitigate wetland and other resource losses resulting from these conflicting programs and injudicious practices have been inadequate.

The policy of The Wildlife Society, in regard to the alteration of stream, riparian, and wetland habitats, is to:

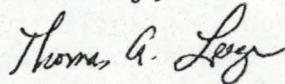
1. Support programs and practices designed to enhance the retention of surface water in its watershed of origin, to conserve natural reservoirs of underground water, and to maintain high standards of water quality.
2. Encourage enactment of legislation that promotes the maintenance and wise management of stream, riparian, and wetland habitats, and their biota.

3. Oppose programs of alteration or utilization that cause permanent damage to the physical and biological resources of stream, riparian, and wetland habitats.
4. Encourage governments having jurisdiction over water rights to set minimum flow rates for streams and minimum levels for lakes and reservoirs necessary to maintain ecologically viable aquatic systems.

The members of The Northwest Section resolved that agencies should be made aware of The Wildlife Society's policy on aquatic and riparian sites and that agencies be encouraged to plan and manage riparian-stream habitats for the maintenance and protection of these important and productive natural ecosystems. We also request that you utilize available facts and guidelines developed by wildlife scientists and seek the consultation of wildlife scientists as part of the interdisciplinary input in developing riparian-stream resource management plans to optimize the yield of forage, the fisheries, and other resources.

I respectfully request that our position just stated be circulated to personnel under your direction that are involved with riparian management.

Sincerely,



Thomas A. Leege, President