



IDAHO CHAPTER

THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

April 6, 1975
500 Schmeizer Lane
Boise, Idaho 83706

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
SUITE 5176
3900 WISCONSIN AVE. N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20016

The Honorable Roy A. Taylor, Chairman
Subcommittee on National Parks and Recreation
House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs
Longworth Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Taylor:

The Idaho Chapter of the Wildlife Society has long been concerned of the Hells Canyon Area. We are a Society of some three hundred members who live and work in Idaho as Professional Wildlife Biologists. We are intimately acquainted with Hells Canyon, its moods, its beauty and its unique character as habitat to a host of diverse wildlife species. We are keenly aware that its river, the Middle Snake reach, is one of but two remaining free-flowing reaches of the Snake River that provides the essential habitat requirements of the white sturgeon. This river reach, after the dams of the Columbia and Lower Snake Rivers, also serves as respite to salmon and steelhead trout in their migration ritual from inland waters to ocean and return. For these reasons and the belief that this canyon with its river and dependent life forms surely represents a natural heritage of National significance, the Idaho Chapter of the Wildlife Society in annual meeting, February 8, 1975, reaffirmed its prior position; thus:

We oppose construction of any more dams on the Middle Snake River from Hells Canyon Dam downstream to Lewiston, Idaho. We can no longer afford the serious loss to a liveable environment that additional dams would cause. There are several reasons for this position.

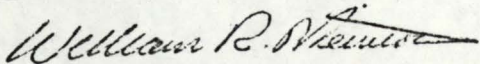
1. There would be a serious degradation of the unique scenic and recreational values associated with this portion of the Snake River if it were dammed. Recreational use is already high, as shown by the 50,000 man-days of recreation spent in the area of High Mountain Sheep and China Gardens dam sites in recent years.
2. The project could change water quality downstream to such a drastic degree that it would threaten the entire Salmon and Clearwater River runs of anadromous fish.
3. There would be a loss or serious reduction in the fine white sturgeon, smallmouth bass, trout and channel catfish fisheries which now exist on this stretch of the river.

4. Big game numbers estimated at 20-30,000 deer would decline because of loss of critical big game winter range inundated.
5. The choice partridge, quail and cottontail rabbit production areas in the bottom lands would be inundated.
6. Significant non-game wildlife habitat and other life form habitats would be destroyed.
7. The power generated by development of the Middle Snake River provides an insignificant contribution (less than a one years supply) to the projected demand thereby making the sacrifice of this canyon a truly "sacrificial lamb" upon the throne of mans quest for power development at any cost.

The foregoing position is in full accord with a majority of Idaho residents whose expressed opinion was affirmed in five independent public surveys conducted by the University of Idaho, Idaho Department of Water Resources (formely the Idaho Water Resource Board) and the Idaho Department of Fish and Game. This position also affirms and complements the decision for denial of dams in the Middle Snake by the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare because of "the impacts on aquatic life and recreational uses of the river". We believe that the actions and statements by Idaho Congressmen Steve Symms and George Hansen due not represent the opinion of Idaho residents and are in direct contradiction of their expressed desire inclusive of the Idaho Chapter of the Wildlife Society.

I therefore submit this letter in support of HR - 30 and ask that it be made a part of the Official Hearings Record; Hells Canyon National Recreation Area, Washington, D.C., April 10, 1975.

Sincerely,



William R. Meiners
President