

David Reynolds – Farmer, Kuna ID

It seems to me we are going backwards as society to remove proven infrastructure that provides so many benefits. We have groups complaining about emissions, green house gases, etc. and now we are fighting on another front to save dams that provide the most environmentally friendly transportation and energy that man has thought of to date. We have progressed as society because of our brains and ingenuity. I would hope that with some very smart minds and a 4 billion dollar budget (one billion per dam) that we could devise a system for fish to navigate the dams and still leave the structures themselves. As a business owner, it seems rather foolish to remove paid for assets and replace that with tax payer dollars that is not sustainable. Thank you for your consideration.

Also, As part of your concept, are you proposing that Idaho would not have to provide any more water for fish or least reduced flows?

My concept remains silent on Idaho water flows and Snake River Basin Adjudication (SRBA). However, the 487,000 acre feet are being sent down to flush salmon through these dams so the question becomes, if the dams are gone do we need to flush Idaho farm water for salmon? Also, the water users would be able to lengthen or amend the terms of the SRBA. This is an opportunity to lock in Idaho's water for decades.

Finally, have you looked at billion-dollar fish ladders per dam or rerouting small amounts of water during peak seasons into a parallel free flowing river. With no guarantee of success by breaching dams, why should we risk losing all their economic advantages? They are proven economically viable structures that are already paid for by U.S. taxpayers.

Fish ladders and flushing thousands of acre feet of Idaho water are happening today and not working to recover salmon. My fear is that while a federal judge cannot remove the dams, they can force even more spill over the dams. Like it or not, the ESA is controlling, much like it did in the spotted owl wars and in the Klamath Basin.

Terry Jones, Idaho Farmer

As with all government projects 33.5 billion will not be enough – then what?

I have spent the last three years attempting to determine what these dams are worth. Engaging with stakeholders is helping us determine that number. All the money will be appropriated up front before the dams are removed, so if there is a discrepancy or a shortfall, we can address it. The key is that we must ensure that farmers and stakeholders are provided with the full value of the benefits they receive from these dams so that they can create their own solutions for certainty and security now and for future generations.

James Boggan, Simplot Land and Livestock

What would the effects of sediment washed downstream, caused by removal of dams, have on river ecology in the Columbia? Would the effects significantly change the ecology or have long term negative effects?

Prior to breaching we will dredge behind the dams to limit sediment washed downstream. Additionally, the concept provides \$400M in a sediment mitigation fund. The Army Corps of Engineers will monitor and study the effects of sediment loading and flows downstream. Mitigation payments will come out of this fund were there to be any downstream damage caused to public or private entities. This river ecology is complex, and we will continue to rely on the biologists to make sure there are not unintended consequences. But I am also making sure the resources would be in place to mitigate if any damage were to occur.

If the salmon do drop to endangered levels, and salmon fishing ends, what would the economic impacts be to small towns in Idaho like Riggins, Kamiah and Orofino? These towns rely on salmon runs as a source of revenue.

If you ask residents of those towns, particularly anglers, they will tell you how much damage that these declining salmon runs have already caused to their communities. The Idaho Outfitters and Guides can give you more specifics, but we know that Idaho is at an economic disadvantage as long as those salmon runs continue at such poor rates. One of the goals of this concept is to restore wild Idaho salmon and steelhead runs which would benefit all Idaho fishing communities and the fishing and guiding industry.

Additionally, here is an interesting article that I found regarding dam removal. I didn't know if this article had been seen or would be useful.

Thank you for the article, we will certainly review it.

<https://econw.com/projects-collection/2019/7/29/lower-snake-river-dams-economic-tradeoffs-of-removal>

Erik Olson, Idaho Farmer

How did Congressman Simpson come up with the number \$3.6 billion for wheat growers? The avg price of wheat in relation to the cost to ship?

In meetings with stakeholders, it was clear that the captive shipper issue would be the most difficult to create a solution for. My goal has been to provide the grain producers, shippers, ports and bargers with significant resources so they can create their own solution to provide certainty and security for now and future generations. The \$3.6 billion amount is the total that the concept provides to these groups so that they can get their grain and other goods from Lewiston-Clarkston down to the barges in the Tri-Cities area and shipped to the Lower Columbia Ports. I have two detailed scenarios of how this funding might be used if you would like to review more specifics on this aspect.

Also, there is no guarantee that environmental groups won't demand that the rest of the dams be removed. How can he confidently say it will not happen?

I understand the skepticism--farmers and ranchers have been attacked by environmentalists and liberal courts for half a century. We CAN guarantee that they will not go after the other major dams though, because we would use sufficiency language. That is how we delisted the gray wolf in Idaho. It was challenged in the courts and it was upheld, so the precedent is there.

How does the Congressman propose to remedy the fact that the rail lines do not have the capacity now to handle the traffic? You can tell the railroads to increase capacity but whether they do or not is up to them.

Of the \$3.6 billion in funding for the captive shipper issue, under one of my scenarios shippers and producers could build out \$1.5 billion in infrastructure. According to shippers, this could pay for 4-120 car unit trains, rail line, port expansion of loading facilities, storage and other transport infrastructure.

Will Hart, Idaho Consumer-Owned Utilities Association

Will you be encouraging the current plaintiffs suing over the BiOp to drop their lawsuits in a good faith gesture as the river user stakeholders consider this concept in good faith? Will Hart/ICUA

The plaintiffs have shown no interest in slowing down the litigation. In fact, they have made it clear to me that they intend to keep suing. This is why I introduced my concept--we have to get out of this broken cycle.

Greg Branson and Jonathan Rosenau, Idaho Farmers

Before the dams, farmers figured out transportation, i.e. they brought rail clear to Grangeville and even into Nezperce. We also had multiple flour mills in Nezperce and on the Camas Prairie. The dams replaced all this infrastructure so it was ALL lost. Do you really think there is enough money allocated to farmers to replace all we will be losing with the loss of these dams?

Yes, I believe that we can put agriculture in a better place than they are now. I would not do this if it were going to hurt our farmers.

Mary Hasenoehrl, Idaho Farmer

Congressman Simpson mentioned that he believes a judge will at some point mandate that the dams be breached. He believes that his plan will help support agriculture and other entities that will be hurt financially once dams are removed. It is my understanding that a federal judge cannot mandate that the dams be breached. I thought that it would take an act of Congress to breach dams. Can Congressman Simpson reference federal law or regulations that would allow a federal judge to order dam removal?

I do not believe a judge can order the removal of these dams. What I do believe is that a judge can make the dams so expensive that the operations may need to be changed. It has already started with the judge ordering more spill in an effort to help the salmon get passed these dams. I also believe that with the continuing decline of Idaho salmon runs, environmental groups will continue to push litigation and push for even more spill, leaving everyone in this state of uncertainty.

Roger Hernandez

What are the other factors and actors in salmon consumption doing to help alleviate their decline? Overfishing tends to have a major impact per the Univ of Oregon study.

I believe that ocean conditions are having the biggest effect on Northwest salmon, followed by climate change. Predators, habitat conditions and harvest are also having an affect on our salmon. However, what I cannot understand is why salmon on the John Day River in Oregon that go through 3 dams have a 4% survival rate, salmon on the mainstem of the Columbia that go through 4 dams also have a 4% survival rate, yet our Idaho salmon that go through 8 dams have a 1% survival rate. The only difference between the Oregon and Washington salmon that I can see is that Idaho salmon go through 4 more dams.

Looking at a study from the University of Oregon factors such as logging, agriculture, overpopulation tend to have major impacts. What are we doing to mitigate these factors?

In my 23 years in Congress I have seen all Northwest resource industries including timber and water users severely impacted by restrictions over salmon. I do not see this ending. I believe it will only getting worse.

Matthew Weaver, Capitol Press

Would removal of the dams affect water levels for rural communities? Would any rural communities become uninhabitable as a result?

Lowering water levels should not affect rural communities or make any uninhabitable. Additionally, there is \$750M in the concept for planning, reconfiguring, reengineering, extending, moving, deepening or any other structural changes required to any affected irrigation intake, outflow, well or other structure related to irrigation, water delivery or discharge in the Ice Harbor Dam area or within the Lower Snake River Corridor.

David Claiborne, Idaho Dairyman's Association

Would participation in water quality program subject a CAFO operator to federal permitting or other federal regulation and oversight. Such as nPDES permit

These voluntary watershed programs would be state based programs meant to incentivize participation by agriculture through lawsuit protections. I do not anticipate any additional federal permitting requirements or oversight for voluntarily participating in a state program. We want to incentivize these partnerships, increased red tape and regulation certainly wont do that. I cannot answer that definitively at this point, but we certainly would want to avoid that.

What has reception been from Fulcher, Newhouse and other members in effected districts?

I have a great relationship with the Pacific Northwest Delegation, especially Congressmen Fulcher and Newhouse. We have a lot of common ground on this issue. We all value and appreciate hydropower.

We all want the lawsuits to end. We all want our farmers to have more security and certainly than they have now. I would say we have different points of view on the necessity of dam removal, but they have been engaged and helpful partners throughout the development of my concept.

Cory Kress, Idaho Farmer

My question is: what do you think will happen when you give certain farmers 25% of their cost of production and not others?

My goal is that farmers will be incentivized equitably to maintain the benefits of barging from Lewiston to Tri-Cities. They should be paid a premium that incentivizes them to load grain onto barges in the Tri-Cities but that does not enrich them beyond that. We want to keep as much grain on barges in Tri-Cities as possible.

Norm Semanko, attorney with Parsons Behle & Latimer

The watershed partnerships are obviously a good idea for Idaho. But do they need to be tied to dam removal? Can't funding for the partnerships stand on its own?

The watershed partnerships are good for Idaho. This concept is full of ideas that are good for Idaho, but unfortunately the focus is all on the dams. The watershed partnerships are an opportunity to reset the system and avoid lawsuits in the process. These partnerships play an integral role in the concept. We could break out each piece of this concept and try to do it on its own, but it would not go anywhere. We need all the pieces of the puzzle in place to truly solve the problem.

What do you make of Speaker Bedke's concern that if dam removal doesn't work, they will come after more Idaho water next? Or that other dams will be removed to deal with other fish problems?

They have already come after 487,000 acre feet of Idaho water to flush salmon down through these dams and it isn't recovering Idaho's salmon. Removing the 4 dams and the need to flush salmon through them with our upper Snake water would likely remove pressure from upper Snake water rather than make things worse. If dam removal doesn't work, then the salmon will go extinct and we will plug the dams back up. However, I don't think that will happen and neither do the fish biologists we talk to.

The slippery slope argument is real, if these dams go then the environmentalists will go after all the dams. That is why we would lock in all major dams for the next 35-50 years to ensure that this cannot happen.

In 1999, the plaintiff conservation groups claimed that the salmon would be extinct by 2017 if the four lower snake river dams weren't removed. That obviously didn't happen. Instead, the runs have increased significantly as compared to the 1990's. Why should anyone take the argument seriously that the salmon will be extinct in 10 years?

Idaho wild salmon numbers continue to trend downward and the smolt to adult return ratio for Snake River salmon is 1% despite the \$17 billion we have spent to encourage their recovery. This number is not sustainable and will eventually lead to extinction.

A few more questions (not attributed)

Why does the issue of predation by seals at the mouth of the Columbia seem to be completely ignored when looking at this?

Predation certainly plays a role as well as oceans, climate change, habitat, and harvest. We recently passed legislation to address predators and that is being implemented. What I am trying to figure out is how John Day River Salmon in Oregon that go through 3 dams have a 3-4% smolt to adult return ratio which is sustainable? The Yakima River salmon in Washington go through 4 dams and have a 2.5% return which is also sustainable. Idaho's salmon return at 1% which I am told is not a sustainable rate and will result in eventual extinction. Idaho's salmon experience the same predators and conditions as the runs on the main Columbia and John Day. The only difference is Idaho salmon go through 4 extra dams as juveniles and returning adults.

I have not heard anything regarding the environmental concerns over carbon emissions regarding the increased rail and truck traffic.

We must keep or expand barging tonnage on the Columbia River from Tri-Cities to the Lower Columbia ports. My concept proposes creating economic incentives for producers/shippers to deliver grain and other goods to Tri-Cities for barging down river. I believe it is even possible to significantly expand barging tonnage which would have a net reduction in carbon emissions over today. My website has a couple scenarios that show how this would be possible.

Is anyone concerned about the pattern of government throwing money at poorly researched projects, when we can all agree that government is going broke with profligate spending?
Is this plan truly sustainable?

I agree completely. We have spent over \$17 billion on fish recovery in the Northwest and the one thing it has not done is recover fish. As salmon runs continue to decline, the courts are going to order the government to throw more of our tax dollars and Idaho water at this issue. I would rather fix the problem than just throw money at it. It is fiscally irresponsible to continue down this path, and you are correct, it is not sustainable.

I would also like to ask Congressman Simpson if he expects Idaho's flow augmentation obligations to end if the dam removal plan is adopted.

We currently flush up to 487,000 acre feet of Upper Snake River water downstream through these dams for salmon. If the dams were breached for salmon recovery it seems there would be less pressure on upper Snake water. If they are not breached, I believe we will be ordered to flush more water in coming years the salmon numbers continue to decline.

Idaho water users have been regularly sued under the ESA by the environmental groups for diverting water in the Salmon and Lemhi basins under their water rights. They have been told that these lawsuits are necessary because of the dams. How will these diversions be protected? Will they be forced into the watershed protection program?

My concept protects agricultural producers who voluntarily participate in watershed programs from ESA and Clean Water Act lawsuits for 25 years. Nobody will be forced into the voluntary watershed programs and they have substantial funding- \$700 million for the Snake River Basin- to implement

watershed programs to improve water quality, quantity, and temperature. In the long term, improving the watershed health of the basin will benefit agriculture and salmon.